



Your Retirement...

PENSION & BENEFIT UPDATES FOR RETIREES OF THE ARIZONA STATE RETIREMENT SYSTEM

A Message from ASRS Director Paul Matson...

ASRS Introduces **New** Website!

The ASRS has launched a new website to provide even more resources and information about the many benefits of ASRS membership.

If you were familiar with the previous ASRS website, you should be able to navigate the new site with ease as we have kept the same three categories:

Members

Retirees

Employers

You'll see these categories listed at the top of the homepage, just above our colorful new information graphic. Click on **Retirees** to see a host of topics specific to our retired members.

Among the improvements we think you'll enjoy is an all-new section devoted to health care! Also, under the Benefit Payment section, we've included a schedule of monthly payment dates, a feature many of our retirees have requested.

You can still access your personal account information in the same secure section of the website. Just look for the **MyASRS** button.



As you know, there are many more services and information available to you as a retiree in your secure ASRS pages, including images of your retirement benefit checks. You can also update your personal information if need be, as well as make updates to tax withholdings, right on line.

You'll notice a new banner for the secure section of the website, with an easy-to-navigate ASRS logo in the upper right of each page to take you back to the main ASRS public website.

"New Website," continued on page two

ASRS Issues Retiree Medical Benefits Plan RFP

The ASRS is required by state procurement statutes to put our retiree health insurance program out to bid every five years regardless of the level of satisfaction enjoyed by our enrolled members and beneficiaries.

In January, the ASRS issued a request for proposals (RFP) to the health care insurance community to provide medical plans for ASRS and other eligible retirees beginning January 1, 2015.

An evaluation committee has been appointed to analyze qualifying proposals. The committee is comprised of appropriate ASRS staff, Board representatives and benefits experts from Mercer Consultants, a benefits consulting firm.

The ASRS received proposals from UnitedHealthcare® and Transamerica Affinity Services, which offers standardized Medicare plans available through various brokers.

"Medical RFP," continued on page two

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Be sure to visit our site periodically to see what's new in the **Latest News** section.

After you've had a chance to navigate around the new site, we'd love for you to take a quick survey. Your feedback is important to us as we strive to deliver the services and information you want and need. ■



Medical RFP... continued from page one

It is expected that the evaluation will last through May 2014. The committee expects to make a recommendation to the Operations and Audit Committee (OAC) of the ASRS Board at a future public meeting. However, in accordance with procurement laws, the evaluation committee's recommendation will be discussed in executive session. If approved, the OAC will, in turn, make a recommendation to the full Board of Trustees, also at a future public meeting.

The summer edition of "Your Retirement" will inform you of the Board's decision and will begin the process of describing any changes that may occur as a result of awarding a new vendor contract. Again, the effective date of any changes will be January 1, 2015.

The ASRS will conduct its open enrollment in the fall of 2014, during which retirees and enrolled beneficiaries will be fully informed of the result of the RFP process, the available medical plan choices, and the premiums to be charged. ■

New ASRS GUIDE TO The Affordable Care Act

Have you seen the new ASRS guide to the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) for non-Medicare retirees ?

This unique guide may be helpful to non-Medicare retirees and others as they navigate new options for health insurance.

The guide is available now on the new ASRS website, **AzASRS.gov**! Just look for the "Health Care" section on the Retiree tab at the top of the homepage. The 60-page summary guide provides information and plan comparisons for the Arizona Health Insurance Marketplace.

The ACA became operational January 1, 2014, for all non-Medicare residents across the U.S. The ACA aims to increase the quality and affordability of health insurance, lower the number of uninsured by expanding public and private insurance coverage, and reduce the overall cost of health care.



It is anticipated that many non-Medicare eligible Americans will be eligible to purchase coverage at subsidized rates. Federal financial assistance is available to help lower costs for people who qualify. Check it out! ■

More Ways to Save on Your Dental Care!

If you are enrolled in one of the Assurant Employee Benefits' indemnity dental plans – the Freedom Advance (High Option) or Freedom Basic (Low Option) – you have the freedom to receive your dental care from any licensed dentist or specialist in the United States. However, you also have the option to select a participating network dentist to receive additional savings on your dental care. Assurant offers you access to a nationwide network of dental professionals through the Assurant® Dental Network¹. The Assurant Dental Network provides access to more than 100,000 individual dentists all across the country offering up to 30 percent off their usual and customary fees.

