



CIDS

County Information and Data Service

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NO. 1

JANUARY 11, 2013

DATES TO REMEMBER

JANUARY 18, 2013	CCAO BOARD OF DIRECTORS, CCAO OFFICE, COLUMBUS
FEBRUARY 10-12, 2013	CCAO COMMISSIONERS' TRAINING SEMINAR, DEER CREEK RESORT & CONFERENCE CENTER, PICKAWAY COUNTY (MT. STERLING)
MARCH 2-6, 2013	NACo LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON HILTON & TOWERS, WASHINGTON, D.C.
APRIL 2013	NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH
JUNE 7, 2013	CCAO SUMMER SEMINAR, QUEST BUSINESS CENTER, COLUMBUS

ASSOCIATION NEWS

COMMISSIONERS' TRAINING SEMINAR: THE BASICS AND BEYOND

Join CCAO for the Commissioners Training Seminar: The Basics and Beyond on February 10-12, 2013 at Deer Creek Resort and Conference Center, 22300 State Park Road 20, in Pickaway County (Mt. Sterling). This seminar is an excellent opportunity for new and veteran commissioners, county executives and county council members to network and learn more than just the basics about your jobs as county elected officials. Registration information was emailed to all Boards of County Commissioners, and the Cuyahoga and Summit County Executives and County Councils this week.

AGENDA

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Challenges and Solutions: A View from the State Auditor
An Introduction to CCAO

- Welcome and Introduction
- Organization, Structure and Services of CCAO and the National Association of Counties (NACo)
- Policy & Legislative Initiatives
- Research and Data Initiatives
- County Risk Sharing Authority (CORSA)
- County Employee Benefits Consortium (CEBCO)
- CCAO Service Corporation Programs (CCAOSC)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Ohio's Ethics Law: What You Need to Know
Commissioner's Meetings, Hearings & Open Government Laws
Keeping Out of Trouble: A Former Prosecutor's Insight
A View from the Courthouse and the Statehouse
County Budgeting and Other Financial Issues
County Economic Development Essentials

Optional Evening Session - Come prepared to be entertained and learn at the same time. Bring those nagging questions that have been on your mind since you were sworn into office. Learn from other commissioners and the staff. A good "ole" round table discussion is often the best way for new commissioners to learn from veteran commissioners.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Employee Relations Issues
The Budget Pac Man: Law Enforcement, Justice Services and Corrections

- The Court System & Judges: The Third Branch, Current Issues and Budget, Finance, and Facility Issues
- Working With Your Sheriff: Challenges and Current Issues
- Working With Your Prosecutor: Civil and Criminal Issues

Human Service and Workforce Development Issues

Registration fees (includes sessions, handouts and all meal functions and breaks): \$110 by February 1 or \$125 after February 1. Online registration is available at www.ccao.co/events.php?event=4 until February 6. After February 6 fax your registration form to CCAO. If you have questions about registration, please contact Ali Redmond, CCAO Accountant, at (614) 221-5627, (888) 757-1904 or onlineereg@ccao.org

Make your room reservations by calling Deer Creek Resort and Conference Center at (740) 869-2020 by January 23 to get the conference rate of \$85 single/double.

2013 CCAO STANDING COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP & BOARD OF DIRECTORS PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS NAMED

CCAO Standing Committee leadership and one-year presidential appointments to the Board of Directors appointees have been named by CCAO President Gary Lee (Union). These appointments will be subject to approval at the organizational meeting of the CCAO Board of Director to be held on Friday, January 18.

STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Agriculture & Rural Affairs

Chair: Chris Abbuhl, Tuscarawas County Commissioner
Vice Chair: Steve Hess, Champaign County Commissioner

General Government & Operations

Chair: John O'Grady, Franklin County Commissioner
Vice Chair: Ed Humphrey, Clermont County Commissioner

Health & Human Services

Chair: Paula Prentice, Summit County Council Member

Vice Chair: Otto Nicely, Defiance County Commissioner

Jobs, Economic Development & Infrastructure

Chair: Tim Bubb, Licking County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Judy Dodge, Montgomery County Commissioner

Justice & Public Safety

Chair: Bob Proud, Clermont County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Ed Elliott, Hardin County Commissioner

Metropolitan & Regional Affairs

Chair: Pete Gerken, Lucas County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Gloria Rogers, Summit County Council Member

Small County Affairs

Chair: Mike Bartrum, Meigs County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Tim Wheaton, Carroll County Commissioner

Taxation & Finance

Chair: Daniel Troy, Lake County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Ginny Favede, Belmont County Commissioner

SPECIAL COMMITTEES, TASK FORCES & OTHER APPOINTMENTS

Audit Committee

Chair: James Caldwell, Ross County Commissioner

Vice Chair: John Bayliss, Logan County Commissioner

Members: Paul Barnaby, Fulton County Commissioner

John Bergman, Auglaize County Commissioner

Joe Moroski, Ashtabula County Commissioner

Doug Corcoran, Ross County Commissioner and CCAO Treasurer, Ex

Officio

Ohio Council of County Officials

Delegates: Gary Lee, Union County Commissioner and CCAO President

Deborah Lieberman, Montgomery County Commissioner and CCAO Past

President

Dennis Stapleton, Delaware County Commissioner and CCAO 2nd Vice President

CCAO DEFERRED COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

Chair: James Caldwell, Ross County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Ginny Favede, Belmont County Commissioner

Bob Corbett, Champaign County Commissioner

John Detrick, Clark County Commissioner

David Dhume, Madison County Commissioner

Dennis Stapleton, Delaware County Commissioner

Greg Sneary, Allen County Commissioner

BOARDS COORDINATING COUNCIL

Members: Chris Day, Preble County Commissioner and CORSA Vice President

Lenny Eliason, Athens County Commissioner and CEBCO President

Nick Kostandaras, Summit County Council Member and CCAO 1st Vice President
Gary Lee, Union County Commissioner and CCAO President
Deborah Lieberman, Montgomery County Commissioner and CCAO Past President
John Love, Putnam County Commissioner and CEBCO Treasurer
To-be-announced, CORSA President

AFFILIATES COUNCIL

Members: Gary Lee, Union County Commissioner and CCAO President
Nick Kostandaras, Summit County Council Member and CCAO 1st Vice President

CCAO Affiliate Organizations Presidents

County Administrators Association - Kenneth Wilson, Franklin County Deputy County Administrator
County Commissioners Clerks and Engineers Administrative Professionals Association - Lisa Hawkins, Clerk, Ashtabula County Commissioners
Ohio County Dog Wardens' Association - Julie Holmes, Butler County Dog Warden
Emergency Management Association of Ohio - Chasity Schmelzenbach, Director, Noble County Emergency Management Agency
Facilities Management Association - Chuck Klco, Building & Grounds Superintendent, Lake County Commissioners
Family & Children First Coordinators Association - Chad Hibbs, Director, Guernsey County Family & Children First Council
Ohio County Home Association - Denise Percival, Administrator, Greene County Home
County Loss Control Coordinators Association - Pamela Courtney, Human Resources Director, Ottawa County Commissioners
Planning Directors Association - Arnold Oliver, Director, Holmes County Planning Commission
Purchasing Association - Karl Kuespert, CPM, Director, Purchasing Department, Franklin County Commissioners
County Sanitary Engineers Association of Ohio - Donald Gallimore, P.E., Deputy Director of Engineering, Summit County Department of Environmental Services
Organization of Solid Waste Districts of Ohio - Paul Braasch, Director, Adams-Clermont Joint Solid Waste Management District

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTIONS

Members: Paula Brooks, Franklin County Commissioner
Jim Carmichael, Wayne County Commissioner
Ted Kalo, Lorain County Commissioner
Gary Lee, Union County Commissioner
Deborah Lieberman, Montgomery County Commissioner and CCAO Past President
Kerry Metzger, Tuscarawas County Commissioner
Ann Obrecht, Wayne County Commissioner
Mike Reed, Morgan County Commissioner
Daniel Troy, Lake County Commissioner

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF DRAINAGE AND DITCH LAWS

Members: Tom Kime, Defiance County Commissioner
Steve Stolte, Union County Commissioner
Other committee members to-be-announced

