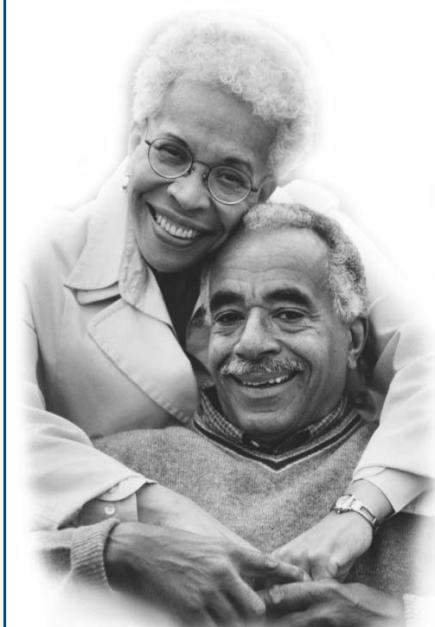


OhioPERS

NEWS

YOUR BENEFIT CONNECTION

News and information for retired members of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System



For your benefit 2008 benefit payment schedule

First 2008 benefit payment scheduled for Jan. 2

Retirees can expect their first benefit payment in 2008 to be issued (deposited) on Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2008. In past years, we distributed benefit payments for Jan. 1 (New Years Day) on the last business day of December. Beginning in 2008, we will discontinue this practice and begin distributing the Jan. 1 benefit payment on the first business day of the new year. This change was made for tax and accounting purposes and only affects the first payment of each year.

holiday, payments will be issued on the last business day of the previous month. Again, the change will only affect the first payment made in January of each year.

2008 benefit payment schedule:

January	Wednesday, Jan. 2
February	Friday, Feb. 1
March	Friday, Feb. 29
April	Tuesday, April 1
May	Thursday, May 1
June	Friday, May 30
July	Tuesday, July 1
August	Friday, Aug. 1
September	Friday, Aug. 29
October	Wednesday, Oct. 1
November	Friday, Oct. 31
December	Monday, Dec. 1

For your benefit

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The payments for February through December will be issued on the first day of the month unless the first falls on a weekend or holiday. If the first falls on a weekend or

What's new on the web

Features and additions to www.opers.org

Online index provides more than just definitions – the new Web site index is helping visitors to the OPERS Web site understand their retirement system better. What began as an online glossary of terms has evolved and expanded into a more comprehensive index. This new online resource presents definitions, but goes a step further in providing links to pages where the defined word appears on the OPERS Web site as well as links to relevant forms and publications.



Ohio PERS NEWS – Your Benefit Connection is a quarterly newsletter providing news and information to more than 150,000 age and service retirees, disability benefit recipients and survivor benefit recipients of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. This publication allows us to communicate vital information concerning retirement benefits and health care coverage to our retirees and also educate them on the services we provide.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

www.opers.org
1-800-222-7377
newsfeedback@opers.org

This newsletter is written in plain language for use by members of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. It is not intended as a substitute for the federal or state law, namely the Ohio Revised Code, the Ohio Administrative Code, or the Internal Revenue Code, nor will its interpretation prevail should a conflict arise between it and the Ohio Revised Code, Ohio Administrative Code, or Internal Revenue Code. Rules governing the retirement system are subject to change periodically either by statute of the Ohio General Assembly, regulation of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement Board, or regulation of the Internal Revenue Code. If you have questions about this material, please contact our office or seek legal advice from your attorney.

Readers provide feedback and suggestions for newsletter

In the Spring 2007 issue of *Ohio PERS News* for retirees, OPERS conducted a survey of readers to ask what we can do to increase their interest in *Ohio PERS NEWS*, our primary form of communication with retirees. The survey asked retirees to comment on article topics and areas of interest as well as the frequency, delivery method and timing of the newsletter.

Topics of most interest to respondents included changes to the OPERS health care plan, legislative changes that could affect OPERS pensions or health care coverage, and OPERS pensions' impact on Social Security. The respondents also indicated they would like to receive the newsletter quarterly and via U.S. mail.