As of the end of 2013, more than two-thirds of all ASRS retiree dental claims were submitted by “in-network” Assurant Dental Network dentists, saving retirees nearly \$6 million on their dental care last year!

To locate an Assurant Dental Network dentist near you, visit the Assurant website for ASRS retirees at AssurantEmployeeBenefits.com. You can search for a dentist by name, specialty, distance, and other criteria that is important to you. You can also call Assurant Employee Benefits' customer service center at 800-442-7742.

Remember, you always have the freedom to choose any dentist to provide your dental care in the Freedom Advance and Freedom Basic indemnity dental plans, but you may save money by visiting an Assurant Dental Network dentist! ■

¹ Assurant Dental Network includes dentists contracted with Dental Health Alliance, L.L.C.® (DHA®) and dentists under access arrangements with other PPO dental networks.

Example of How You May Save Money on Your Dental Care From an Assurant Dental Network dentist:

	Network Dentist	Non-Network Dentist
Average charge for crown*	\$1,057	\$1,057
Minus Assurant Dental Network discount	-30%	NA
Actual fee	\$740	\$1,057
Insurance pays 50%**	\$370	\$529
You pay	\$370	\$529

Your Savings: \$159

*This example is for illustrative purposes only. Data represents the mean normal charge for a crown in Phoenix, AZ as of July 2013, according to FAIR Health, an independent, non-profit organization created to provide transparency in health care charges.

** Freedom Advance plan, 2nd year co-insurance for Major Services.



Regular Visits to Your Dentist are Important to Your Health!

While brushing and flossing twice daily are recommended for optimum oral health, regular dental examinations and cleanings are also important to maintaining your overall oral health.

If you are enrolled in an Assurant Employee Benefits' dental plan, you are eligible for exams and cleanings twice each year.

Did you know there are different kinds of cleanings? A **routine cleaning** is a preventive procedure during which the dentist or hygienist removes plaque, tartar and stains from the teeth and is recommended for patients in generally good dental health.

A **periodontal cleaning** is generally done when a patient shows signs of periodontal (gum) disease (i.e., deeper gum pockets, loss of support for the teeth, bleeding gums, accumulation of plaque and tartar below the gum line). This procedure includes the removal of plaque and tartar above the gum line, scaling, root planing of specific areas below the gum line, and polishing.

Your dentist will recommend the most appropriate cleaning based on your dental health. However, the severity of periodontal disease increases with age and is the leading cause of tooth loss in seniors. Almost 25 percent of 65 to 74 year olds have severe periodontal disease. Your overall physical health may depend on your dental health.

Periodontal Disease can...

- increase risk of respiratory infection.
- make it difficult for diabetics to control blood sugar.

People with periodontal disease are...

- twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease.
- at greater risk of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease.

See your dentist before dental problems arise. Be sure to take advantage of your dental benefits and schedule your periodic dental check-up today! ■

Help Available for Chronic Pain from UnitedHealthcare

People who suffer from chronic pain know just how debilitating it can be, but there is help.

Chronic pain is typically defined as lasting 3-6 months or more. It affects 100 million U.S. adults with a national cost of nearly \$636 billion—more than cancer, heart disease and diabetes combined!

If you're living with a chronic illness or pain, you can count on UnitedHealthcare (UHC) to make things as simple and healthy as possible throughout your treatment. There are several programs which can assist you:

Care Management is a proactive program offering individualized support, education and care management customized to help meet your unique needs.

Disease Management includes services that may help members enhance self-care, minimize risk, identify warning signs and access resources for assistance along with a complete physician treatment plan.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) provides educational materials to help manage the condition and create a self-management action plan.

Cancer Support Program is a comprehensive, integrated single source to help manage cancer-related conditions and costs that may help improve the quality of care and quality of life for patients and their dependents.

Coronary Artery Disease is designed to help reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and health care costs, and improve quality of life.