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SOLID WASTE LAW

Chair: John Bayliss, Logan County Commissioner
Vice Chair: Steve Hambley, Medina County Commissioner
Members: Steve Arndt, Ottawa County Commissioner
Gary Bauer, Huron County Commissioner
Paul Braasch, Director, Adams-Clermont Joint Solid Waste Management District and OSWDO President
Paula Brooks, Franklin County Commissioner
Diane Bickett, Director, Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District and OSWDO Vice President
Janet Weir Creighton, Stark County Commissioner
Judy Dodge, Montgomery County Commissioner
Tom Ferrell, Erie County Commissioner
Pete Gerken, Lucas County Commissioner
Jim Harris, Defiance County Commissioner
Gary Lee, Union County Commissioner and CCAO President
Dana Storts, Director, Greene County Solid Waste District and OSWDO Past President

PRESIDENTIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPOINTMENTS

Steve Arndt, Ottawa County Commissioner
Janet Weir Creighton, Stark Commissioner
Kim Edwards, Ashland County Commissioner
Edward FitzGerald, Cuyahoga County Executive
David Hartley, Clark County Commissioner
Greg Hartmann, Hamilton County Commissioner
Ted Kalo, Lorain County Commissioner
John Love, Putnam County Commissioner
Carol Rimedio-Righetti, Mahoning County Commissioner

COUNTY ACTIVITIES

WARREN COUNTY DEBT FREE - AND PROUD OF IT

As the nation teeters on a fiscal cliff due to growing deficits, Warren County sits pretty. Warren is one of nine Ohio counties – the only one in Southwest Ohio – with no general obligation-limited tax debt as of December 15, according to a [Cincinnati Enquirer analysis of financial data](#) provided by the Ohio Municipal Advisory Council. The other eight counties (Ashland, Athens, Carroll, Hardin, Morgan, Noble, Pickaway, and Shelby) are generally more rural than Warren. [Click here](#) to view an interactive map tracking Ohio counties' debt.

Warren County prefers to pay for big ticket items as they go and do much less in terms of the scale of their capital projects so that they can finance a lot of current operations. That includes paying \$12 million for a new administration building in 2001. But there's a downside. Its Common Pleas Courts Building, for example, has employees working in hallways because of overcrowding and commissioners' refusal to go into debt for a large expansion.

Warren County's conservative "aversion to debt" approach dates back to the late 1980s. At that time the county couldn't meet the payroll so a bank advanced the county \$500,000. The commissioners asked, " 'Do we need it? Can we afford it?' And many times the answer was no. ... We just ran that budget like it was our own company (and) like it was our own money." [Click here](#) to view the video of Warren County Commissioner

Dave Young on Fox and Friends on December 28, 2012 as he explained how the county is debt free and in excellent fiscal condition.

The county has experienced tremendous growth during this period long of tight fiscal management. Its population more than doubled from 1980 (99,276) to 2010 (212,693). The tough task ahead for Warren County is how to stay debt-free as the county continues to grow.

Warren County Administrator Dave Gully said the county has deferred many capital projects because of the economy. He said three years ago county buildings “were in horrible shape” because of deferred maintenance. Problems included roof leaks, foundation leaks and electrical and plumbing problems. He said the county has caught up on about 50 percent of them. He said some buildings still have major roof issues and the remaining 50 percent will be done during the next three to five years.

CUYAHOGA COUNTY TO SEED COLLEGE SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Cuyahoga County is making a bold move to ensure that more Cleveland-area kids can continue their education after high school. County Executive Ed FitzGerald recently launched the [Cuyahoga County College Savings Account Program](#). It will deposit \$100 for every child entering kindergarten starting in fall 2013. Open to 15,000 public, private and parochial school students, it will be the largest program of its kind in the nation. The County Council passed the measure on first reading; FitzGerald expects final approval by March or earlier.

When fully implemented, Cuyahoga’s program is expected to cost about \$2 million annually and will be paid for by a county higher education fund required by the county’s charter. It will be an opt-out program; parents who do not want their kids to participate can sign a waiver.

