



RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION Chico Chapter 077

APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER

Mission Statement:

We are active and retired California public employees working together to maintain and improve the quality of the lives of our members by protecting and improving our earned retirement, medical, and other benefits. RPEA represents the rank and file retired public employees.

Sharon Salcido, Editor – 893-0181 – sharonsalcidofromchico@gmail.com

Matters concerning your address should be directed to Barbara Evans – barbevans37@aol.com - 342-4783

RPEA Chapter 077 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 6415, Chico, CA 95927-6415

Chapter Website: www.rpeachapter77.com

MEETING CANCELLED!

The general membership meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 2, has been cancelled due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Board voted to cancel the meeting, and this was followed by a directive from RPEA Headquarters in Sacramento. Board meetings have also been cancelled until further notice. Seniors are most vulnerable to serious symptoms and death from this virus, so follow all of the recommendations and stay hunkered down at home. New information about the Coronavirus is received daily (and hourly), so there will be new updated information by the time you receive this newsletter. You will be kept updated about future meetings in the newsletters and rpeachapter77.com website as more information is received.

Stay healthy and safe!

LEGISLATIVE REPORT – By Mary Kowta

As this is written, COVID-19, the coronavirus, is the center of attention for the Governor and all our lawmakers. Gov. Newsom has issued executive orders and requests to limit gatherings, step up public health efforts, provide aid to the most vulnerable, maintain social distancing, and, for seniors, to just stay home! The lawmakers are trying to keep up with the State's business, but many hearings and committees have been cancelled. The realization that this pandemic will not fade away quickly is changing how things are done in the Capitol.

At this time, there has not yet been a coronavirus diagnosis in Butte County. One can only hope that the modest available resources will be adequate for any future challenge.

\$\$\$\$\$

CalPERS Fund status on 3/12/2020 is \$352.89 billion; down about \$20 billion from the end of 2019.

Cost-of-living increase will show up on the May pension check; 1.8% increase for most retirees.

Next month: the continuing saga of PERS China investments, now being 'looked into' by Trump administration.

HEALTH BENEFITS REPORT – By Al Raitt

Two topics for discussion in this month's newsletter: Coronavirus and Health Open Enrollment Results. Any newsletter article from a health benefits coordinator these days might well be considered incomplete if it did not include some mention of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and this will be no exception. However it's my belief that, rather than try to provide all of "the latest" about a very complex and rapidly progressive process, it will be most helpful to encourage anyone who is truly interested to use the information available through three main online resources: one international in scope, one focusing on the US, and one about what's happening in Butte County. These are authoritative and respected sources, and the information is accurate, trustworthy, and relevant to how we live our lives on a daily basis.

From an international perspective, the website for the World Health Organization (WHO) is very helpful. The link is: who.int. For information about what's happening in the US, the Center for Disease Control is useful. The link is cdc.gov. For the latest about Butte County, the link is: buttecounty.net. At the upper bar, click the down-arrow for "Departments," and then click on "Public Health." There you will find links to the CDC as well as the California Department of Public Health, and there is also a local "COVID-19" link that provides the number of positive tests for this

virus in Butte County. (As of the writing of this article, March 14, the number is 0 - zero.)

During the March 12 Stakeholders meeting held in Sacramento, CalPERS' staff reported on the transfer rate from one plan to another during the 2019 Open Enrollment Period. There was a decrease transfer rate compared to 2018. In 2018 the transfer rate was 6.41 percent compared to 2020 when it was 4.89 percent. This means that 74,420 of the 1,494,378 total CalPERS Total Covered Lives (TCL) changed health plans. The number of members enrolled in a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) health plan decreased by 0.72 percent; members enrolled in a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) plan increased by 1.88 percent; and members enrolled in Association health plans decreased by 0.21 percent.

The three plans experiencing the largest net gain were PERS Select, Anthem HMO Select, and United Healthcare. The three plans experiencing the largest net loss were BSC Access+, Health Net SmartCare and PERSCare. What these figures also show is that, in general, 95.02 percent of TCLs did not migrate out of their current plan. This indicates that 19 out of 20 were satisfied enough with their current plan coverages, co-pays, and premium costs that they saw no need to change. This is probably due in large part to the successful negotiations that CalPERS has had with health insurance programs; and for this, it seems to me, they are to be congratulated.