



OPERS continues its communications efforts to Medicare eligible retirees about health care changes

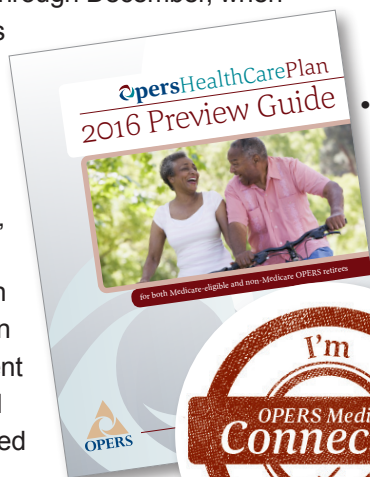
As you probably know, the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) will transition to a Medicare Connector for our retirees enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B beginning Jan. 1, 2016. Eligible retirees will receive an allowance, deposited monthly into a Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) to receive reimbursement for plan premiums and other eligible medical expenses through the OPERS Medicare Connector. Eligible spouses will receive an allowance through 2017.

We are preparing our participants now for the upcoming enrollment season, from October through December, when our Medicare retirees and spouses on the current group health care plan will select an individual plan through the new OPERS Medicare Connector administered by OneExchange. Earlier this year, OPERS sent eligible retirees a Connector Readiness Kit filled with information about the Connector. In preparation for a retiree's enrollment call with a OneExchange Licensed Benefit Advisor, OPERS has created a second Connector Readiness Kit. The new kit includes additional information about the enrollment process and reminders about the OPERS Medicare Connector. Below is a complete list of materials within the second kit:

- **Get Ready with OneExchange:** Covers a variety of topics including a complete list of optional in-person and online education sessions and information about Licensed Benefit Advisors.
- **Ready. Set. Enroll:** Outlines a timeline of communications materials retirees will receive from

OneExchange as well as any action steps to take as the enrollment season nears.

- **Get HRA Ready:** Provides details about the HRA and illustrates the step-by-step process for how reimbursements will work.
- **Re-employment and Health Care Coverage Fact Sheet:** Details what retirees' health care options are if they return to work in an OPERS-covered position.
- **Get Medication Ready:** Offers advice for organizing medications prior to the retiree's enrollment call with a Licensed Benefit Advisor.
- **Stickers:** Includes seminar, webinar and enrollment specific sticker reminders to place on the Connector Readiness calendar (provided in the first Connector Readiness kit) in anticipation of these important events.



Why use a Connector?

While it may be hard to believe, plans offered on the individual Medicare market are more affordable than employer-sponsored, group Medicare plans including the current OPERS Medicare plan. Rates are better on the individual market because there is a Medicare population size of 50 million nationally, compared to the 145,000 eligible OPERS recipients. The Connector will offer many plan choices as opposed to the single plan that OPERS offers. Participants may find more affordable and more comprehensive plans than the current plan that OPERS offers.

All of the materials from both Connector Readiness Kits are available on the OPERS website at <https://www.opers.org/healthcare/connectorreadiness/index.shtml>.

OPERS approves additional \$300 HRA deposit for Medicare eligible retirees 65 and over

OPERS Board and staff understand the transition to the OPERS Connector is a significant change for our retirees. We recognize there will likely be some upfront out-of-pocket expenses incurred as they move to their new medical plan and set up the required accounts and reimbursement arrangements. In order to make their transition flow as smoothly as possible, OPERS will furnish each enrolled retiree with an additional \$300 deposit to the HRA once a year for the next three years (2016-2018) which can be used for reimbursement of qualified medical expenses. These qualified medical expenses could include initial premium payments, premiums for spouses or prescription drug costs. Current and surviving spouses will not receive this additional deposit. This additional \$300 is on top of each individual retiree's HRA allowance provided by OPERS each month.

Enrolling an eligible spouse

Many retirees enrolled in both Medicare Parts A and B are understandably concerned about providing coverage for their eligible spouse when OPERS makes the move to the Connector in 2016. Even without an allowance, eligible spouses will be able to take advantage of medical/prescription drug plan enrollment services available through the Connector. Eligible spouses will receive a reduced allowance in 2016 and 2017. Spouse allowances will transition to zero dollars in 2018. After 2018, OPERS retirees can use their HRA monthly allowance to also cover a spouse's qualified medical expenses.

Upcoming communications to retirees from OPERS

With open enrollment periods for the OPERS Medicare Connector and the OPERS health care plan coming in the next few months, retirees can expect to receive a variety of publications in the mail this summer. We are encouraging members to read each item they receive carefully and note important dates, specific instructions and deadlines.

Mid-June – Connector Readiness Kit 2

This was sent to all Medicare retirees eligible to select a plan through the Connector this fall.

July – OPERS Announcement letter and OneExchange Getting Started Guide

This will be sent to all Medicare retirees eligible to select a plan through the Connector this fall.

August – OPERS Open Enrollment Bulletin

This will be sent to all retirees with the Summer OPERS retiree newsletter.

September – OPERS Open Enrollment Statement and Guide

This will be sent to all retirees eligible to participate in the OPERS health care plan.

October – OneExchange Enrollment Guide

This will be sent to all Medicare retirees eligible to select a plan through the Connector this fall.

We hope this information is helpful to you in understanding the level of communication OPERS is doing with our Medicare retirees about this new program. If you have additional questions about the OPERS Medicare Connector or receive questions from your members and constituents, please don't hesitate to contact us.



OPERS Government Relations Team

Carol Nolan Drake
Chief External Affairs Officer – 614-222-0398

Gordon Gatten
Government Relations Officer – 614-222-2924

Christopher Collins
Assistant Government Relations Officer – 614-222-0555

Deborah McCarthy
Assistant Government Relations Officer – 614-222-6466

Matthew Overturf
Assistant Government Relations Officer – 614-225-9030

Anthony Tedesco-Nichols
Assistant Government Relations Officer – 614-222-0381



With \$91.2 billion in assets, OPERS is the largest public pension fund in Ohio and the 11th-largest public pension fund in the United States. OPERS provides retirement, disability and survivor benefits for more than 1 million public employees. OPERS can be found on the web at OPERS.org.