Though we feel the survey results indicate a high level of satisfaction with the newsletter, we are continually working to improve it as a communications tool. We want to know what we can do to increase your interest in this publication. To help accomplish this, we have opened a permanent e-mail address for newsletter feedback -- newsfeedback@opers.org. Please use this address to send comments on newsletter content and to provide suggestions.

What's new on the web

(Continued from page 1)

Web site satisfaction survey - OPERS has posted an on-line survey addressing the features and usefulness of our newly designed Web site. The survey will ask your opinion on topics including:

- New site organization - can you find what you're looking for?
- The effectiveness of new online tools, such as a new search engine, online index and direct MBS log in from OPERS.org
- What features you would like to see added

Please take a few moments to complete this survey. Feedback from site users is extremely valuable as we work to ensure that www.opers.org is an easy-to-use source of information for our members and retirees.

The Aetna Medicare Open Plan – *OPERS answers your questions*

Many OPERS retirees chose to enroll or will be automatically enrolled in the Aetna Medicare Open Plan beginning Jan. 1, 2008.

Considering the Aetna Medicare Open Plan is a new product and a significant change to the OPERS health care plan, we would like to answer some of the most common questions we have received.

What happens if my doctor or health care facility will not accept the Aetna Medicare Open Plan?

The first thing you need to do is contact Aetna and let them know. Aetna will then make a phone call to your doctor or health care facility to explain the facts and benefits of the plan.

If, after speaking with Aetna, your doctor or health care facility still does not accept Aetna Medicare Open Plan payment, you have two options:

1. Contact Aetna at 1-800-282-0631 and they will help you to find a doctor or facility in your area that does accept the Aetna Medicare Open Plan. - **OR** -
2. Call OPERS and ask to be changed to the Medical Mutual Enhanced or the Aetna Enhanced Plan.

If I change my mind about enrolling in the Aetna Medicare Open Plan and wish to go back to the Enhanced Plan, do I have to wait until the next open enrollment period?

As long as you provide OPERS with 30 days of notice, you may switch to the Medical Mutual Enhanced Plan at any time during the year.

In order to switch to the Aetna Enhanced Plan, you must have a doctor or health care facility that does not accept the Aetna Medicare Open Plan.

Why is there not a network/provider directory for the Medicare Open Plan?

The Aetna Medicare Open Plan follows Medicare guidelines. These guidelines allow a doctor or facility to accept Medicare payment or not and to change their position on accepting Medicare payment at any time.

In a network arrangement, a doctor or facility (provider) signs a contract with a health plan agreeing to accept a certain payment schedule for a period of time. These agreements allow the health plan to publish a directory of participating providers. Because the Aetna Medicare Open Plan does not have provider contracts, there is no set network of participating providers and therefore, no directories.

Why would a doctor not accept the Medicare Open Plan?

Some physicians do not accept Medicare payment and may choose not to accept the Aetna Medicare Open Plan. Physicians may also be unfamiliar with the Aetna Medicare Open Plan and believe it to be an HMO arrangement, which it is not.

If your physician or facility does not accept the Aetna Medicare Open Plan payment, it is important to make Aetna aware so they can contact the provider.

Aetna will educate the provider by explaining that the Aetna Medicare Open Plan makes payments using the exact same fee schedule as Medicare and that they will likely receive reimbursement faster than with traditional Medicare.

OPERS has stated that the Aetna Medicare Open Plan is expected to save OPERS over \$20 million in the first year. How is this possible?

This projected savings is possible largely because the Aetna Medicare Open Plan is a fully insured product. Under the OPERS medical plans (administered by Aetna and Medical Mutual), retiree claims are paid out of OPERS' funds and OPERS assumes all the risk. Because the Aetna Medicare Open Plan is a fully insured product, claims are paid from Aetna's funds with OPERS paying a monthly premium to Aetna for this coverage. Aetna assumes the risk for retiree claims. "Assuming the risk" means that if there are large or unexpected claims, Aetna pays for them while OPERS continues to make the same payment each month.

In the future, OPERS expects even more cost savings as a result of the wellness and disease management programs under the Aetna Medicare Open Plan.