The fund will only make disbursements to qualified educational institutions on a student’s behalf, not make payments directly to the student. FitzGerald said it is open to all kindergartners because “we didn’t want any stigma associated with it — that it was just for certain parts of town or certain people, or it was a poverty program.”

The savings accounts can be used for any post-secondary education, including vocational training, and two- and four-year colleges. If not claimed by an age deadline yet to be established, the money will revert to the fund pool. The county is also considering additional deposits at key educational milestones, such as graduation from elementary and middle school. FitzGerald said the county has been in “very serious negotiations” with some of the larger financial institutions in the Cleveland area who might pick up the program’s administrative costs and contribute to the accounts.

The college savings program addresses a growing need in the Cleveland area and across the country, county officials said. For the first time, students today are less likely to complete college than their parents; less than one in 10 low-income students graduate from college by their mid-20s.

STATE ACTIVITIES

LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT AFFECTING ABANDONED SERVICE STATION SURETY BONDS

The State Treasurer’s office has notified CCAO about a legislative change to ORC 3791.11, 3791.12 and 727.50, which will affect how service station owners or lessees will be required to pledge surety bonds in the future for the repair, removal, or the restoration of the property of any service station if it is determined to be an “abandoned service station” as defined on ORC 3791.12.

Below is the scheduled expiration dates for all of the affected service station owners or lessees. Please be aware that once the surety bonds on file with the Treasurer's office expire, the service station owner or lessee will need to pledge all future surety bonds.

Service Station Owner or Lessee	Surety Bond Expiration Date
BP Products North America, Inc.	December 6 2012
Certified Oil Company	August 16, 2013
Giant Eagle, Inc.	June 23, 2013
Marathon Ashland Petroleum, LLC & Speedway	December 7, 2012

If you have any questions, please contact Denise Blain, Director, Trust Department in the State Treasurer's office at (614) 466-8046.

OPERS APPROVED RETIREE HEALTH CARE COVERAGE CHANGES

Attached to this issue of CIDS is the latest OPERSource newsletter which focuses on the Ohio Public Retirement System (OPERS) approved retiree health care coverage changes that are going to be taking effect starting January 1, 2014.

At the same time pension legislation (Sub SB 343) was working its way through the General Assembly, OPERS was considering significant changes to the OPERS health care plans, changes that would affect many current and future retirees. Even with the passage of pension legislation, the rising cost of health care and demographic challenges, it simply will not allow OPERS to maintain the current level of health care coverage. Read the attached issue of OPERSource for a summary of the core health care changes. A more comprehensive explanation of these changes is available on the OPERS website at www.opers.org. Click on one of the "Comprehensive Guides" that details the health care changes.

9-1-1 SYSTEMS REQUIREMENT ASSESSMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED BY FEBRUARY 1 OR FUNDING WILL BE SUSPENDED

On January 4th, the Statewide Emergency Services Internet Protocol Network (ESINet) Steering Committee emailed information to county commissioners and the Cuyahoga and Summit County Executives and County Council Members about assessing the readiness of the State's IP Network and local 9-1-1 programs to support the transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 services. CCAO has two representatives serving on the ESINet Steering Committee: Ed Humphrey, Clermont County Commissioner, and John Leutz, CCAO Senior Policy Analyst.

County 9-1-1 Coordinators and each County PSAP need to understand the importance of their participation in this 9-1-1 Systems Requirement Assessments and that the appropriate individuals within each PSAP are aware of this data collection effort. **Failure to comply with the reporting requirements will result in the suspension of disbursements from the Wireless 9-1-1 Government Assistance Fund to the County. It is in everyone's best interest to complete the assessment in a timely manner.**

Section 5507.02 D (1) of the Ohio Revised Code directs each chairperson of a countywide 9-1-1 Planning Committee to report the following to the ESINet Steering Committee:

- statistics detailing the number of 9-1-1 calls received by each PSAP,
- identification of the geographic extents and populations served by each PSAP,
- expenditures of disbursements from the wireless 9-1-1 government assistance fund,
- an inventory of and the technical specifications for current 9-1-1 hardware and software requirements,
- and any other information requested by the steering committee.

