



Staff Education Association Retirees VEBA

Newsletter

January 2022 – vol. 11

SEARV 2020-2021

This past couple of years has been challenging to say the least. Charlie and Michele have done a great job responding to the needs of members despite having to operate under COVID-19 restrictions. Josh has done his usual outstanding job looking after our investments and the Board has been diligent in making sure the Trust provides promised benefits and more.

The truly sad event was the passing of counsel David Cook. We sent a letter to all concerning David and he continues to be in our memories every day. David's business partner Bennett Allen has taken over the duties of trust counsel. Bennett was with David for several years and worked with the Trust during that time. We are fortunate to have him with us.

We also want to thank Garrett Harbron for his service to the Trust as he retires from the Board. We also welcome Ms. Laurie Therrien to the Board as she fills Garrett's vacancy on the board. Laurie is also very well qualified and knows Garrett very well.

New Benefits –

These past years have again seen Trust assets grow while being able to increase benefits. As you know we were able to implement a zero-co-pay prescription drug program. We studied the impact of this change to make sure we are able to do this with little impact on the overall financial position. That being said, hopefully we will not see any major market change that would cause us to review benefits. Should you have any questions or concerns please feel free to ask any Board member and we will do our best to answer.

We also added two new benefits for our participants. Those benefits are Dental, through Delta Dental and Vision through NVA. This year the Board voted to increase the annual maximum for dental from \$1,000 to \$2,000. You should have received documents by mail detailing those benefits. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact a Board member, Michele or Charlie at CW Breitsman.

Transamerica Portal –

This past year there was a glitch in our coverage with TransAmerica Premier Life, our Medicare Supplemental benefit carrier. The payment was misguided and they “temporarily stopped” coverage. The error was quickly corrected but there was still some confusion. As a result, we investigated using the patient portal provided by TransAmerica. If you go to our web site, www.searveba.com, you will find detailed instructions on how to setup your account in the portal. Once this is completed you can monitor your coverage including your “EOB” or Explanation Of Benefits.

Audit -

Salter and Company, LLC completed our 2020 audit. We also encourage you to review this report when you receive the Summary Annual Report. Also, as a Class Member of SEARV, you are entitled to receive a full copy of the financial report. Please contact Charlie or Michele at the SEARV office if you want a copy.

Trust Participants –

As of January 1, 2022, the Trust had 304 covered participants. There were 23 active employees and covered spouses, 21 future participants under age 65, 26 participants that currently opted out of coverage, and 234 currently receiving benefits.

Turning 65?

Start early! If you need to sign up for Medicare and Social Security, we recommend that you visit your local Social Security office - especially if you try online and have any difficulties. We continue experiencing some challenges with retirees failing to sign up in a timely manner. Please give us as much notice as you can, as it is imperative that you complete your paperwork and get it in to Charlie and Michele at least 30 days prior to your turning 65. Remember that failure to sign up in a timely manner could result in a gap in coverage as well as a penalty for late sign up for Medicare Part B. Remember the TPA is there to help you as are your Board representatives. Do not hesitate to call.

SEARV/CORE RELATIONSHIP:

The **Coalition of Retired Employees of the Ohio Education Association (CORE)** was established in 2004 and spearheaded the successful settlement between the OEA and the organization’s staff retirees. That settlement enabled CORE to create the **Staff Education Association Voluntary Employees Beneficiary Association (SEARV)** which now provides Medicare Supplemental and Prescription Drug Insurance as well as Dental and Vision to post-65 retirees.

CORE continues to represent OEA retirees to ensure everyone receives all benefits entitled by contract.

CORE membership is not now--nor has it ever been--a condition of representation. Neither is it a condition of eligibility for SEARV benefits. But in recognition of its hard-fought battle with OEA that led to the establishment of SEARV, we would urge that everyone who is now or will be eligible for benefits at age 65 become a member of CORE.

Annual dues are \$20 for each individual eligible for benefits. Make your membership dues check to **CORE of OEA** and send it to:

Marianne Gehring
2503 Squirewood Ct
Dublin, OH 43016

Please include your mailing and e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers with your check. Also, don't forget to attend the luncheons coordinated by Denny Roberge. They are a great way to both stay connected with fellow retirees and to stay updated on the issues of the day.

