
FOR YOUR BENEFIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE LOCAL 295 IBT EMPLOYER GROUP BENEFIT FUNDS
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GOOD NEWS AMERICA –

WE'RE LIVING LONGER

A dramatic increase has taken place in the average life expectancy during the 20th century. It is one of society's greatest achievements. Most babies born in 1900 in the United States did not live past age 50. Fifty years ago, in 1965, the average life expectancy rose to 70.25 years and now life expectancy is approaching 79 years, according to the projections for 2015. The United States is in the 57th spot on the 2015 list and Monaco heads up the list at 89.52 years while Japan ranks second at 84.74 years. These numbers are the averages for all males and females. The life expectancy for females is about 5 years more than the life expectancy for males. The improvements in life expectancy can, in part, be attributed to the victories against infectious and parasitic diseases. We immunized millions of people against smallpox, polio, and major childhood killers such as measles. Before that came better living standards, especially more nutritious diets and cleaner drinking water. We reduced serious infections and prevented deaths among children. More children are surviving their vulnerable early years and reaching adulthood. Public health education and

good health habits helped tremendously in reducing the spread of disease. The reduction in death rates and the increase in life expectancy can be attributed to prescription drug research and development, new diagnostic procedures and improvements in medical and surgical care. In recent years, the 10 leading causes of death have been heart disease, cancer, suicide, stroke, respiratory diseases, Alzheimer's diabetes, influenza/pneumonia, kidney disease and unintentional injuries. An extensive study was carried out by a major nation-wide health plan insurer. They examined millions of claims and concluded that we are personally responsible for more than one-half of what happens to us. How can that be so? We create our own problems by driving too fast, not wearing our seat belts, eating too much of the wrong kinds of food, alcohol and drug abuse, and using tobacco products. Some of us work at hazardous occupations; we ignore safety rules; we undertake more than we can handle and become stressed out. We don't get regular medical checkups and only get medical care when the pain is so bad that we can't stand it any longer. Take control of your life. Turn your back on your bad habits, make an appointment to see your doctor. Pay attention to the tell-tale symptoms of a medical problem.

When you take control, you will be around long enough to enjoy your children and your grandchildren. There was a recent novelty song about doing your best to stay on the green side of the grass.

DO YOU HAVE A VISION PROBLEM THAT REQUIRES MEDICAL ATTENTION?

If you have any vision problems that can't be corrected with new eyeglasses



or contact lenses, you should go to

an ophthalmologist.

Ophthalmologists are medical doctors who specialize in vision care. They are trained to diagnose and treat medical problems such as cataracts and glaucoma and other diseases of the eyes.

The Welfare Fund provides coverage for the services of an ophthalmologist. When making an appointment, you should verify that the ophthalmologist is a network doctor.

WHY HAVEN'T YOU SIGNED UP FOR DIRECT DEPOSIT?

Do you still wait by the mailbox for your pension check to arrive? If so, you need to use the direct deposit service of the pension fund. You'll save time and effort. The service is free. Call the Pension Fund Office and ask for a direct deposit form.

ARE YOU ON MEDICARE AND COVERED BY THE WELFARE FUND?

If so, we want to remind you that most of your coverage is provided through the Medicare Advantage Plan.

The Medicare Advantage Plan and Medicare cover your hospital, medical, surgical and drug charges. Your Medicare Advantage Plan is insured by United Healthcare.

You have dental coverage but it is not through the Medicare Advantage Plan. Your dental coverage is provided by DDS, Inc. If you need any dental work call the Welfare Fund Office to find a participating DDS, Inc. dental office near you. The Fund Office telephone number is 212.308.4200.

OUT OF NETWORK MEANS OUT OF POCKET

You should always verify that your health care provider is in the Blue Cross/Blue Shield network. If you receive any health care services from an out-of-network provider, your claim will be processed under the major medical portion of the Welfare Fund coverage. Under major medical, each person has to first meet the annual deductible of \$400. After the deductible has been met, the remainder of the permissible plan charges is paid at the rate of 75%.

If the permissible plan charge is \$400, for example, no payment would be made by the Plan. The full amount of the \$400 would go toward the annual deductible.

A claim for \$500 of permissible plan charges would result in a payment of just \$75 and the patient would have to pay \$425, plus the provider's fees that are over and above the permissible plan charges.

Stay within the provider network. You'll be glad you did.

WHY HAVEN'T YOU ENROLLED IN WELLNESS – THE RIGHT WAY – FOR YOUR BENEFIT?

This benefit can be used by all of the active Welfare Fund participants and pre-Medicare retirees as well. Eligible dependents who are age 18 and older may also use this service. It provides you with ways to maintain and improve your health.

Many health conditions are supported...

The program supports individuals who have high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, asthma or low back pain. These are chronic medical conditions that require extensive medical care and pharmaceutical management. 44.43% of the population has one or more of these problems:

Patients have the option of working with a Registered Nurse. Also, you can have chat sessions with a health coach for weight management, nutrition and exercise.

Through the education program, you can learn about stress management and weight management. With stress and weight management, you can help to improve your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

The sneaky silent killers...



High blood pressure, high cholesterol and high blood sugar are all sneaky medical conditions. None of them presents any symptoms. They slowly creep into your life and silently kill you. The only way to detect

their presence is through testing at your doctor's office.

Go to your doctor's office...

So, if you haven't paid a visit to your doctor for a while, maybe it's time to pick up the telephone and call for an appointment. The doctor's office visit is covered by the Welfare Fund. If you're not on Medicare, you just have to make a small co-payment to a network provider. For an annual physical examination, there is no co-payment to a network provider.

