



MCREA

Montgomery County Retired Employees' Association, Inc.

May 2018

Retirees and Beneficiaries May Change Their Health Insurance Benefits At Any Time During the Year. See related article [page 10](#)

ANNOUNCING: MCREA's Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 14, 2018, 7 – 8:30 p.m., COB 3rd Floor [Council Hearing Room](#)

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR! POSTCARDS WILL NOT BE SENT THIS YEAR!

Guest Speakers:

Linda Herman, Executive Director, Montgomery County Employee Retirement Plans

Robert Goff, Retirement Benefits Manager, MCERP

Karen L. Bass, Health Insurance Team Manager

Also present to address questions:

Shawn Stokes, Director, Office of Human Resources

Karen Plucinski, Manager, Office of Human Resources

CareFirst, Kaiser and United Health Care Insurance Representatives will be available from 5:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. to speak with and answer retirees' questions. Meet and greet fellow retirees and enjoy light refreshments at the same time.

***Please remember: All visitors to the COB must pass through a metal detector.
Hand held items will be passed through an x-ray machine.***

HELP PAY FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER COSTS

Do you know that MCREA sends its newsletters to all retirees and their beneficiaries per a mailing list provided by the Office of Human Resources? This mailing information is never shared with MCREA but MCREA is responsible financially for the printing, addressing, handling and postage costs of the newsletters. Your membership dues cover these costs, KEEPS YOUR ASSOCIATION STRONG and you informed. MCREA appeals to EACH OF YOU to support your Association by paying your SHARE. If this is your year to pay or you have never paid before or you have allowed

your dues to lapse, please do so now! If you are unsure when you last paid your dues, send an email to MCREAmembership@gmail.com; you will receive an email with the status of your dues.

Two Ways to Pay Your Dues:

1. Please complete the membership application on page 11, include your email address or indicate you do not have one or do not wish to share it; mail your check to the address indicated. Providing your legibly written email address enables MCREA to send you an email should a time sensitive issue regarding your retiree benefits arise. You will also receive a friendly email reminder when your membership dues expire.
2. You may now pay your dues via PayPal or by using your credit or debit card. Go to <http://www.mcreaonline.com/membership.html> and follow the instructions. You will be charged a small fee of \$0.75 whether you choose to pay **2, 4, or 5** years. If you have questions about your PayPal payment, send an email to MCREAMembership@gmail.com

MCREA strives for all-of-its newsletter receiving members' full support. Thank you for your participation in this year's membership drive!

WITH APPRECIATION TO JENNIFER BARRETT

For the past six years (2012-2018) Jennifer Barrett served as MCREA's Representative on the County's Board of Investment Trustees (BIT) and the Board of Consolidated Retirees Health Benefits Trust (CRHBT). Jennifer had served previously as an ex-officio member when she was the County's Director of Finance. Jennifer's role as trustee was to "represent the best interests of all participants in the Employee Retirement Plans (and the CRHBT,) with a goal to maximize returns and ensure the long-term stability of the various plans." MCREA's Board and members say "Thank you Jennifer" for a job well done!

AND A HEARTY WELCOME TO DEBORAH SNEAD

We are pleased to announce Deborah Snead as MCREA's new representative on the Board of Investment Trustees (BIT) and the Board of Trustees for the Consolidated Retiree Health Benefits Trust (CRHBT). During her 32 year career with Montgomery County, she held several positions in both the Executive and Legislative branches of the County government. Deborah retired in 2007 and has served on the MCREA Board of Directors since May 2008. She will continue to serve on the MCREA Board as well.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MCREA BOARD MEMBER

Chuck Sherer retired in October 2011 after working on the staff of the County Council for 31 years doing mostly budget work, which involved monitoring the budgets of various departments in the County Government and the outside agencies and making recommendations to the County Council and its Committees. He is excited about working on the Board to promote the interests of his fellow retirees.