VENDORS –

General Counsel – Bennett Allen

Counsel is responsible for making sure the Trust is run in compliance with applicable laws that govern and regulate tax exempt VEBA Trusts. They also advise the Board with respect to legal matters associated with Trust administration. Please do not contact counsel directly, but you may ask questions or communicate through the TPA CW Breitsman Associates.

Third Party Administrator (TPA) – CW Breitsman Associates, LLC

Charlie Breitsman charlie@cwba.com

Michele Gentile michele@cwba.com

Three Gateway Center, Suite 1625, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Phone – (412) 325-2805, Toll Free – (866) 520-9174, Facsimile – (412) 325-2801

The TPA is responsible for handling the day to day administration of the Trust including interfacing with each of the other vendors, records retention, and interface with Trust members and the Ohio Education Association concerning Trust matters.

Custodial Bank – Huntington National Bank

The bank is the initial holder of funds and investments monies. Questions concerning banking need to be directed through the TPA.

Medicare Supplemental Provider – Transamerica Premier Life Insurance Company

The Medical Supplemental carrier is contracted on an annual basis. You may communicate directly with the provider concerning your account or you may contact the TPA for assistance and contact information.

Transamerica Premier Life Insurance – Company Customer Service: 1-800-752-9797

Prescription Drug Provider (PDP) – United HealthCare/OptumRx

The Prescription Drug (Part D) provider is contracted on an annual basis. You may communicate directly with the provider concerning your account or you may contact the TPA for assistance and contact information.

UHC Customer Service: 1-888-556-6648

Dental Coverage – Delta Dental

This coverage is now included in the benefits package. You may communicate directly with the provider concerning your account or you may contact the TPA for assistance and contact information.

Delta Dental Customer Service: 800-524-0149, www.DeltaDentalOH.com

Vision Coverage – NVA National Vision Administrators

This coverage is now included in the benefits package. You may communicate directly with the provider concerning your account or you may contact the TPA for assistance and contact information.

NVA Member Services 800-672-7723, www.e-nva.com

Investment Advisors – Dover Consulting Group, Josh Smittkamp

The investment advisor assists the Board in creating and maintaining the Trust's formal investment policy and works with investment managers to ensure the Trust investments are in compliance with the guidelines that policy establishes. They also provide investment reporting to the Board on a regular basis.

Auditors – Salter and Company, LLC

As required by law and for the prudent management of the Trust, independent auditors are engaged to review the finances of the Trust and prepare required annual reports.

Other Actions of the Board –

In addition to those items mentioned above the Board took the following actions:

- Appointed new public trustee Laurie Therrian

- Monitored the performance of the supplement providers and other vendors,
- Determined annual budgets,
- Approved investment strategies
- Continue to defend benefits for participants

How are we doing? –

Your Board of Trustees would like to thank all of you for your support and having the confidence in us to allow us to serve as your Trustees on the Board of the Staff Education Association Retirees VEBA Trust. Your feedback is always welcomed, and we will work to keep you informed. Please don't hesitate to contact any of the Trustees or the TPA with your questions.

SEARV Board of Trustees -

The Board of Trustees is comprised of five (5) members; three (3) members who are "Class Members" and two (2) members who are "Public Trustees", as required under the VEBA Trust Agreement.

- **John Wardell**, Chairman SEARV Board of Trustees
Ohio – (740) 474-3004, Florida (941) 429-2803, Cell (614) 203-3135 - COREofOEA@aol.com
- **Bob Hockenberger**, Co-Chairman SEARV Board of Trustees, HIPAA Privacy Officer, Investment Committee Chairman
(614) 499-1073 - b.hocko43@gmail.com
- **Priscilla Roberge**, Secretary, SEARV Board of Trustees (614) 774-2190 - prisroberge@gmail.com
- **Paul Gonzalez**, Public Trustee, Budget Chairman, member Investment Committee
(517) 242-4739 - gonz2006@aol.com
- **Laurie Therrien**, SEARV Board of Trustees, Public Trustee, member Investment Committee (317) 697-8883 - lauriemtherrien@comcast.net

Please visit the SEARV web site:

www.SEARVeba.com

Please notify Michele or Charlie of any address, telephone, email, or other contact information changes