



Employees' Retirement System Communicator

November 2014

No. 11

Contact Information

Employees' Retirement System

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Life & Health Benefits

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Newly Retired Members

New Retirees

Doris Alexander

Barbara Buettner

Stephen Ballard

Frederick Bau

Anita Brown

Frannie Burks

Gregory Burmeister

Michael Carden

David Crowley

Lauri Edwards

Michelle Ford

Brenda Goggans

Lynn Grap

Michael Johnstone

Robert Knighten

Scott Kultz

Leann Launstein

Andrew McDonald

Maureen Moeller

Thomas Moser

Daphne Moutry Allen

From the Desk of the ERS Manager

Dear Milwaukee County Retirees,

Hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving. What a great day to reflect on the goodness in our lives, enjoy the company of others if we choose, and stuff ourselves silly (again, if we choose).

ERS and Benefits are both busy preparing for year end activities: Open Enrollment, tax statements, etc. You will find communication regarding Open Enrollment Informational Sessions schedule on Page 4. If you will be having guests join you during the holiday season, Vivian Aikin offers great tips for both guests and hosts.

However you prepare for the holidays, please find time to enjoy the season!

Marian Ninneman
ERS Manager

By Vivian Aikin

HOLIDAY HOUSEGUESTS: BE A WELCOME GUEST AND A GOOD HOST

One of the joys of the holiday season is visiting with family and friends we don't often get to see. It's a great time to catch up on what's new, reminisce about special memories and share traditional meals. For many of us that means having guests come to stay with us or being a guest in someone else's home. Whether you are the guest or the host, a holiday visit can turn into a stressful, exhausting experience without careful advance planning. Here are some recommendations to keep in mind for a successful visit.

Guests

- Communicate your arrival and departure dates clearly in advance giving your host ample time to prepare for your visit. Be specific about who will be coming with you. This goes for your spouse or significant other, children and/or pets.
- There is an old saying about fish and houseguests stinking after 3 days. Keep this in mind and don't plan an extended visit at the holidays. Even the best guests can wear out their welcome at such a busy time.
- Respect the rules of the house. If your host doesn't smoke or drink in his home, you shouldn't either. The same goes for no shoes in the house. Don't feed the dog "people food" if your host says not to.
- Don't complain! If conflicting lifestyles are a problem, plan to stay elsewhere. If your host is a meat-eater but you are a vegetarian who feels ill at the sight of a burger, a hotel might be a better choice.
- Be on time for meals and any activities your host has planned.
- Lend a helping hand by chipping in with chores and at meal time. Be prepared to do simple tasks like washing dishes or taking out the garbage. Your host will appreciate it.
- Clean up after yourself and keep common areas of your host's home clean.

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- Keep your belongings out of the way. As much as possible keep your room looking like it did when you arrived.
- Your host will likely have some activities planned but don't expect him to entertain you 24/7. Bring along music or reading material for downtime. If the weather cooperates, take a walk.
- No matter what your host says, don't really make yourself at home. It is not your house. Ask before adjusting the thermostat, changing the TV channel, etc.
- Either treat your hosts to a meal at a nice restaurant or provide a meal for them at home.
- Make sure to extend a thank you (either a gift or handwritten note) to express your gratitude.
- Invite your hosts to stay at your home in the future.

Hosts

- Clarify expectations before your guests arrive. Find out exactly who will be coming, when they will arrive and how long they will stay. Do they have any unusual food requirements, allergies, etc.? If there will be times that you will not be available during the visit due to other commitments, let your guests know in advance.
- Clean and tidy the house. Your guests won't expect the house to be spotless so don't make yourself crazy with cleaning. Clean sheets and towels are a must.
- When they arrive, roll out the welcome mat. Let them know you're happy to have them in your home. If they haven't stayed with you before, give them a tour. Ask about their journey. Offer something to eat or drink.
- Explain your "house rules". Your rules might be different from theirs, but a good guest will be anxious to adapt. Give specifics: no shoes inside, hang up coats, turn off lights when leaving a room, keep countertops clear of junk, no pets on the furniture, etc.
- Plan in advance any meals you will be cooking. Houseguests will often welcome the opportunity to pitch in with preparation. Make sure you have plenty of snacks and beverages for your guests to enjoy.
- Be generous with your time but avoid smothering your guests. Avoid overscheduling; some downtime to just relax or take a nap is especially welcome during the holidays.
- At the end of the visit, make sure your guests know how much you've enjoyed the visit and let them know they are invited back.

By being a good houseguest or a good host you can give the best holiday gift of all - cherished memories that will be remembered for years to come.

5 Ways to Lower Your Blood Pressure Without Medication

Hypertension strikes one in three American adults.

Learn the top lifestyle strategies that can make a real impact on lowering your blood pressure.