MCREA's WEBSITE TO GET AN UPDATE and A CALL FOR PHOTOS

Our website MCREAonline.com, operational since 2001, is to receive a Board approved update. Some of the changes will include a larger page appearance, larger font size, a new online membership form and payment link (PayPal) as well as sections for our Annual Meeting Presentations, periodic current issues important to our membership, and other important notifications/dates such as Social Security Seminars.

We are considering changes to the artwork (banner) displayed across the various pages. The current banner has 5 photos taken from around the County. We are seeking new ones in our "Call for Photos" and ask you to submit photos for MCREA to select from. The selected images will be used on the website and on MCREA's Facebook page. Photos are due by June 30, 2018. Here are the submission guidelines:

1. Any MCREA member may submit up to 6 images of something in Montgomery County. They may be of buildings, scenery, favorite locations, etc. Specific groups of people or head shots will not be considered. There is no timeframe in which they need to be taken.
2. Identify where the photos were taken, by whom, and if you would like your name announced if selected. The names of the photographers and where the photos were taken will be displayed on the new website. If you wish to remain anonymous, let us know when you submit your photos so that your name will not be used.
3. The images need to be submitted in digital format: jpeg, png, tif, svg, or pdf format. The preferred photo size is 5" x 7" at a minimum of 150 dpi. If you take photos after seeing this announcement please use a digital camera or cell phone camera, set your image settings to the highest possible resolution.
4. Please give written permission to MCREA to use your photo(s) in its website, in its Facebook page, and on any other digital or printed materials that MCREA may use them for. MCREA will not profit from your photos, but needs permission to use them.
5. The final photos selected will be announced in the Fall newsletter and on Facebook.
6. Please submit your photos to: lauraeliz201@gmail.com by **June 30, 2018**.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT – Rob Klein

For the last two years, I have been President of MCREA. I thank you the members and the rest of the Board for that privilege. As my business interests have greatly expanded, I feel the need to rebalance my commitments and thus after the June Annual MCREA Meeting, I will be stepping down as President and a Board member. While the Board always benefits from new persons, we are fortunate for the knowledge and robust energies of the continuing board members. I thank other retiring Board Members Bob Vettori and Nicki Drotleff for their much appreciated service.

The mission of MCREA is to advocate for and to provide important retirement information to you our members. As we know, pension and health care is critical to our post-County employment life and we must be vigilant. MCREA continues to monitor County policies and practices that could affect retiree benefits. **For example**, to deal with a revenue shortfall this fiscal year, the County has, on a one-time basis, reduced its contribution to the Consolidated

Retiree Health Benefits Trust (CRHBT) fund that finances future retiree health benefits. This action does **NOT** affect current retiree benefits. MCREA is following and communicating with County staff dealing with this issue and has voiced support for the County Executive's FY 19 budget which includes the annual contribution to the CRHBT.

In March the Board met with all nine Councilmembers. Board Member Barbara Garrard, who heads the subcommittee monitoring Council activities including the budget, engaged the Councilmembers on the importance of building pension and health care trust fund reserves **as noted above**. Following her presentation a number of Board members raised various economic and quality of life concerns and suggestions as essential to keeping the County fiscally strong and able to support obligations to retired county employees.

Last year MCREA, with its members' assistance, successfully lobbied against the fossil fuel divestment legislation. Instead a resolution promoting divestment was passed by the County Council. See [Page 5](#) for an update on this activity. Here too, MCREA has been and will continue to guard trust fund fiduciary integrity.

The Office of Legislative Oversight will be undertaking an assessment of "Other Post Employment Benefits" (i.e. our County Health benefits). We have been assured that our input will be included.

Briefly, I wish to touch on MCREA undertakings to make our organization more responsive to your interests. Through various MCREA working groups, we have made and will continue to make changes related to data, technology, website, and organizational structure. For example, you can now pay MCREA dues on-line. Shortly, our website will take on a new look and better access to information. Please take a look at mcreaonline.com.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES:

Design for Life – Can You Benefit?