Whether you are trying to get healthy, stay healthy or live with a chronic illness, UnitedHealthcare gives you the tools that may improve your overall health and well-being.

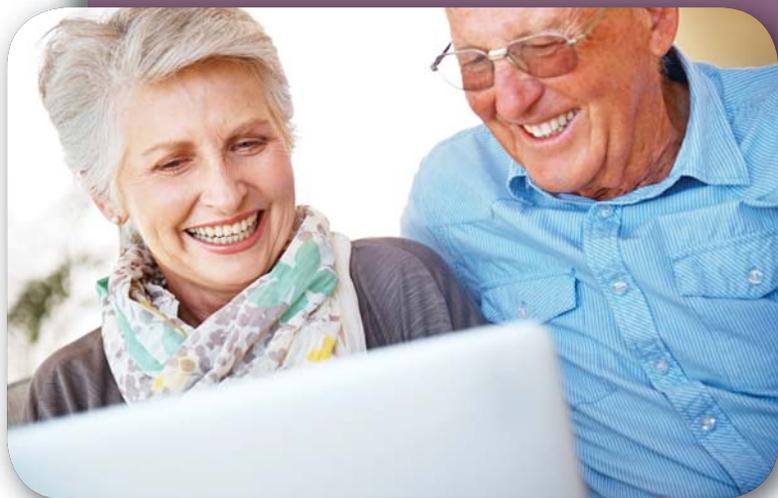
Call the number on the back of your UHC ID card or visit the UHC websites at UHCretiree.com/asrs or MyUHC.com for more information. ■

Calculating Your Monthly Social Security Benefit

Question: What's the average monthly Social Security benefit for a retired worker and how is the amount calculated?

Answer: The 2014 average monthly Social Security benefit for a retired worker is \$1,294 per month. Social Security benefits are based on earnings averaged over most of a worker's lifetime. Your actual earnings are first adjusted or "indexed" to account for changes in average wages since the year the earnings were received. The Social Security Administration (SSA) calculates your average monthly indexed earnings during the 35 years in which you earned the most. Then a formula is applied to these earnings, arriving at your basic benefit amount.

The benefit computation is complex and there is no simple method or table to tell you how much you may receive. There are, however, several online tools to help you estimate your benefit. The **SSA Online Calculator** lets you enter your own data to create an estimate. Or, use the **Retirement Estimator** which generates an estimate based on your actual Social Security earnings record. Keep in mind that these are just estimates. SSA can't provide actual benefit amounts until you apply. To learn more, visit the Social Security Administration online at SSA.gov. ■



The High Cost of Non-Medicare Plans

If you are enrolled in a non-Medicare health insurance plan, you no doubt have noticed that premiums continue to increase. A primary reason non-Medicare plan premiums are high is because they have a single revenue source: the premiums you pay, along with the deductibles, copayments and coinsurance amounts you also pay.

Except for the ASRS Premium Benefit Program, non-Medicare retirees have to shoulder the burden while Medicare-eligible retirees are "subsidized" by The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services through payments it makes to providers. As a result, premiums are usually less in a Medicare-eligible medical plan.

No employer, including the ASRS, is immune from escalating premiums for its non-Medicare plans. Our health care plans have operated for many years in an environment of increasing medical and prescription drug costs, increasing number of enrolled members, increased utilization by members, and reductions in reimbursements made by the federal government to doctors and hospitals. In this environment, it becomes increasingly challenging to provide affordable, accessible and meaningful health care for non-Medicare retirees.

Non-Medicare members are encouraged to become informed consumers by reading articles related to the non-Medicare health insurance marketplace and Affordable Care Act (ACA), such as the ACA article on page 2 of this newsletter. There are many health care options available to you now and it's important to stay current and informed.

The Marketplace, which began in January 2014, is a new option for non-Medicare retirees and other eligible persons. The variety of medical plans offered through the Marketplace may be an important resource as you embark on your research to maintain enrollment in an appropriate health insurance plan. ■

Dealing with grief when a loved one dies is hard enough, but often you find yourself in a situation where you have to deal with financial and investment matters as well. The uncertainty about what to do next can be overwhelming. The following suggestions may help guide you through the process.