Commissioners as a member of the county's 9-1-1 Planning Committee must insure that the County 9-1-1 Planning Committee Assessment is appropriately completed on or before Feb 1, 2013. It is also important that commissioners make sure that all managers of every PSAP in your county be made aware of the Ohio Public Safety Answering Point NG9-1-1 Systems Requirement Assessment that is also to be completed by February 1, 2013. These surveys are to be completed on line and are to be accessed through the following links. Click on these links to complete the assessments:

County 9-1-1 Planning Committee Assessment

<https://novisurvey.net/n/RequirementAssessment.aspx>

The Ohio Public Safety Answering Point NG9-1-1 Systems Requirement Assessment

<https://novisurvey.net/n/NetworkSteeringCommittee.aspx>

If you have any questions about the assessments, please contact Jeff Smith, Spatial Data Infrastructure Manager, Ohio Geographically Referenced Information Program, Office of Information Technology, at (614) 466-8862 or jeff.smith@ohio.gov

FEDERAL ACTIVITIES

NACo RELEASES FISCAL CLIFF ANALYSIS

NACo has released a new summary of the fiscal cliff deal signed by President Obama. After weeks of negotiation, Congress approved legislation (H.R. 8) on New Year's Day that delays the across-the-board sequestration cuts for two months, extends most of the Bush era tax cuts, and extends the Farm Bill for another year. The measure passed the House late on January 1 after the Senate had approved it overwhelmingly earlier that same day. While the passage of this measure will temporarily avert and delay various elements of the fiscal cliff, Congress and the administration are already opening talks on the next round of federal debt and deficit issues that may have significant consequences for counties.

Under the most recent fiscal cliff deal, there are several key issues impacting counties:

- Deduction of state and local taxes extended
- No major reform to entitlements, including Medicaid
- Farm Bill extension fails to extend funding for rural development
- No comprehensive reform to the tax code; tax-exempt status of municipal bonds preserve

Counties, however, must continue to be vigilant as issues not addressed in the cliff deal will likely arise again as the 113th Congress gets underway. To view the NACo fiscal cliff summary, please [click here](#) to view the full report.

NACo ACTIVITIES

2013 NACo ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Does your county have an innovative program that modernizes county government and increase services to county residents? Obtain national recognition for your program by applying for a NACo Achievement Award. Started in 1970, the annual Achievement Award Program is a non-competitive awards program that recognizes innovative county government programs. Each application is judged on its own merits and not against other applications received. Awards are given in 21 different categories including children and youth, criminal justice, county administration, environmental protection, information technology, health, and many more. For a full list

of categories and more information on the application procedures. The deadline for submissions is February 21, 2013 at 11:59 p.m. EST. Click on the links below for information.

- [2013 Achievement Awards Application Instructions](#)
- [Achievement Awards Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Last year, Clark, Fairfield, Hamilton (3), Marion, Montgomery (4), and Summit counties won a total of 11 Achievement Awards.

After reviewing the above information, please contact Katie Bess, Research Associate, NACo County Solutions and Innovation Department, at (202) 942-4215 or kbess@naco.org if you have additional questions.

[Click here](#) to get ideas from archived NACo Achievement Award Programs.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

2013 NACo LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

The NACo Legislative Conference will be held on March 2-6, 2013 at the Washington Hilton in Washington, DC. This meeting brings over 2,000 elected and appointed county officials from across the country to focus on legislative issues facing county government. Attendees hear from key Administration officials and members of Congress about educational opportunities addressing current and hot topic issues.

The Opening General Session Speaker on Monday, March 4 will be Bob Woodward, Associate Editor of *The Washington Post* and Author of *The Price of Politics*. All educational sessions and conference-wide functions will be held at the Washington Hilton. As part of a two-year, phase-in process, NACo has made some immediate changes to the Legislative Conference schedule:

- Subcommittee and committee meetings will continue to be held on Saturday, March 2 and Sunday, March 3 this year and traditional workshops on Monday, March 4.
- The conference-wide luncheon was moved from Tuesday to Monday to free up more time for congressional and administration visits on Tuesday.
- Conference workshops on Tuesday were streamlined limiting them primarily in the morning. NACo's goal is to use most of Tuesday and all of Wednesday for outreach meetings with your Members of Congress and the Administration.