Design for Life is a property tax credit program for Montgomery County homeowners, builders and remodelers. With its accessibility features and standards the goal is to create more homes that welcome people of all ages and stages of life. Features include no-step entrances and ramps, wide exterior and interior doorways, elevators and stair glides, and accessibility-enhanced bathrooms/kitchens. The property tax credit is applied to the property that is improved and is 50% of eligible costs in excess of \$500 incurred within 12 months of the required application. For more information, go to montgomerycountymd.gov/design/

Age 50+ - Put Your Skills to Work - Volunteer

The Montgomery County Volunteer Center's new **50+ Volunteer Network** connects skilled volunteers with nonprofit and government agencies that need assistance. This program is perfect for anyone who is at least 50 and wants to make a significant contribution of time and talent to the community, while still retaining a flexible

schedule. Through personal consultations, trained advisors will help participants find volunteer opportunities that fit their particular areas of interests, skills, and availability. Options may include:

- Ongoing program management and support, such as editing a newsletter, providing administrative and client intake services, serving on a board of directors, or managing a program
- Short-term consulting projects that use professional skills, like grant-writing, accounting, strategic planning, marketing, web design, or IT help
- Direct services to clients in need, including mentoring at-risk students, teaching adult literacy, or providing career counseling to those in transition

For more information, email 50plus@montgomerycountymd.gov or visit www.montgomeryserves.org.

NEWS from

MONTGOMERY COUNTY EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PLANS (MCERP)

Council Resolution 18-804 Fossil Fuel Update

On November 20, 2017 the Boards of the Employee Retirement Services (ERS) and the Consolidated Retiree Health Benefits Trust (CRHBT) made their First Report to the County Council and County Executive as mandated by County Resolution 18-804 (May 16, 2017) regarding divestment in companies with the largest Fossil Fuels holdings.

The Report discusses the Boards' fiduciary duties and their environmental, social and governance (ESG) guidelines as defined within their governance policies, which outline the evaluation of investment managers in this area. It discusses the research undertaken and the Boards current holding in companies with fossil fuel holdings. As of September 30, 2017 the ERS' fossil fuel holdings were \$67.3 million or 1.69 percent of \$3.9 billion of the fund's total holdings. The CRHBT's fossil fuel holdings were \$16.5 million or 1.86 percent of its total of \$885 million. The Boards' Report concludes that they will continue to assess and refine their guidelines and those of their investment managers and this analysis will be included in future annual reports as requested by the Council resolution.

To view the Report, *go to*: Montgomerycountymd.gov/mcerp, *click* [Board of Investment Trustees](#) (on the left side in blue), *click* [Reports](#), and *click* [First Report on the Resolution](#) (listed under Annual Reports)

Board of Investment Trustees (BIT) Annual Report (June 30, 2017)

The Report highlights include: the funded status of the Employees’ Retirement System which has increased to 94% (from 92% in June 2016), fee reductions for the investment offerings in the County’s Retirement Savings and Deferred Compensation Plans, and continued participant outreach efforts by MCERP staff to ensure that employees and retirees understand the provisions of their retirement plans! Visit the Board’s website at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/retirement> and click on “What’s New” to view the report. If you would like a copy mailed to you, please call 240-777-8220.

Montgomery County’s Three Retirement Plans

The participation in the County’s retirement plans as of June 30, 2017 is shown in the chart below:

	Employees’ Retirement System	Retirement Savings Plan	Guaranteed Retirement Income Plan	County Deferred Compensation Plan
Active Members	3,960	3,577	1,778	2,236
Retirees & Beneficiaries	6,516	N/A	N/A	N/A*
Terminated-still participating	480	1,007	260	1,175

**The N/A applies to retirees. Former employees who leave their monies in the Deferred Comp Plan are not classified as retirees and beneficiaries. They are classified as terminated and still participating.*

Social Security/Medicare Seminars

Social Security Administration (SSA) representatives conduct quarterly onsite seminars for retirees and employees in the EOB Lobby Auditorium from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Of special importance to persons soon to turn 65 years of age, information will be provided about Social Security, Medicare, and the SSA’s online services; questions will be addressed. The dates of the remaining 2018 seminars are:

Thursday, June 28, 2018 Wednesday, August 15, 2018 Tuesday, November 13, 2018

To register to attend a seminar, please email MCERP at retirement@montgomerycountymd.gov or call **240-777-8230**. Please include your name, the session you would like to attend and if you will be bringing a guest. Parking is available across the street at the Council Office Building (COB). A parking voucher will be provided at the seminar.

