



An **Office of Retirement Services** Publication

Connections

October 2005, Vol. 8 No. 2

Our Mission

We deliver pensions, related benefits and services to promote the future financial security of our customers.

Our Vision

Fast, easy access to complete and accurate information and exceptional service.

Medicare Part D

The new Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit will begin January 1, 2006. If you are enrolled in the State Health Plan PPO, your prescription drug benefits will continue to be provided through Express Scripts. There are a growing number of advertisements for Medicare Part D plans. Don't confuse ads for other Part D plans with information the Michigan Department of Civil Service (MDCS) Employee Benefits Division. As always, your health care benefits are coordinated by MDCS-Employee Benefits. Watch for information directly from them, and if you have questions, please contact the MDCS MI HR Service Center at 1-877-766-6447.

For more information on Medicare, go to www.medicare.gov or phone 1-800-MEDICARE.

Financial help available for Medicare benefits

Another Medicare improvement beginning January 1, 2006, offers financial help to low-income seniors for their prescription drug expenses. The Social Security Administration is mailing information about financial assistance to many seniors. If you receive an application, respond if you think you may be eligible.

Give your medications a check-up

We all know how important it is to stay in good health. It is also important to educate yourself as much as possible on the medications you take. Many adults see more than one doctor and may take several prescription medications along with herbal supplements, vitamins and the like. If this describes you, it may be time for you to give your medications a check up.

Prescription drugs can have the ability to save your life, but they may also be harmful if they are not taken correctly or if they interact with other substances. Drug interactions may make your prescription drug less effective, cause unexpected side effects, or increase the action of a particular drug. Older adults may be at particular risk

because they typically suffer more chronic conditions and consequently use more medications according to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.



To reduce your risk of adverse drug reactions, it is important that all of the doctors you see are aware of the medications you use. Next time you see your doctor, be sure to take all of your prescribed medications, over-the-counter drugs, supplements, herbal remedies and vitamins to the appointment. Let your doctor

review them and repeat the process for all of the doctors you see. The drug review may provide you with some valuable information and help keep you healthy.

Connections is published semiannually for retirees served by:

Office of Retirement Services
Dept. of Mgmt. & Budget,
P.O. Box 30171
Lansing, MI 48909-7671

Phone: (800) 381-5111
in Lansing: 322-5103

www.michigan.gov/ors

ORS Director:
Chris DeRose

Printed by:
Authority of 1943 P.A. 240
Authority of 1986 P.A. 182
Authority of 1992 P.A. 234

Number printed: 50,700
Total cost: \$3,305.75
Cost per copy: \$.022

From the Director

A couple of weeks ago, I was at an engagement party for the son of some dear friends. In the course of the afternoon, I talked to three people who would someday retire or had already retired from one of the retirement systems we administer. This is a very common occurrence for me. Pretty much everywhere I go, whether I'm in a work situation, out with family, or visiting with friends, the people I meet have some connection to our retirement systems. I guess when 1 in 20 Michigan residents are customers of ORS, it's not that surprising to run into one of them.

This might drive some people crazy – to have work “infringe” on your personal life – but I actually enjoy it. I especially like listening to people's stories. There is usually a great deal of excitement and passion in what they have to tell me – how they are enjoying retirement; the experiences they've had with our staff; or advice they want to share with people who are about to retire.

Most people make a special effort to tell me about their positive experiences with our staff. Whether they received

their first pension payment when promised or we helped them after the loss of a loved one, they express a real sense of gratitude for us being there when they needed us. Their appreciation seems to come, in part, from our ability to exceed their expectations. Unfortunately, many times they expect poor service from a government agency and when they get quality service from us, they are surprised. I don't mean to say that I don't hear some complaints – I do. But I enjoy those conversations as well because those comments allow us to review what we're doing and figure out ways to improve our service.

So keep your stories, comments and even your complaints coming. It is a privilege to be part of an organization that continually focuses on providing great service to public servants who have served our state in various capacities.

Who knows? Maybe I'll run into you one of these days.

Chris DeRose

Surveys help ORS improve service

The ORS vision is to provide fast, easy access to complete and accurate information and exceptional service. To achieve our vision, we must continually evaluate new tools and new ways of doing things that will improve service. But only you – *our customers* – can tell us if we're on the right track toward exceptional service.

The confidential surveys we regularly send to ORS members and retirees give us this important feedback. You may have already responded to an ORS survey, or may be selected at random to participate in the future. Here's a bit of information to help you understand why we conduct different customer surveys, and what we do with the information they provide.

Survey categories.

The retiree satisfaction survey is conducted twice a year, usually in January and July. We ask around 1,600 randomly-selected retirees to rate the services provided by ORS and our insurance carriers. We also ask how helpful you find various information sources such as toll-free phone lines, websites, and newsletters, and we ask for recommendations for improving customer services.

Another survey is sent to customers who have been in touch with ORS recently. This contact survey goes to around 1,800 customers, usually in April and September. Its purpose is to see if we're meeting your expectations, asking how you reached us and whether a satisfactory

answer was received in a timely manner. Again, we ask for ideas that can help us provide better service.

From data to action.

Once we have tabulated all the survey responses, the data is presented to staff for discussion. Charts and graphs help us visualize benchmarks and recognize trends. After we analyze the information we identify steps we can take to keep the ratings moving upward.

We thank you for your help

If you receive a survey, we hope you'll take the time to complete and mail it back promptly. We extend our sincere gratitude to all who have responded to one of our past surveys, and we thank you in advance for sharing your opinions in future surveys. By taking the time to tell us how we're doing, you can be assured of ever-improving customer service from ORS.

Pension payments

Pension payments are issued on the 25th of the month.

Holidays – Retirement offices closed

November 11 – Veteran's Day

November 24-25 – Thanksgiving

December 23 & 26 – Christmas

December 30 & January 2 – New Year's Holiday

January 16 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February 20 – President's Day