Payment Information and Schedule

Did you notice a change in your net monthly payment amount effective January 1, 2019? This change could be related to your tax withholding and/or your health care premiums.

No Need to Report

Because neither of these changes increased or decreased your monthly gross payment amount, you do not need to report this change to Social Security.

• Tax Withholding

In December 2018, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) updated the income-tax withholding tables for 2019. The updated percentage method tables reflect changes in tax rates and tax brackets, and were effective on your January 1, 2019 check. The withholding information is posted on www.IRS.gov.

How Does This Affect Me?
Depending on your tax bracket and number of allowances you designated, your monthly payment may be more or less than previous months.

• Health Care Premiums

Premiums decreased for most enrollees in the Aetna Medicare Plan (PPO) in 2019. Premiums for some Aetna enrollees with Medicare Part B only, remained the same. Premiums decreased for enrollees in the Paramount Elite Medicare and PrimeTime plans.

Our health care vendors submitted lower rates for 2019, which allowed SERS to pass along those savings to enrollees. Positive Medicare revenue, lower increases for prescription drugs, along with good claims experience, all contributed to lower premiums.

Reminder

If you receive a Social Security benefit based on a spouse, ex-spouse, or deceased spouse’s work record, you need to report increases to your monthly gross payment amount to Social Security.

You receive a payment stub every quarter, and whenever there is a change in your benefit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payment Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your 1099-R Forms Available Online

SERS mailed more than 105,000 1099-R Forms in January. Can’t find yours? Don’t worry. It’s easy to get a new one with an online account.

If you have not yet set up an online account, it’s easy. To ensure your information is secure, contact our office at 800-878-5853 to begin the registration process. Next, go to our website at www.ohsers.org, click on the Retirees login button, and follow the step-by-step instructions to register.

Once you have an online account, you will be able to instantly access all your personal retirement information, including your annual 1099-R Form.

If you need help setting up an online account, or need to have a reprint of your 1099-R mailed to you, call us toll-free at 800-878-5853.

SERS Financial Information

SERS publishes two documents that summarize the financial health, investment performance, and key accomplishments of the last fiscal year (July 1-June 30): the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), and the Summary Annual Financial Report (SAFR).

Both are available on the SERS website at www.ohsers.org.

CAFR — Detailed financial statements with an in-depth explanation of the numbers.

SAFR — Overview of the year’s financial highlights, basic descriptions of investments, pension funding, membership, and health care.

For the average SERS retiree, his or her 10% contributions pay retirement benefits for about 3.5 years, and the 14% contributions from his or her employer pay benefits for about 4.5 years. The rest is up to SERS.

For the average SERS retiree who spends 20 years in retirement, 60% (or 12 years) of benefit payments are funded by SERS’ investment return.

SERS received the Public Pension Coordinating Council’s Public Pension Standards Award for meeting professional standards for plan funding and administration among state and local public retirement systems in 2017.

Published by the School Employees Retirement System of Ohio
300 E. Broad St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43215-3746 ■ 614-222-5853 ■ Toll-Free 800-878-5853 ■ www.ohsers.org

RETIREMENT BOARD
James A. Rossler, Jr.
Chair, Appointed Member
Catherine P. Moss
Vice-Chair, Retiree-Member
Jeffrey T. DeLeone
Appointed Member
Hugh Garside, Jr.
Employee-Member
James H. Haller
Employee-Member
Barbra M. Phillips
Employee-Member
Daniel L. Wilson
Appointed Member
Beverly A. Woolridge
Retiree-Member
Richard Stensrud
Executive Director
Keep in Touch
When you write to SERS, please make sure to give your full name and the last four digits of your Social Security number, or your full name and complete Member ID number.

Change of Address
Also, make sure you advise SERS of any change in address.
Even if SERS deposits your check directly into your bank account, we still need your current home address. If you move and do not notify SERS, your benefits can be suspended.
You can easily update your address using the My Profile section of Account Login.

Change of Circumstances
You also must notify us when circumstances change, such as the death of a spouse if the spouse was covered by our health plan, or if you chose a Joint Life plan of payment.