Register online for the [2013 NACo Legislative Conference](#) and save \$25! Blocks of sleeping rooms have been reserved at the Washington Hilton, which is the headquarters and closest hotel located north of the Dupont Circle Metro Station, and at the Omni Shoreham, which is located north of the Hilton near the Woodley Park Metro Station. Both Metro Stations are on the red line.

CLASSIFIEDS

Title /For More Information. . .	Employer/Application Deadline
Chief Building Officer	Ashtabula County Commissioners January 18, 2013
Finance Director	Fairfield County JFS January 28, 2013

Chief Section Engineer	Cuyahoga County January 24, 2013
Protective Services Program Administrator	Fairfield County JFS Position open until filled



SUMMARY OF OPERS RETIREE HEALTH CARE PLAN CHANGES

At the same time pension legislation (Sub. S.B. 343) was working its way through the General Assembly, OPERS was considering significant changes to the OPERS health care plan, changes that would affect many current and future retirees.

Even with the passage of pension legislation, the rising cost of health care and demographic challenges we face simply will not allow us to maintain our current level of health care coverage.

Without changes to the health care program, the OPERS actuary projected that the OPERS health care trust fund would be exhausted within fourteen years. As a result, OPERS spent much of the spring and summer communicating to our members through our newsletters and social media, and by hosting town halls, tele-town halls, webinars and presentations across the state. In each venue, we covered the need for changes to the health care plan, and sought member feedback. Member feedback was critical in the development of the plan

for health care changes – we heard loud and clear that our members consider health care coverage to be an integral part of their retirement security.

In September, OPERS adopted a set of changes to the retiree health care plan that will allow OPERS to continue offering retirees a meaningful level of health care coverage for the foreseeable future.

A summary of the core health care changes is listed below to help you respond to questions from your constituents.

Implementation of these changes will begin in January 2014. A more comprehensive explanation of these health care changes is available on our website, www.opers.org, by clicking on one of the “Comprehensive Guides” that details the health care changes.

COMPONENT	CHANGES
Age and qualifying service eligibility requirements (excludes those with a retirement effective date prior to Jan. 1, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum eligibility for health care for future age & service retirees: Age 60 with 20 years of service. • Members retiring at any age with 30 or more years of service are eligible for coverage. (The number of years will be re-evaluated by the Board in future years.) • The above eligibility criteria will be used for public safety and law enforcement members.
New age and qualifying service monthly allowance table (Applies to all retirees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly allowances will range between 51% and 90% of the full monthly premium. • Same allowance table will be used for current and future retirees. • Members retiring prior to Jan. 1, 2014 with an allowance at or above 75% will maintain an allowance of at least 75%. • Members retiring at any age with 30 or more years of service: These members will have at least a 71% allowance. (The qualifying number of years will be re-evaluated by the Board in the future.)
Spouse coverage (Applies to all retirees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouses under age 65 will transition to a \$0 allowance over three years (2014-2016) and have access to OPERS coverage at full cost in 2017 through 2019. The Board will reevaluate access at full cost bi-annually. • Spouses over age 65 will transition to a \$0 allowance over three years (2014-2016) and will have access to the OPERS Medicare Connector in 2015. • Spouses of benefit recipients who die before or after retirement will no longer assume the retiree's health care allowance.
Child coverage (Applies to all retirees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children (up to age 26) will receive half of the retiree's allowance percentage if the recipient has at least 20 years of service and is enrolled in the health care plan. • If the recipient retires with less than 20 years of service, children (up to age 26) will transition to a \$0 allowance over three years (2014 - 2016) and then have access to coverage at the full cost in 2017 through 2019.
Recipient Medicare B Premium Reimbursement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those eligible, Medicare Part B premium reimbursement will transition to a \$0 reimbursement with the first reduction occurring in 2015. • 2014 reimbursement: \$96.40 • 2015 reimbursement: \$64.60 • 2016 reimbursement: \$31.80 • 2017 and after: \$0