NEWS from

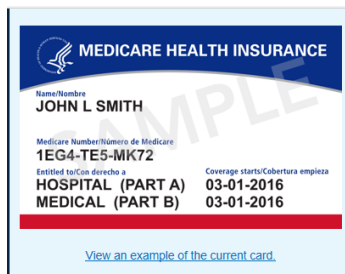
OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES (OHR)

New Medicare Card

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will mail new Medicare cards beginning on April 1, 2018 through April 1, 2019. The new cards will no longer have a number called Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) that contains the individual's Social Security number. In its place a new ID number, called a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI), will be assigned to each individual by CMS.

Impact to Medicare Beneficiaries

Medicare beneficiaries who have a Medicare card will see the new MBI number used on Medicare-related documents. The new numbers will not change Medicare benefits. People with Medicare may start using their new Medicare cards as soon as they get them. For more information visit Medicare.gov, the official U.S. Government site for Medicare.



If you are currently on Medicare, there is no need to send a copy of this new card to the Office of Human Resources (OHR). Medicare has already supplied OHR with this information. If you are turning age 65 after April 2018, fax a copy of your Medicare card to 240-777-5131 OR mail a copy to: Office of Human Resources, 101 Monroe Street, 7th Floor, Attention:

Benefits Department, Rockville, MD 20850

Medicare Enrollment

By Karen Bass, OHR Health Insurance Manager

An important event occurs when you turn age 65: Medicare becomes your primary insurance and the County's plan becomes secondary to your Medicare coverage. Sometimes this can occur prior to age 65 if you are approved for disability through the Social Security Administration. If you were Medicare-eligible prior to age 65, it is important to communicate this to OHR's Health Insurance Team as we have no way of knowing otherwise. If you have previously notified us of your Medicare eligibility, there is no need to do so again.

Here's how it works. Two to three months prior to your 65th birthday, the County sends a letter to you and your dependents to let you know what needs to be done to continue coverage under the County's plans (as secondary coverage). You must enroll in both Medicare Parts A and B. While there is no premium for Part A, there is a premium for Part B based on your past income:

If your yearly income in 2016 (for what you pay in 2018) was:		You pay each month (in 2018):
File individual tax return	File joint tax return	
\$85,000 or less	\$170,000 or less	\$134
above \$85,000 up to \$107,000	above \$170,000 up to \$214,000	\$187.50
above \$107,000 up to \$133,500	above \$214,000 up to \$267,000	\$267.90

Your Medicare premium is deducted from your monthly Social Security benefit. If you are not yet receiving your Social Security benefit, you will be billed quarterly for this premium from the Social Security Administration. The County does not collect this premium.

All the years you worked, you paid into your Medicare benefits as did your employer(s), since this was part of the FICA taxes that were deducted. The County is relying on the benefit of Medicare paying the majority of the claims (generally 80%), and the County’s responsibility lessening. As a result, your medical premium reduces. This occurs automatically. We run a process each month to see which retirees or dependents are turning 65 and adjust the premium that is charged for that month.

So, what do you need to do when the time comes that you will be receiving coverage through Medicare?

1. Enroll in Medicare Part A and B as soon as you are eligible (different rules apply to active employees). If you do not enroll, the County’s plans will not pay any of the portions of the claim that Medicare would have generally paid. Additionally, Medicare may assess a penalty, and will not enroll you right away.