(Continued on page 5)

OPERS will change pharmacy benefit managers effective April 1, 2008

OPERS will change the pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) for the OPERS health care plan from Medco to Express Scripts effective April 1, 2008. This article will answer some common questions about this change. **OPERS and Express Scripts will not be ready to answer individual questions until Express Scripts opens its toll-free customer service phone lines in late January.**

Beginning in January, OPERS will offer educational seminars throughout Ohio to provide information and help retirees make a smooth transition to Express Scripts. Please see page 5 for a seminar schedule and registration instructions.

Who is Express Scripts?

Express Scripts is a pharmacy benefit manager headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. There are more than 57,000 retail pharmacies in its network across the country. Each year, Express Scripts processes more than 390 million retail prescriptions and 40 million home delivery prescriptions.

Why change from Medco to Express Scripts?

OPERS utilizes a competitive bid process to select top quality, cost effective services. After conducting a thorough evaluation of pharmacy administrators, it was decided that Express Scripts was the best choice for OPERS.

When will I receive information about Express Scripts?

There are important mailings planned for January and February 2008. Please read all the materials you receive and retain them for your records.

Will my co-payments change with Express Scripts?

No. Co-payments will change in January 2008 as described in your 2008 open enrollment materials, but will not change again in April as a result of the switch to Express Scripts.

When will Express Scripts begin to fill my prescriptions?

Express Scripts will begin to fill all new and refill prescription orders effective April 1, 2008. Refills can be ordered by telephone or through the Express Scripts Web site beginning April 1.

Will Express Scripts use the same formulary and the same co-payment structure as Medco?

There may be some medications that have a different formulary status with Express Scripts. Express Scripts intends to send a letter to retirees who have an existing prescription for a medication that will be changing formulary status. If you don't receive a letter and want to confirm a medication's formulary status and your co-payment, contact Express Scripts directly when its customer service phone lines and Web site become available in late January.

Will my existing prescriptions be transferred from Medco to Express Scripts?

Most existing prescriptions will be automatically transferred from Medco to Express Scripts. Some prescriptions including narcotics and compound medications will require a new prescription. Express Scripts intends to send a letter to retirees who have an existing prescription for a medication that will require a new prescription. If you have any questions, contact Express Scripts directly when its customer service phone lines and Web site become available in late January.

Will I receive a new ID card?

Yes. Express Scripts will send new prescription ID cards in March. Please be sure to use your Medco ID card until April 1, 2008.

How long does it take to fill my prescription through the Express Scripts Home Delivery Program?

Most prescriptions will be delivered by mail about 10 to 14 days after you mail your order to Express Scripts, which is the same as it has been for Medco Home Delivery.

(Continued on page 5)

Pharmacy benefit managers

(continued from page 4)

Does Express Scripts have a toll-free customer service number?

Express Scripts will have a toll-free number available in late January. OPERS will provide this number in the Winter 2008 issue of *Ohio PERS NEWS* and will also publish it on our Web site. Express Scripts will send a post card announcing the customer service phone number to each retiree enrolled in the OPERS health care plan.

What do I do now?

If you have questions regarding this change, consider signing up for a seminar (schedule listed below.) Express Scripts will send the first of several mailings in January. Please be certain that OPERS has your current address so that you will receive these important mailings. More information will also be included in the next retiree newsletter and on the OPERS Web site.

Express Scripts Educational Seminar Schedule

Call 1-800-222-7377 to register

Akron

Jan. 25, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Holiday Inn Akron/Fairlawn
4073 Medina Road, Akron, OH

Athens

Jan. 25, 10 a.m.
The OU Inn & Conference Center
331 Richland Avenue, Athens, OH

Cambridge

Feb. 13, 11 a.m.
Pritchard Laughlin Civic Center
7033 Glenn Highway, Cambridge, OH

Canton

Jan. 30, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Courtyard by Marriott
4375 Metro Circle NW, Canton, OH

Cincinnati

Feb. 1, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Holiday Inn Eastgate
4501 Eastgate Blvd., Cincinnati, OH

