



Employees' Retirement System Communicator

April 2012

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Contact Information

Employees' Retirement System

Please contact the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) at **414-278-4207** in Milwaukee or **toll-free at 877-652-6377** outside of Milwaukee for all Pension questions, including Retirement calculations. You can also contact ERS via email at ers@milwcnty.com.

Life & Health Benefits

Please contact the Benefit Division with Life and Health Benefits related questions at: **414-278-4198**. You can contact Benefits via email at benefits@milwcnty.com

Newly Retired Members

David Alcover Saez
Karen Anderley
Randall Asunto
Marsha Azzolina
David Beihoff
Janet Bockoff
Linda Bryant
Linda Durham
Mary Garity
Lacharite
Sally Heard
Leonard Jackson
Mary Jiricka
John Jorgensen
Mary Kapke
Gregory Kosharek
Patricia Koth

From the Desk of the ERS Manager

ERS has been busy — During the first 3 months of 2012 we've retired 142 members, taken close to 2,100 phone calls from retirees and active members and responded to approximately 400 emails. We've got an awesome staff in place, and we like to hear from you!

When was the last time you took the time to see if your name appeared on the published list of unclaimed money? While it can be exciting to learn there is money with your name on it just waiting for you to find, it's important that your money not get held up on a list. The "Unclaimed Life Insurance Benefits" article below has good information for you to consider.

If you're like me, I know the long months of our Wisconsin winter have leave you anxious to get outside. There's a great article on overcoming your exercising obstacles from our Benefits team. Walking, playing outdoors with grandchildren, or taking a leisurely bike ride through one of our fantastic parks is a great way to spend time outside *and* enjoy the many benefits of exercise!

Please call our office at any of the numbers listed in the shaded box to the left if you have questions regarding your pension or healthcare benefits. We are here to help!

Marian Ninneman
ERS Manager

UNCLAIMED LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS

One billion dollars. That's the amount of money state regulators estimate is sitting on life insurers' books and owed as death benefits. Could some of it belong to you?

State regulators, treasurers, comptrollers and attorneys general from several states (including California, Florida, Massachusetts and Connecticut) have recently initiated investigations to see if insurers are boosting profits by delaying or failing to pay death benefits quickly enough to heirs or to search aggressively for the beneficiaries. The insurance companies use a Social Security death database to cut off retirement income checks of annuity owners. They have not, however, used the database to determine if life insurance policyholders have died and death benefits should be paid. Insurers argue that they have behaved lawfully. They state that insurance contracts require beneficiaries to file a claim to trigger a payment.

After regulatory prodding, more insurers are beginning to use the Social Security death database in their life insurance units. Some state insurance departments have implemented or are considering creating programs to help beneficiaries search for policies sold in their states. MetLife, the nation's largest life insurer by assets (and Milwaukee County's current group life insurance vendor), has launched a website to

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help people determine if their families have benefits due from the firm.

States also have a financial interest in unclaimed life insurance benefits. Although the money belongs to the beneficiaries, states have laws stipulating that the government becomes the owner of abandoned property after a period of time. Several states are aggressively enforcing their unclaimed property laws to make insurers hand over the money. Technically the states hold unclaimed property for the benefit of the owners. In many cases, however, the owner doesn't come forward. The Center for Insurance Research estimates that as much as a third of a state's unclaimed property never finds its rightful owner. That means the state has interest-free use of the money until the owners claim it and free revenue if they don't.

What should you do if you think you might be owed life insurance proceeds? Here are some ideas:

Start with simple investigating

For group life insurance, check with the benefits office at your loved one's previous places of employment or union office. For individual policies, look through cancelled checks to see if any were written for premium payments. Continue to check the mail for a year after death for premium notices that are sent annually. If a policy is paid up, the company won't send a payment notice but might still send an annual notice about the policy and pay a dividend. Review old tax returns for interest income from life insurance companies.

Contact insurers directly

Collect as much personal information as possible about the insured: full name, maiden name if applicable, Social Security number, recent addresses, date of birth, date of death, the name of the agent who sold the policy, etc. Large insurance companies have websites or toll-free numbers for this purpose. For example, MetLife's is known as "Policy Finder" and is at www.metlife.com/policyfinder. Beneficiaries can call Prudential at 1-800-778-2255. Use the internet to find contact information on other insurers.

Tap an industry database

MIB Group Inc. is an industry organization that collects underwriting information from insurers when people apply for life insurance. After the 2001 terrorist attacks, MIB made records available to people who lost family members in order to track down insurance coverage. The effort was so successful MIB began a "Policy Locator Service". For a \$75 fee, MIB will research their database on your behalf and report the findings. The service is at www.policylocator.com.

Check with state insurance regulators

Most states have a governmental agency responsible for unclaimed property. Contact your state agency directly. Two helpful websites are: www.missingmoney.com and www.unclaimed.org.

