



# Employees' Retirement System Communicator

July 2014

No. 7

## Contact Information

### Employees' Retirement System

In the Milwaukee area:

**414-278-4207**

Toll Free:

**877-652-6377**

Email:

ers@milwaukeecountywi.gov.

## Life & Health Benefits

Phone: **414-278-4198.**

Email: benefits

@milwaukeecountywi.gov

## Newly Retired Members

### New Retirees

David Andraszczuk

Jeanette Balistrieri

Charles Bateman

Bruce Beehler

Charlie Davis

Barbara Demaster

Daniel Diliberti

Anna Ellis

Kathryn Emmer

Alan Endries

Mary Guentner

Fatrena Hale

Hannah Hernes

Henrietta Jackson

Richard Kapustanczek

Steven Marcus

Kristine Meyer

Susan Owens

Victoria Reinke

Debra Schmidt

Nancy Sicilia

## From the Desk of the ERS Manager

Dear Milwaukee County Retirees,

I hope you are all enjoying the summer months, be they in Wisconsin or elsewhere. Take advantage of the extra sunshine hours to get that boost of Vitamin D (but be sure to protect your exposed skin with a sunblock). As I write this, the Retiree Pension Board Member Primary election is one week away. We will publish the results of the election next month and include information on the candidates who will move forward to the Final election

This month the *Communicator* offers articles on summer bugs (Vivian Aikin) and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Theresa Velazquez).

The Benefits and ERS email addresses have changed — Please contact ERS by email at [ers@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:ers@milwaukeecountywi.gov) and Benefits at [benefits@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:benefits@milwaukeecountywi.gov) with questions or concerns. When contacting a specific individual through email, please use the format : first name.last name@milwaukeecountywi.gov. We monitor the site frequently throughout the day and respond as quickly as possible. We are also available by phone and have both local (414-278-4207) and toll-free (877-652-6377) phone numbers.

*Marian Ninneman*  
ERS Manager

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## **DON'T LET BUGS BUG YOU**

By Vivian Aikin

It's the end of July and we have officially entered the sultry "dog days" of summer featuring warmer temperatures, lots more humidity, and BUGS! While insects are primarily an annoyance at this time of year, some do pose potentially serious health threats by triggering allergic reactions or carrying disease. We might not be able to bug-proof the rest of our summer, but there are some things we can do to keep the risk under control.

### Mosquitoes

A headline in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* recently declared "Mosquitoes are feasting on Milwaukee-area residents" and the accompanying article jokingly suggested mosquitoes could replace the robin as

**E**mployees'  
**R**etirement  
**S**ystem

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Wisconsin's state bird. Humor aside, the spread of disease is a serious concern. The most common mosquito-borne disease in the U.S. is West Nile virus. While varying by region, there were 5,674 reported cases in 2012 including 286 deaths in 48 states. Some diseases once confined to the tropics are now spreading. Certain southern states have reported cases of dengue fever (causing high fever and severe joint pain) carried by mosquitoes. A new threat with similar symptoms, chikungunya (also known as ChikV), has surfaced in Florida and may have been brought to the U.S. by travelers returning from the Caribbean and South American.

The best prevention is to discourage mosquitoes from breeding in the first place. Eliminate standing water from your yard so the insects cannot lay their eggs. Gutters and yard items like bird baths, portable fireplaces and pits, pools and fountains should be checked regularly and drained of water. Mosquitoes also like cool, dark places so clear away grass clippings and decaying leaves. While there are several products on the market that use fans, electric grids or adhesive pads to capture and kill mosquitoes, it is unclear how effective these products are.

Dawn and dusk are prime time for mosquito bites. While outside at those times, it's recommended that you wear long sleeves, long pants, socks and closed-toe shoes. Avoid wearing dark colors that attract these insects. Perfume or after-shave is also a no-no. If you decide to use a repellent, use products containing a minimal concentration of DEET as the Environmental Protection Agency warns of serious side effects.

## Ticks

Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne disease and is primarily found in the Northeast, Upper Midwest and Pacific Coast. The Center for Disease Control estimates that nearly 300,000 people get Lyme disease each year. Other diseases transmitted by ticks are anaplasmosis, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. The symptoms for these tick-borne diseases are all similar and can be described as flu-like: fever, chills, muscle aches, headache and nausea. These diseases pose a danger not only to humans, but to our domestic animals as well.

If you develop any signs of a tick-borne illness, get medical help. Lyme disease has a classic "bull's eye" rash. Other symptoms are chills, fever, fatigue, headache and muscle or joint pain. Prompt treatment with antibiotics is usually successful in curing infections and preventing serious complications (among them: acute arthritis, facial paralysis, difficulty breathing, bleeding disorders, heart, joint or kidney damage).