Cleveland

Jan. 30, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Holiday Inn Cleveland East
28600 Ridgehills Dr., Wickliffe, OH

March 7, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Holiday Inn Independence

6001 Rockside Rd., Independence, OH

Columbus

Feb. 1, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
March 19, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
OPERS
277 E. Town St., Columbus, OH

Dayton

Feb. 8, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Holiday Inn Dayton Mall
31 Prestige Plaza Dr., Miamisburg, OH

March 26, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Holiday Inn Dayton North
I-75 & Wagner Ford Rd., Dayton, OH

Hamilton

March 21, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Miami University - Hamilton
Harry T. Wilks Conference Center
1601 University Blvd., Hamilton, OH

Huron

March 19, 10:30 a.m.
BGSU - Firelands Campus
Cedar Point Conference Center
One University Dr., Huron, OH

Portsmouth

Feb. 20, 10:30 a.m.
Shawnee State University
University Center-Micklethwaite (2nd floor)
940 2nd Street, Portsmouth, OH

Steubenville

Feb. 29, 11 a.m.
Holiday Inn Steubenville
1401 University Blvd., Steubenville, OH

Toledo

Feb. 4, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
March 24, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Holiday Inn French Quarter
10630 Fremont Pike, Perrysburg, OH

Youngstown

Feb. 15, 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
March 26, 10:30 a.m.
Holiday Inn
7410 South Avenue, Boardman, OH

YOU CAN DO IT!

Stop smoking in 2008 with the Ohio Tobacco Quit Line

OPERS has partnered with the Ohio Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Foundation to promote the **Ohio Tobacco Quit Line**. This partnership is an effort to promote healthy behaviors that have a significant physical and financial benefit.

OPERS retirees and their covered dependents who are living in Ohio and participating in the OPERS health care plan have access to a free and confidential tobacco cessation service through the Ohio Tobacco Quit Line. The service connects people who want to quit using tobacco with trained counselors who can guide and support them through the process. The program includes telephone counseling sessions for eight weeks and an eight-week supply of nicotine replacement patches.

Call the quit line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW to register for the program and commit to improved health in 2008!

The Aetna Medicare Open Plan (continued from page 3)

How do I nominate a fitness center for the Aetna Medicare Open Plan wellness program?

Contact Aetna at 1-866-282-0631 with the name, address and phone number of the fitness center. Aetna representatives will contact the facility and look into enrolling it.

I was enrolled in the Aetna Medicare Open Plan during open enrollment. When will I receive my new ID cards?

Your ID cards will be mailed to you by the end of December.

Legislative update

OPERS adopts Iran/Sudan Divestment Policy

The Ohio PERS Board of Trustees adopted an Iran and Sudan Divestment Policy at its September meeting. The policy establishes the goal of reducing investment exposure to the potentially unique risks associated with investments in companies with actual ties to Iran and Sudan only when comparable investments offering similar quality, return and safety are available.

OPERS is in the process of screening our affected investment portfolios to identify companies that may be doing business in Iran or Sudan. We will then engage these companies in a written dialogue advising them of our new policy and requesting a written explanation of their business activities in Iran and Sudan.

Once the list of scrutinized companies has been finalized, OPERS will notify our external managers and investment staff regarding our list of scrutinized companies and encourage them to divest from holdings in these companies provided that comparable investments offering similar quality, return and safety are available.

We believe that the new Iran and Sudan Divestment Policy will allow us to pursue voluntary divestment from companies doing business in these countries while maintaining our duty of loyalty to our members.

This policy addresses concerns raised regarding OPERS' investments in companies having actual ties to Iran and/or Sudan, without necessity of mandated divestment as currently provided in House Bill 151.

We believe that the new Iran and Sudan Divestment Policy will allow us to pursue voluntary divestment from companies doing business in these countries while maintaining our duty of loyalty to our members.

As reported in the last issue of *Ohio PERS News*, House Bill 151 was re-referred to the House Rules and Reference Committee where it is still pending. We will continue to post developments on this important issue at www.opers.org.