The primary reason life insurance proceeds go unclaimed each year is that the beneficiaries have no idea it ever existed. There are proactive steps you can take now to make sure your heirs receive the benefits you want them to have.

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- ◆ Talk to your beneficiaries. Provide them with a complete list of all insurance policies including the name of insurer, policy numbers and benefit amounts.
- ◆ The policies should be kept in a safe, accessible place where surviving family members will know where to find them. Consider a safe deposit box or a secure fireproof safe kept at home. Insurers usually require submission of the policy itself when filing a claim.
- ◆ If you worked with an insurance agent, make sure your family has contact information on that person.
- ◆ Remain in contact with insurers to update any changes in personal information (especially address changes).

Life insurance is meant to help your loved ones when you die. When life ends, your legacy begins. Wills, trusts, transfer on death accounts and life insurance all take effect upon your death. Make sure your life insurance policies and other end-of-life documents are in order before you leave us. Your loved ones will thank you for it.

FROM THE BENEFITS DEPARTMENT

Overcoming Your Exercise Obstacles

Seven common excuses keep many people from the benefits of exercise. Here's how to overcome these barriers and enjoy being more active.

"I don't have time to exercise." "Exercise is boring."

Does this sound like you? If you've used these or similar excuses to avoid exercise, you're not alone. Two out of three Americans are not getting enough exercise. Don't let these excuses stop you from exercising.

Here are the top seven barriers to exercise and ways to hurdle over them:

1. **No time.** Spend a week identifying 30-minute time slots that you can set aside for exercise. Then mark your day planner accordingly. Find ways to work in physical activity into your everyday life. Take the stairs instead of the elevator or ride your bike to the grocery store. Other time "obstacles" to hurdle: **Family obligations.** Fit in exercise with the kids or grandkids. Play together.
2. **Lack of support from family or friends.** Tell your family or friends that you want to be more active. Ask them to support your efforts. Get your spouse/significant other or friend to jog or play tennis with you. Find a group; join a gym or a hiking, biking or running club.
3. **No energy.** We all have times when we are more energetic. If you are a morning person, maybe a before-work workout is best. If you feel an energy boost after work, then you may want to hit the gym on your way home. Others find time in the middle of the day.

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- No will power.** If you're saying this, you may need to write yourself a contract. It may be as simple as writing down a time to exercise in your calendar or date book. You are more likely to do it if you write it down. Choose an activity you enjoy. To stay motivated, choose a reward to work toward and keep you going. Working out with a buddy (tennis partner, walking companion) will also keep it fun and keep you motivated.
- Fear of injury.** Talk to your doctor first to get the go-ahead to exercise. If it has been some time since you've exercised regularly, start out slowly so you don't get hurt. Choose a low-impact activity that won't injure your knees or other joints. Choose activity that's appropriate for your age and ability level. Remember to warm up and cool down before and after exercise.
- Lack the skill.** If you can walk, you can exercise. In fact, you can build an entire exercise routine around walking. If you always wanted to learn to swim or play tennis, now is the time. You may want to take a class to develop new skills.
- Lack of resources.** This barrier may be related to money or location. You don't need to join an expensive gym to exercise. All you need is a pair of sneakers or comfortable walking shoes. Go to a nearby park or make up your own route in your neighborhood. If there's no park nearby or your neighborhood is not pedestrian-friendly, then find a recreation program or health facility at work. And don't let the winter keep you from staying in shape. Take your walking routine to the mall. Work out in the privacy of your home with your favorite aerobics DVD.

You probably know that exercise has many benefits, such as warding off heart disease and diabetes. Exercising 60 to 90 minutes a day can help you to reach a healthy weight. Keeping a routine of 30 to 60 minutes a day helps you stay at a healthy weight. You can even benefit if you break up your exercise program into several 10-minute intervals a day.

Newly Retired Members (con't)

*Alice Kurzynski
Sandra Lewin
Luann Marter*

*Darlene Maternowski
Robert Morgan
Pamela Prince*

*Kenneth Reesman
Candace Richards
Dennis Ryan*

*Rita Simon
Anthony Vossman
Susan Watson*

In Memoriam

Please keep the families of these recently deceased retirees and spouses in your thoughts:

*Mario Barron
William Beam
Carol Carlsen
George Eichelberger
Ann Gier*

*Aileen Gohlke
Barbara Hrdlicka (Wayne)
Genevieve Krueger (Ralph)
Robert Maertz
Sonja Plesko (Joseph)*

*Patrick Rantanen
Nicholas Ricciardi
Dean Roepke
Jacqueline Ryan*

*Elaine Schulz (Walter)
Celia Seraphim (Christ)
Ruth Sieger
Katherine Woppert*