The Caremark Prescription Drug Plans: Which Works Best for Me? –

Karen Bass, OHR Health Insurance Manager

For the purpose of this article, “prescription plan” refers to either Caremark’s CVS or SilverScript plan. SilverScript is the Medicare prescription drug plan in which all Medicare-eligible retirees are required to be enrolled if they elect to have prescription drug coverage through the County’s retiree group insurance program.

Many retirees think that being enrolled in the High Option Prescription Plan provides them with access to better medications than those available through the Standard Option Plan. This is simply not the case. Both plans cover the same medications and apply the same rules. So, what is the difference between the High and Standard Option Plans?

It all comes down to the premiums and copayments associated with each plan. Regarding the premium difference, it is important to note that, many years ago, the County changed its contribution strategy for the High Option Plan. The County decided to fund the same dollar amount toward the High Option Plan as it does toward the Standard Option Plan. This means that those enrolled in the High Option Plan pay the full premium difference between the plans. This is the case for active employees as well.

With the High Option Plan, retirees pay a significantly higher premium each month, but have slightly lower prescription drug copayments. With the Standard Option Plan, retirees pay significantly lower premiums, but have slightly higher copayments as well as an annual \$50 family deductible (see the chart below for details). Generally, the first prescription you fill each year is assessed the \$50 deductible and a copayment. If you have family coverage, each person in the family is not assessed a separate \$50 deductible; the \$50 deductible applies to the entire family.

Retirees can make changes every month as there is no longer a retiree open enrollment. So, if you should switch to the Standard Option Plan and later regret that decision, you can simply re-elect the High Option Plan. The only rule about changing plans is that election forms need to be received by the 10th of the month for them to be effective the 1st of the following month. Election forms can be obtained on the retiree webpage or requested by calling 240-733-6471.

Prescription Drug Cost Comparison			
	High Option \$5/10	Standard Option	Annual Savings if Enrolled in Standard Option
NON-MEDICARE / SELF ONLY 20% cost share	Monthly: \$220.68 Yearly: \$2,648.16	Monthly: \$38.59 Yearly: \$463.08	\$2,185.08*
MEDICARE / SELF ONLY 20% cost share	Monthly: \$265.49 Yearly: \$3,185.88	Monthly: \$46.66 Yearly: \$559.92	\$2,625.96*
NON-MEDICARE / SELF ONLY 30% cost share	Monthly: \$239.97 Yearly: \$2,879.64	Monthly: \$57.88 Yearly: \$694.56	\$2,185.08*
MEDICARE / SELF ONLY 30% cost share	Monthly: \$288.82 Yearly: \$3,465.84	Monthly: \$69.99 Yearly: \$839.88	\$2,625.96*
COPAY Up to a 90-day supply with Maintenance Choice Program	\$5 generics \$10 brand name	\$10 generics \$20 preferred brand \$35 non-preferred brand name	
DEDUCTIBLE	N/A	\$50 ONCE A YEAR	
MAIL ORDER	YES	YES	
MAINTENANCE CHOICE*	YES	YES	
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS	SAME	SAME	

*Savings calculated on premium difference only and does not include the annual deductible or any increased copayments for prescriptions.

Watch Out for Scams

Medicare will never call you uninvited and ask you to give personal or private information to get your new Medicare Number and card. If someone asks you for your information, for money, or threatens to cancel your health benefits if you do not share your personal information, hang up and call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

MCG Retiree Insurance Enrollment Statistics as of 1/1/2018								
Retirees	Medical Plans							
	CareFirst Indemnity	CareFirst Point-of-Service (POS)		Kaiser w/Rx	UHC			
High POS (OOA eliminated 1/2017)		Standard POS (OOA eliminated 1/2017)						
Non-Medicare	35	1193	131	157	496			
Medicare	626	1760	360	163	363			
Total Retirees (includes Survivors)	661	2953	491	320	859			
Retirees	Concordia Dental Plan		NVA Discount Vision	CAREMARK/ SILVERSCRIPT** Rx Plan		Total Rx		
				High Rx	Stnd. Rx			
			Non-Medicare	2098	1673	311	1332	1643
			Medicare	3632	2229	729	1584	2313
Total Retirees (includes Survivors)	5730	3902	1040	2916	3956			