Go ahead, enroll right now!



Enrollment is easy. Call 1.877.834.4596. You can also enroll on their web site. The address is <http://wellnesstherightway.hmcportal.com>

Go on line or call right now to enroll. The telephone call is toll free and the benefit program will not cost you anything out of pocket.

So, you have nothing to lose except some of that excess weight, blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol numbers.

FINDING OTHER COVERAGE

With the recent Supreme Court decision regarding the Affordable Care Act, we're repeating some of the information from the previous newsletter.

Pre-Medicare retiree cost is increasing...

The Welfare Fund announced that it was necessary to increase the cost of coverage for retirees and dependents who are not covered by Medicare.

Unfortunately the cost had to be increased to \$975.00 per month for each covered person. That increased cost went into effect on June 1, 2015.

Opting out...

When the increased cost was announced, the pre-Medicare retirees were told they could opt out of the Welfare Fund and find other coverage through the State or Federal exchanges or investigate their private insurance options.

How to find other coverage...

If you opt out of the Welfare plan of benefits, you may, if you wish, find coverage in the State or Federal Health Care Exchanges. You may also investigate your private insurance options.

If you live in New York State, the website of the Exchange is: www.healthbenefitexchange.ny.gov

If you live outside of New York, you may be able to buy coverage either through the Federal Exchange or your State Exchange. If you make a change in your health plan coverage, you should explore the possibility of getting a subsidy.

Questions? If you have any questions about this change, or if you need any forms or other information, call or visit the Welfare Fund Office. The number is 212.308.4200. The fax number is 212.308.4545. The Fund Office is located in the financial district of New York City at Sixty Broad Street, 37th Floor, New York, New York 10004.

THE SUBSIDIES

An important part of the Affordable Care Act is the creation of subsidies. A subsidy, officially known as the Advanced Premium Tax Credit, are like discounts that are applied directly to your health insurance costs.

If you purchase health plan coverage in the Marketplace, the amount of subsidy you may qualify for depends on several factors: Your age, your household income, the number of people in your household, where you live, and whether or not you smoke.

In general, the lower your household income, the greater the subsidy you can receive to help you pay for your health insurance needs.

For example, a two person household can qualify if their income ranges between \$15,510 and \$62,040. A four-person household can qualify with income ranging between \$23,550 and \$94,200. These examples are for households located within the 48 Continental U.S. Different schedules apply to residents of Alaska and Hawaii.

DON'T RISK HAVING YOUR PENSION BENEFIT SUSPENDED AND TERMINATION OF HEALTH PLAN COVERAGE

The Pension Fund sends out a form once a year to everyone who is receiving a pension benefit.

The purpose of the form is to verify that everyone receiving a pension benefit is continuing to be eligible for the payments.

Don't delay...

The form must be fully completed, signed and notarized and returned to the Pension Fund Office. If this



form is not returned to the Pension Fund Office, your monthly pension

benefit will be suspended. The benefit suspension will remain in effect until such time as the form is received by the Fund Office and the benefit payments will not resume until the first day of the next month.

No income and no health plan coverage...

A suspension of your pension benefits could cause your coverage in the Welfare Fund to be terminated if the cost is being deducted from your monthly pension.

Some pension benefits were suspended...

Last year, the Pension Fund suspended the monthly benefits of nearly 100 pensioners. That, in turn, caused the health plan coverage of many of them to be terminated.

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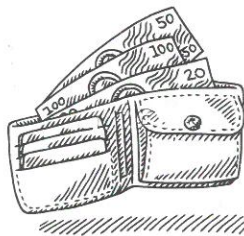
WILL IT BE ENOUGH?

For many people, retiring with a private pension and Social Security is much like trying to use a stool with just two legs. The two income sources may not provide enough income to comfortably get you through your retirement years.

This is where a third leg on the stool can help. It can change your retirement financial status from unstable and wobbly to one that is much more stable. That third leg could be an IRA, an Individual Retirement Account, or a personal savings account.

Tighten the belt a bit... Buy now, pay later, unfortunately, is the mantra in today's credit-happy culture. That brings back memories of a novelty song that was popular a while ago – "You can have all the things you seek for a dollar down and a dollar a week." How about changing your tune to – "Don't Buy Now, Save For Later!" Everyone loves having some of the luxuries of life and indeed, that is not going to change when you are retired.

It's well known that even people with decent incomes are not saving enough for retirement. When you retire, you may think you won't have to spend as much as you do now. It's true that you will be eliminating some costs such as getting to and from work, parking fees, some clothing and some other work-related costs.



The costs you eliminate will be replaced by some other costs such as your leisure time activities and some Medicare premiums and other expenses. Older persons typically need more medical care and you will probably need prescription drugs. The prescription drugs of older persons usually cost more than those of the younger population.

Keep in mind that Medicare isn't free. You have to pay a monthly premium that is deducted from your monthly Social Security benefit. You could choose to not enroll in Medicare but that choice could quickly land you in the poor house.

Analyze your current costs... Take some time to calculate how much you actually spend in a month including

those niceties such as dining out, lattes, an extra new item of clothing, new electronics and the latest of anything.

You may be very surprised at what you are spending. True, you're spending helps to keep the economy going. But, what about your own future economy?

Chances are some of your current spending could be eliminated and the money saved can be shifted into an IRA or savings account. Remember, the more unnecessary purchases you make now, the more you will pay for those purchases after retirement, in terms of a diminished standard of living.