Feel Down? Get Up! Exercising has Emotional Benefits
According to the National Institute on Aging, research has shown that the benefits of exercise go beyond just physical well-being.

Exercise helps support emotional and mental health too.
Next time you’re feeling down, anxious, or stressed, get up and start moving.

Physical activity can help:
• Reduce feelings of depression and stress, while improving your mood and overall emotional well-being.
• Increase your energy level.
• Improve sleep.
• Empower you to feel more in control.
In addition, exercise and physical activity may possibly improve or maintain some aspects of cognitive function, such as your ability to shift quickly between tasks, plan an activity, and ignore irrelevant information.

Lift your mood with:
• Walking, bicycling, or dancing. Endurance activities increase your breathing, get your heart pumping, and also boost chemicals in your body that may improve mood.
• Yoga. A mind and body practice that typically combines physical postures, breathing exercises, and relaxation.
• Tai Chi. A “moving meditation” that involves shifting the body slowly, gently, and precisely, while breathing deeply.

Board Election News
On December 17, the Secretary of State certified that current Board member Hugh Garside submitted sufficient petitions to be certified as a qualified candidate for one of the two four-year employee-member seat terms that begin July 1, 2019. Under Ohio law, because only one candidate qualified for the two open employee-member seats, and no candidate qualified for the open retiree-member seat, no election will be held. Because no one qualified for the other open employee-member seat or the open retiree-member seat, the Board will declare those seats open in July and begin the process of choosing temporary replacements.
Golden Buckeye Card Helps Ohio Seniors Save

The Golden Buckeye program has been helping older Ohioans for more than four decades. The program is a service of the Ohio Department of Aging, which offers the Golden Buckeye Discount Card.

Ask anywhere you spend money if they accept the card.

An Ohio resident who holds a current Ohio Driver License or State ID card will automatically receive a Golden Buckeye card in the month of his or her 60th birthday.

Individuals who do not have a current license or State ID, as well as people under age 60 who are eligible due to disability, or who otherwise do not receive their card automatically, may apply for a card at most public libraries and senior centers.

Just a Number

Now that you are just lying around in that hammock enjoying the retirement you worked so hard to achieve—wait—many of you are actually spending your retirements climbing mountains, hiking trails, traveling the world, scuba diving, and teaching classes.

Many SERS retirees find that retirement is just another adventure on the road of life. So age really is just a number. What you do with that number is up to you. Be inspired by fellow SERS retirees as well as others who retired only to get busy again. Make that number count.

According to www.ranker.com:

Grandma Moses: 76
Grandma Moses became one of the country’s most famous painters. She painted her first painting at the age of 76. She took up painting because arthritis had crippled her hands so that she no longer could embroider. Three years later, her art was hanging at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Peter Roget: 73
Roget began keeping lists of words as a young man, but didn’t publish the thesaurus until he was 73.

Momofuku Ando: 61
Ando was a Taiwanese-Japanese businessman who founded Nissin Food Products Co., Ltd., becoming one of the inventors of instant ramen, and Cup Noodles. His invention of Cup Noodles in 1971 helped spark the popularity of instant noodles overseas.

Nelson Mandela: 75
Mandela was elected president of South Africa in 1993. He was the first non-white head of state in South Africa’s history, as well as the first to take office following the dismantling of apartheid and the introduction of multiracial democracy. He was also the oldest head of state in South Africa’s history.

John Pemberton: 55
Pemberton was an American pharmacist who, at the age of 55, came up with the formula for Coca-Cola.
Vevia and Bruce Enix of Tipp City enjoyed the Tai Chi classes at their local senior center so much that when training classes were offered, they became instructors.

Tai Chi (pronounced tie-chee) is an ancient Chinese practice that started as a martial art and means of self-defense. Over time, it has been modified and is practiced by all ages for health benefits, such as stress relief and improved balance.

“You’ve got to keep breathing and moving,” says Vevia, a former Huber Heights City Schools employee who worked in the school’s Nutrition Services Department for 28 years.

The couple teaches Golden Qi (pronounced chee), a seated form of Tai Chi, every Tuesday at the Vandalia Senior Center.