Senate committee holds hearing on GPO and WEP

The Senate Finance Subcommittee on Social Security, Pensions and Family Policy held a hearing on November 6, 2007 on the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

A retired teacher from Massachusetts and a CalPERS Board member provided witness testimony urging repeal of the GPO and WEP.

The General Accounting Office and the Urban Institute also appeared on the panel and presented testimony. Ohio PERS supports the repeal of the GPO and WEP on the basis that it unfairly penalizes many OPERS retirees.

In the past, mandatory Social Security coverage has been suggested as a way to cover the costs of repealing the GPO and WEP. However, we remain opposed to mandatory Social Security coverage for public sector employees because it would undermine our ability to provide current benefits and impose an additional financial burden on our employers.

Interested parties should contact the Chairman of the subcommittee, Senator John Kerry (D-MA) and urge the committee members to support S. 206, which would repeal both the GPO and WEP.

2007-2008 calendar of educational seminars

Please call 1-800-222-7377 to register for any seminar.

RETIREE SEMINAR – This is a four-hour seminar designed exclusively for OPERS retirees. Topics range from taxation of your pension benefits and re-employment to health care coverage, financial/estate planning and Social Security.

There is no cost to attend and you may bring a guest. Just be sure to register your guest's name when you enroll yourself.

2008 RETIREE SEMINARS

Athens April 30	Dayton January 23	Perrysburg March 26 July 29
Canton May 14	Eastlake August 12	Sharonville December 2
Cincinnati (East) June 3	Independence April 16 October 21	Strongsville January 15
Columbus (OPERS) February 12 April 22 June 13 September 4 November 25	Mansfield August 27	Youngstown July 16

REMOTE COUNSELING SESSIONS – If you live outside the Columbus area and wish to discuss your pension benefits with a benefits counselor, you can schedule a remote counseling session. Counseling sessions are also available by phone. Call 1-800-222-7377 to make an appointment.

2008 REMOTE COUNSELING SESSIONS

Cincinnati Eastgate June 16-19	Miamisburg April 14-17	Strongsville Jan 28-31 May 19-22
Cuyahoga Falls January 7-10 May 5-8	Perrysburg February 4-7 June 9-12	Youngstown March 17-20
Lima February 25-28	Sidney March 3-6	

Ohio PERS retirement board

The 11-member Ohio PERS Board of Trustees is responsible for the administration and management of Ohio PERS. Seven of the 11 members are elected by the groups that they represent (i.e., college and university non-teaching employees, state, county, municipal, miscellaneous employees, and retired members); the Director of the Department of Administrative Services for the state of Ohio is a statutory member, and three members are investment experts appointed by the Governor, the Treasurer of State, and jointly by the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives and the President of the Ohio Senate.

Elected Board Members

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State Employees

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Retired members

John W. Maurer
Retired members

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Ohio PERS

NEWS

YOUR BENEFIT CONNECTION

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OPERS presents health care seminars throughout the state in 2008

The OPERS health care team will be on the road next year presenting OPERS health care plan seminars for both active and retired members. During the seminar, our health care benefit counselors will discuss the details of the OPERS health care plan and your prescription coverage. Also covered during the seminars is how to make changes to your coverage and enroll qualified dependents. Finally, our counselors will tell you about our plans for the future, including the new OPERS wellness programs.

All seminars begin at 11 a.m., last approximately two hours and are free of charge. Registration is still available for the seminars listed at right. Please watch future newsletters and the Web site, www.opers.org, for future dates and locations.

**Contact the OPERS Member Services Center at
1-800-222-7377 to register.**

2008 OPERS HEALTH CARE PLAN SEMINARS

Akron August 22	Dayton January 18	New Philadelphia March 14
Canton February 22	Elyria April 11	Portsmouth May 8
Chillicothe December 12	Huron June 20	Steubenville July 11
Cincinnati February 8 September 19	Lima September 26	Toledo March 6 November 12
Cleveland March 28 September 12 November 21	Mansfield July 25	Youngstown April 18
Columbus May 16 August 18 November 7	Marietta June 13	
	Mentor December 5	