Since ticks like tall grass and lots of shade, keep your lawn mowed, remove yard debris and allow a reasonable amount of sun into the yard each day. You may also be exposed to ticks when walking through wooded or grassy areas away from home. Check your clothing and skin when you go indoors. Wearing light-colors will make it easier to spot ticks that cling to your clothes. If you find a tick on your skin, use tweezers to gently remove them. Be sure to check your pets for ticks as well after they've been in the yard or on a walk.

## Stinging insects

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This nasty category includes bees, wasps, hornets and, to a lesser degree, spiders. As with mosquitoes, prevention is important. Bees in particular love discarded food, so keep your garbage cans and picnic food covered. They are also attracted to strong scents. If you are going to an outdoor event or have lots of these insects in your yard, avoid any perfumed soaps, deodorants or shampoos. If you don't swat at them or otherwise provoke them, they will often leave you alone.

If you find a nest and want to remove it, the best advice is to call a professional to deal with it, especially if removal requires standing on a ladder. If you decide to attempt removing a nest yourself, wait until fall or winter when the nests are abandoned. Wear head-to-toe protective clothing. You may need to use insecticide powders or sprays but be sure to explicitly follow directions and keep the elderly, children and pets away from the area.

If you are stung by a bee, wasp or hornet, carefully remove the stinger. Cold compresses, hydrocortisone creams (Cortaid® for example) and oral antihistamines (like Benadryl®) can help ease burning or itching. Swelling resulting from spider bites can also be helped by oral antihistamines. While stings are painful, they can also cause life-threatening reactions in people who are highly allergic to them, a serious condition known as anaphylaxis. These individuals can have a severe reaction very quickly after the sting, often within minutes. Symptoms include swelling of the face or mouth, difficulty swallowing or breathing and chest pain. Urgent medical care is required as the condition can be fatal if left untreated. As a precaution, many people who know they are prone to anaphylaxis will carry a prescription epinephrine injector like EpiPen®. Statistics on the actual number of fatal allergic reactions to bee, wasp or hornet stings are difficult to analyze. According to *Consumer Reports*, fatalities may be underestimated because they can be mistaken for heart attacks.

While there is no one "silver bullet" for our summer insect invasions, there are steps we can take to gain at least some control over the problem.

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### Meet with a UnitedHealthCare (UHC) Representative

UHC will continue to have a representative available to assist you with understanding your Explanation of Benefits (EOB), deductibles, copays and out-of-pocket costs or other concerns you may have. Final dates for 2014 are listed below

Wilson Park Senior Center 2601 W Howard Avenue		
8/13/2014	Wednesday	12:00pm - 4:00pm

Washington Park Senior Center 4420 W Vliet St -- Meeting Room 2		
10/8/2014	Wednesday	9:00am - 12:30pm

Clinton Rose Senior Center 3045 N MLK Dr - 1st Floor Conference Room		
9/10/2014	Wednesday	9:00am - 1:00pm

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## Staff Contributions:

*Theresa Velazquez, Retirement Specialist*

### **Nutrition and a Health Lifestyle**

The older we get the more our diet needs to change to provide for the needs of our body. Nutrients from vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and proteins are essential for our body to thrive. Key benefits of eating healthy are living longer, as well as, looking, feeling, and functioning better. Supplements are great but it is important to get as much of the essential vitamins from food. According to Lynn Food and Fitness Alliance, "the antioxidants and other nutrients in fruits and vegetables help protect against certain types of cancer and other diseases. And while advertisements abound for supplements promising to deliver the nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables in pill or powder form, research suggests that it's just not the same." A recent study has also found that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help reduce the risk of Alzheimer's Disease.

Listed below are some foods that have high nutritional value.

- Vegetables like asparagus, avocados, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, garlic, spinach, and squash help lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of digestive and eye problems. In addition, they help reduce the chance of stroke and heart disease.
- Fruits like apples, apricots, bananas, berries, cantaloupe, figs, grapefruit, oranges, papaya, pears, and plums are loaded with minerals, vitamins, and anti-oxidants which have high disease prevention value.
- Whole grains like barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, rye, spelt, corn, and whole wheat help keep the colon and heart healthy.
- Dairy products like low-fat cheese, milk, and yogurt help build muscles, prevent obesity, and lower the risk of type 2 diabetes and hypertension.
- Proteins like lean chicken, beef, lamb, and turkey provide vitamin B3 and B6 which aid in brain and nervous system function.

As we age, we often wish we were able to function at a higher level. The gains from eating healthy are tremendous. An individual who lives a healthy lifestyle is an individual who doesn't smoke, maintains a healthy weight, eats healthy food and exercises regularly. For some, this may not be so easy to accomplish. The first step is to ask yourself "what can I change?" and go from there. Start slow...exercise, include fruit in your cereal, and don't go for that second helping.

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### **In Memoriam**

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

*Margaret Dawson  
Eartharene Emerson  
Ozell Flanigan  
Gertrude Gallot*

*Maureen Heffernan  
Norman Johnson  
Virginia Kornowski  
Mildred Mayer*

*Kevin Redmond  
Obie Saffold  
John Sertich  
Donald Severson*