Reminder: Retirees and Beneficiaries May Change Health Insurance Benefits at Any Time

Montgomery County Government retirees no longer have to wait for the annual open enrollment period to make changes to their group insurance elections i.e. medical, prescription, dental and vision. So, if you need to make a change to your group insurance, you may do so at any time. For qualifying life events, the 60-day rule still applies (e.g., births and marriages must be reported within 60 days).

To change your coverage:

1. Complete the Retiree Group Insurance Election form, which can be found on our website at: montgomerycountymd.gov/hr > *benefits* > *Health Insurance* > *Retired Employees* > *Insurance Forms and Rates*. Forms can also be picked up at our customer care center Monday thru Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or call 240 773 6471 to request a form be mailed to you. If you need to add a new dependent, please attach the marriage and/or birth certificates as needed.
2. Fax the completed form to 240 777 5131 or mail it to OHR, Health Insurance Team, 101 Monroe Street, 7th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850 by the 10th of the month.
3. If the form is received by the 10th of the month, changes will be effective the 1st of the following month. Retirees will be mailed a confirmation of the transaction.



MCREA

Montgomery County Retired Employees' Association, Inc.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please **PRINT CLEARLY** or Use an Address Label

RETIREE: Last Name _____ First _____ M.I. _____

Spouse (optional): First Name _____ Last Name (if different from above) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____


Phone: Home (_____) _____ Cell (_____) _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Thank you for your support!

MCREA holds this information in confidence. It is not shared or sold to other groups or organizations.

For additional information about annual meetings, health insurance, newsletters, helpful contact information, and much more, please visit: www.mcreaonline.com

 Find us on Facebook:
Montgomery County Retired Employees' Association, Inc.

Application is for: New Renewal

Dues are \$10.00 for 2 years per County retiree.

Enclosed are dues for:

2 years, \$10.00 4 years, \$20.00

5 years, \$25.00

Check #: _____

Date on check: _____

Please make your check payable to MCREA.

Enclose your check with this completed form and mail to:

MCREA, P.O. Box 73, Rockville, MD 20848-0073

4/18 You can also join or renew your membership online. Go to www.mcreaonline.com.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

MCREA: 1-866-929-9339 or 301-929-9339; website: www.MCREAonline.com; email: MCREAMembership@gmail.com or PresidentMCREA@gmail.com

Montgomery County Government MC311: 1-877-613-5212 or 240-773-6471 or 311 (local)

For Montgomery County Employee Retirement Plans: 1-877-613-5212 or 240-777-8230;
Fax: 301-279-1424; website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcerp

Fidelity (Deferred Compensation Plan): 1-800-343-0860 or 240-777-8228

Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance (Mass Mutual): 1-800-528-9009

For Group/Health Insurance: see the [MC311](#) information above; also visit www.mc311.com or www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HIret

CareFirst Blue Cross-Blue Shield: Member Services: 1-888-417-8385 www.Carefirst.com

Kaiser Permanente: Washington Area: 301-468-6000; Baltimore Area: 1-800-777-7902
<https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org>

United Healthcare: Member Services: 1-800-638-0014 www.myuhc.com

Caremark: 1-866-240-4926 www.caremark.com

SilverScript 1-866-249-6167 www.mcg.silverscript.com

United Concordia (Dental): 1-866-851-7564 www.ucci.com/tuctcc (enter "Mont")

National Vision Administrators (NVA): 1-800-672-7723 www.e-nva.com

Prudential Long Term Care Insurance: 1-800-732-0416 www.Prudential.com

This newsletter is published by: Montgomery County Retired Employees' Association, Inc. P.O. Box 73, Rockville, Maryland 20848-0073. Editor: Irm Damazo. Feedback is welcomed.

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