Gathering the Pieces

You may wish to consult your attorney regarding important deadlines and procedures as some tasks must be completed before too much time elapses.

- 1. Obtain death certificate copies.** The funeral home can help you obtain them for filing insurance and benefits claims, transferring assets, closing bank and credit card accounts, etc. Additional copies can be obtained online at **VitalRec.com**.
- 2. Locate the will.** It's important to find the will if the person who has died has left one. The will names a personal representative - called the executor - who may be a family member or an institution, such as a bank.
- 3. Apply for a taxpayer ID number.** The personal representative must apply for a taxpayer ID number for the estate using IRS Form SS-4 (call 800-829-4933 or apply online at **IRS.gov** to expedite the process). This taxpayer ID number must be included on tax returns, bank and brokerage statements, and other documents filed concerning the estate.
- 4. Notify Social Security.** If the decedent was receiving Social Security benefits, you must notify their local Social Security office. Benefit overpayments after an individual's death may result in a difficult repayment process. Visit **SSA.gov** for more information.
- 5. Contact employer(s).** Contact the decedent's current or former employer(s) for information on life insurance policies, health insurance coverage, union death benefits, pension plans and retirement plan benefits. Company benefits departments can instruct you on the procedures for obtaining proper forms and filing claims.

- 6. Documentation.** As you begin the process of gathering the documents necessary to settle your loved one's financial affairs, be on the lookout for documents that may affect the disposition of the estate or the division of assets. You should consult an attorney to learn the items required based on the decedent and the circumstances.

Your Checklist of Documents:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Will | <input type="checkbox"/> Income Tax Returns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter of Instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Gift Tax Returns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trust Documents | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe Deposit Box Contents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IRA/Retirement Plan Documents | <input type="checkbox"/> Beneficiary Designations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pension Plan/401(k) statements | <input type="checkbox"/> Automobile Titles, Registrations, Loan/Lease Agreements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Insurance Policies | <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer-on-Death (TOD) Agreements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bank, Credit Union Account Statements | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Insurance Information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annuity Contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> Birth & Marriage Certificate(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stock Option / Deferred Compensation Agreements | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Card |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deeds to Real Estate (recent Mortgage Statement) | <input type="checkbox"/> Military Discharge Papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> List of Assets | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card Account Statements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> List of Liabilities | |

To help you determine the appropriate next steps in this process, talk with family, a financial advisor, attorney and tax/legal professionals for guidance. ■

FREE "BEING PREPARED" BOOKLET

Arizona Department of Administration has put together a 15-page workbook to guide you through this process. Download your copy:

HR.Az.gov/PDF/Being_Prepared_Booklet.pdf

About one-third of those over age 65 fall at least once a year and by age 80, 50 percent of individuals fall annually. Six out of every 10 falls happen at home, where we spend much of our time and tend to move around without thinking about our safety. Most falls also happen on level ground and occur in the process of sitting to standing (often because blood pressure drops), because footwear is not appropriate, or because there are physical obstructions that aren't noticed, according to the Red Cross.

Many falls can be prevented by making adjustments in your living areas. Simple changes like getting rid of clutter that lies in household pathways and moving pet bowls to an out-of-the-way corner are easy first steps. Remove unsteady small furniture. Adjust and tuck loose electrical and telephone cords so they will not get caught on passing feet. Remove throw rugs and secure all carpeting. Lay no-slip strips or a rubber mat in your bathtub or shower. Put non-slip strips on floors and steps, or better, treat slippery surfaces so they become non-slip surfaces. Information on no-slip surfaces can be found on the internet.

Place a lamp within easy reach of your bed and keep a flashlight handy in case the power goes out. Put

night lights in the bathroom, hallways, bedroom and kitchen. Have handrails installed on both sides of stairs and walkways. Improve lighting because eyes need brighter lights as we age. Be sure stairwells and hallways are well-lighted.

Some very simple and minimal modifications can go a long way to prevent the risk of falling. ■

New

Online Feature to Assist Return to Work Retirees

On June 6, the ASRS introduces a new online tool that will improve the process for retirees who wish to return to work for an ASRS employer.