About one in every three American adults has hypertension, or high blood pressure. Medication is often prescribed, but that's not the only solution. There are many lifestyle strategies that have also been shown to have an impact. For some, weight loss combined with exercise and a healthy eating plan may even reduce or eliminate the need for medication altogether.

Your doctor can help you decide whether to take a combined approach (medication plus lifestyle) or whether to try following these healthy lifestyle strategies first:

1. **Increase exercise.** Aerobic exercise can lower blood pressure and can also help with weight loss. It doesn't take a time-consuming workout in a gym to reap the benefits, either.
 - As few as 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days of the week has been shown to be effective.

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2. **Cut your salt intake.** One teaspoon (2,400 mg) is the maximum recommended daily amount. Reducing this to two thirds of a teaspoon (1,500 mg) can make a big difference.
 - Use herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor foods.
3. **Eat a healthy diet.** Follow the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) guidelines. This has been shown to lower systolic and diastolic blood pressure, even without other interventions.
 - The DASH diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. It restricts intake of saturated fats, red meat and sugar.
 - The increased fiber, potassium, calcium and magnesium from these foods are all thought to play a role in reducing blood pressure.
4. **Lose weight.** For every two pounds of weight loss, you can lower your systolic pressure by one point and your diastolic pressure by 1.4 points.
 - Gradual weight loss of one to two pounds per week is most effective.
 - Choose foods low in saturated fat, cholesterol, trans fats and refined sugar.
 - Do not skip meals. Eating three meals a day plus snacks is essential in weight management.
5. **Limit alcohol.** Drinking a lot of alcohol can raise blood pressure.
 - This means no more than one drink a day for women, two drinks for men.
 - One drink is the equivalent of 12 ounces of beer, five ounces of wine or two ounces of hard liquor.

You can also help yourself to relax and cope better with stress from your busy life with these techniques:

- Simplify. Try to cut out activities that eat up your time but deliver little value. Learn to say "no." Clean out your house, car and garage of things that you no longer need. Let go of relationships that complicate your life more than they add.
 - Take a deep breath. Making a conscious effort to deepen and slow down your breathing can help you relax.
 - Exercise. Physical activity is a natural stress-buster.
 - Get plenty of sleep. Being sleep-deprived can make your problems seem bigger than they really are.
- The key is to discover what works for you. Choose your strategies, take action and start enjoying the benefits. You can lower your blood pressure and help prevent other chronic diseases at the same time.

ANNUAL ENROLLMENT 2015

This year's open enrollment period and informational sessions will be held from **December 8, 2014 through December 17, 2014**. During this year's sessions, the Milwaukee County Benefit's Division staff and representatives from United Healthcare will be presenting on an **Alternative** Medicare Advantage plan for Medicare eligible retirees and their dependents. Retirees are welcome to attend any of the sessions listed below; **attendance is optional, but strongly encouraged for Medicare-eligible retirees**. Open Enrollment informational packets will be mailed to your home the first week of December. See Page 4 for complete session schedule.

In Memoriam

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

Harold Artus
Joan Baaske
Carol Barrie
Zita Broetzmann
AnnMarie Buss

Gennie Chan
Kenneth Cummings
Lillian Holm
Roman Kaunas
Shirley LaForge

Marcella La Tendresse
William Maas
Myrtle Martz
Margaret Pagan
Kenneth Reese

Roy Roggenbach
Marlene Simonson
Leona Williams

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Informational Session Schedule

Monday, December 8

Wilson Park Senior Center – Main Hall

2601 W. Howard Avenue

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM Open for walk-in questions from Milwaukee County benefit staff, medical, pharmacy, Medicare Advantage, and life insurance vendors.

11:30 – 1:00 – Break (Vendors and County Benefits Staff will not be available)

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM Presentation for Medicare Eligible Retirees by UHC Medicare Advantage Staff

2:45 PM - 4:00 PM Repeat presentation by UHC Medicare Advantage Staff

Wednesday, December 10

Clinton Rose Senior Center

3045 N. Martin Luther King Drive

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Open for walk-in questions from Milwaukee County benefit staff, medical, pharmacy, Medicare Advantage, and life insurance vendors.

10:30 PM - 12:00 PM Presentation for Medicare Eligible Retirees by UHC Medicare Advantage Staff

Monday, December 15

Washington Park Senior Center – Main Hall

4420 W. Vliet Street

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM Open for walk-in questions from Milwaukee County benefit staff, medical, pharmacy, Medicare Advantage, and life insurance vendors.

11:30 – 1:00 – Break (Vendors and County Benefits Staff will not be available)

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM Presentation for Medicare Eligible Retirees by UHC Medicare Advantage Staff

2:45 PM - 4:00 PM Repeat presentation by UHC Medicare Advantage Staff

Newly Retired Members Continued

Steven Rademan
Lynne Roberts
Jan Rafert
Martha Joanne Schaff

Virginia Viilo
Charles Volovsek
Judy Mae Wickman
Bertha Weathers