continued on page 2

COMPONENT	CHANGES
Medicare Part A Equivalent Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The OPERS Board will determine the portion of the cost that it will pay for members and will provide Medicare Part A equivalent coverage to spouses who are not eligible for Part A (50% of the cost).
Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPERS will continue to offer a medical plan and prescription drug plan for participants under age 65. How much you pay will depend on retiree's years of service at retirement and your age when you first enroll in the OPERS health plan. In 2014 OPERS will continue offering a medical plan and prescription drug plan for Medicare retirees. In 2015 OPERS will introduce the OPERS Medicare Connector. OPERS will continue to offer optional dental and vision coverage for a premium.
Service Credit (excludes those with a retirement effective date prior to Jan. 1, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only the following types of service credit will apply to health care eligibility after Jan. 1, 2014: Contributing service, Ohio Retirement System transfers, interrupted military (USERRA), unreported time and restored (refunded) service.
Disability Recipients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members receiving a disability benefit prior to Jan. 1, 2014 will have continued access to health care coverage based on the annual review and approval of their disabled status. Allowance will be determined in the same way as an age and service retiree. If recipient does not meet minimum age and service requirements, the minimum allowance will be used. Members first receiving a disability benefit on or after Jan. 1, 2014 will have coverage during the first five years of disability benefits. After 5 years, recipient must meet minimum age and service requirements or be enrolled in Medicare to remain enrolled in the OPERS plan. If enrolled, allowance will be determined in the same way as an age and service retiree.
Delayed Enrollment (Applies to all recipients)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retirees may delay entry into the OPERS health plan. Allowance will be determined based on their years of service at retirement and age at enrollment.
Elected withdrawal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retirees who voluntarily elect to withdraw from the OPERS health care plan on or after Jan. 1, 2014 cannot re-enroll. This rule does not apply to retirees who return to public employment and are required to enroll in the employer's health care plan.
Minimum Earnings (excludes those with a retirement effective date prior to Jan. 1, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning Jan. 1, 2014, contributing service credit for health care will be accumulated only if the member earns at least \$1,000 per month. Health care eligibility based on the minimum earnable salary will not be prorated. Credit earned prior to January 2014 will not be affected by this change.
Income-Based Discount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An income-based discount will be provided for those participants who have a household income at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty level and at least 20 years of service. Qualifying participants will receive a 30 percent discount on premiums for the OPERS Health Plan.

Reminder: If a member's effective date for retirement is Jan. 1, 2014 or later, they must have at least 20 years of qualifying service and be age 60 or have 30 or more years of qualifying service at any age to qualify for OPERS health care coverage. In future years, the 30 years at any age will increase to 32.

Service Credit

In addition, changes to applicable service credit for health care eligibility will also take effect Jan. 1, 2014. This means any noncontributing service a member has purchased will not apply to their health care eligibility, nor will it apply in determining their health care allowance if their effective date for retirement is Jan. 1, 2014 or later. Purchased credit will still count in determining your retirement benefit.

Disclaimer

Finally, it is important to remind members that retiree health care coverage is not a guaranteed benefit. OPERS intends to continue to provide coverage as long as resources allow. However, the OPERS Board of Trustees has the discretion to review, rescind, modify or change the health care plan at any time.

Important Retirement System Update

Due to increases in the number of retirement applications being processed, OPERS members who wish to retire in advance of the legislative effective date should expect some delay in the receipt of their first service retirement or interim benefit payment based on their chosen effective date of retirement. Contact OPERS if you have questions or need additional information.

OPERS Government Relations Team

Gordon Gatien
Government Relations Officer – 614-222-2924
Deborah McCarthy
Assistant Government Relations Officer – 614-222-6466

Christopher Collins
Assistant Government Relations Officer – 614-222-0555
Anthony Tedesco-Nichols
Assistant Government Relations Officer – 614-222-0381



The Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) is the largest public pension fund in Ohio and the 11th largest public pension fund in the U.S. In operation since 1935, OPERS serves nearly 954,000 members, including more than 176,000 retirees and beneficiaries.