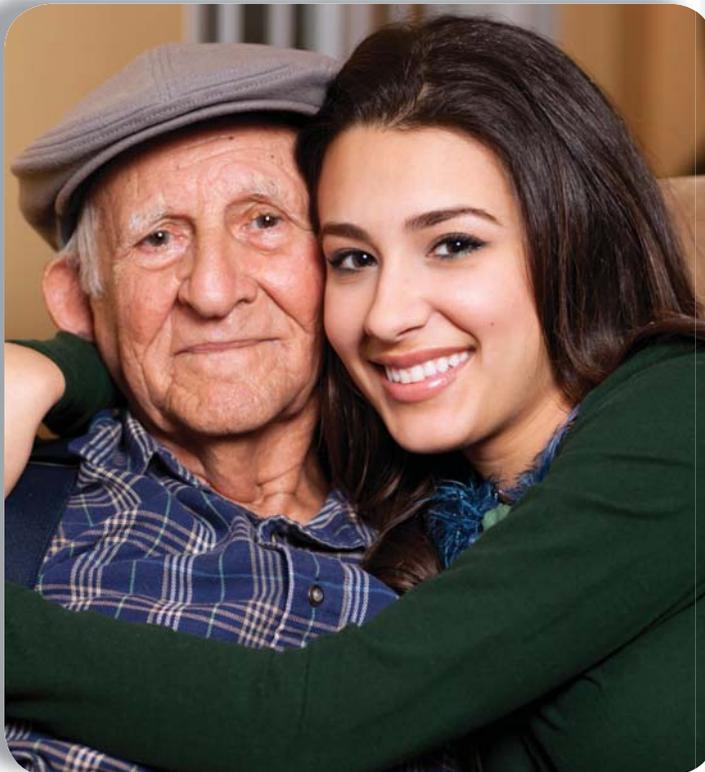
The new feature allows members who are planning to retire and return to work for an ASRS employer to quickly see if they are eligible to do so without jeopardizing their pension benefit.

Retirees will be able to verify their status as well, and submit a required form electronically to the ASRS employer where they will be working.

The employer will be advised on correctly processing the retiree as a return-to-work retiree.

The ASRS has a new section on its website that explains the laws and processes for retirees returning to work. This additional information is incorporated into the Retiree section of the ASRS website.

Visit **AzASRS.gov** for more "Return to Work" information in the **Retirees** section. ■





Arizona State Retirement System

Your Retirement

PO Box 33910

Phoenix AZ 85067-3910

Contact Us Online:

AzASRS.gov

For assistance with your personal account, log in for secure email access.

Not Online?

In Phoenix:
602-240-2000

In Tucson:
520-239-3100

Toll-Free:
800-621-3778



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ASRS Going Greener...

ASRS to Discontinue Mailing Monthly Benefit Advice Notices in 2015

In our continuing effort to reduce costs and in keeping with the ASRS' commitment to "go green," the ASRS will discontinue mailing direct deposit benefit advices to retirees effective January 1, 2015.

Since 2010, mailings to retirees who did not opt to go paperless have been limited to receiving mailed statements in the month of December and in months in which a benefit amount changed – generally due to tax or health insurance deduction modifications.

Retirees are encouraged to log in to their **myASRS** secure account to view monthly direct deposit summaries and review their account, make updates, change tax withholdings and more.

Beginning in January 2015, the ASRS will no longer mail advices and instead encourages retirees who wish to view their monthly advices to log into their **myASRS** secure account with 24/7 access.

This change is an extension of the ASRS' effort to reduce mailings and related costs while encouraging efficient, cost-effective best practices.

Based on the transition that occurred when we eliminated routine mailing of these advices in 2010, we anticipate this transition will go smoothly for our retirees.

Since the initial elimination of routine mailing of monthly advices, the ASRS has saved more than \$400,000 annually in postage costs, a savings that becomes even larger as mailing costs continue to increase.

Monies saved remain in the ASRS trust fund and are invested until they are needed to pay future benefits.

If you haven't been to the new ASRS website— or haven't logged into your account recently— we encourage you to visit **AzASRS.gov** today! ■