“We have a nice group that we’ve gotten to know,” said Vevia. “It’s good to have people come to your class who enjoy it.”

“It’s become a combination of workout and social class,” said Bruce.

Toni Williams, the center’s program coordinator, said the Golden Qi class has a devoted and growing group of participants. “I think the draw for coming to this class is anyone can come, whether in a walker or wheelchair,” said Williams.

Vevia knows what it means to have physical limitations.

Due to knee problems, “I could not stand for long periods,” said Vevia. Before retiring, she had two total knee replacements.

Being able to move freely and without pain motivates Vevia to help others through the Golden Qi classes.

During the typical class, there’s a short warm-up followed by a series of 18 movements, which are done from a seated position.

The exercises have names, such as “flying pigeon,” “scoping the sea while looking at the sky,” and “separating the clouds,” which mimic movements and are created with one’s arms.

On occasion, the Enixes pass out large fans to the group. The action needed to open and close the fan for the choreographed movements work a different set of muscles. The opening and closing of the fans require quick flicks of the wrist.

The core set of exercises are repeated weekly, so that they can be repeated at home. A person with arthritic hands could do the hand exercise to loosen the joints each morning while still lying in bed, said Vevia.

One class member who had a fall that resulted in a short stay at a rehab center didn’t let that stop her from practicing what she had learned in the Golden Qi class. “The physical therapist was very impressed that she was still trying to do things she had learned in class,” said Vevia.

Among the regular attendees are the Hagens. Larry Hagen had a reverse shoulder replacement. His wife, Sandy, said that coming to the class helped him improve his range of motion. She said that Golden Qi also required more concentration than other types of exercise classes because the movements were slower and more controlled.

The word about the class and its volunteer leaders is spreading.

This past December, the couple was asked by the local Lioness Club to do a 30-minute presentation on Golden Qi.

“We’ve enjoyed it,” says Bruce of the weekly class. “It’s a great group of people.”

Many senior centers offer a variety of health and wellness programs, lifelong learning opportunities, and social events. Call toll-free 1-866-243-5678 to be connected to the Area Agency on Aging serving your community.
Have messages been left on your answering machine on behalf of Aetna and School Employees Retirement System about scheduling an in-home health evaluation? Medicare regulations require that Aetna attempt to contact new and existing plan participants annually. The service is offered at no extra cost to you.

**Answer the Call**

Even if you do not want to receive an in-home visit, please answer the call and decline directly. Medicare requires that the plan continue to make attempts to reach you until you answer.

**In-home Visits**

When you agree to the in-home health evaluation, a licensed care professional will conduct a brief physical examination and answer any questions about the medications you take or any health-related questions you have. The evaluation takes about an hour to complete.

Based on your history, the care professional may suggest one or more preventative screening tests at no additional cost. The screenings focus on diabetes care, colorectal cancer, and osteoporosis. These tests can be performed while the care professional is at your home. The care professional can also perform a risk assessment for falls.

Agreeing to an in-home health evaluation also helps determine Medicare reimbursement rates, which in turn helps SERS.

There are no consequences if you decline to participate.

**Assessments by Phone**

If you do not answer calls about the in-home health evaluation, Aetna is required to contact you about completing a Health Risk Assessment over the telephone. The assessment allows Aetna to have the most up-to-date information about your health.

The in-home health evaluation and telephonic health risk assessments are not intended to replace your regular doctor visits. Your results can be mailed to your primary care physician.

---

**New to Medicare?**

**Enroll in Medicare Part B and Remain Enrolled**

SERS retirees who are new to Medicare often question why they need to remain enrolled in Medicare Part B (medical) when they have SERS’ health care coverage.

Most people choose to sign up for a Medicare Advantage Plan or Medigap plan because Medicare Part B only covers about 80% of medical costs.

To have Medicare Advantage or Medigap coverage, you must first enroll in Medicare Part B and remain enrolled. This requires you to pay a monthly Part B premium. For most new enrollees, the Part B premium is $135.50 per month. Either the premium is deducted automatically from a Social Security check, or you are billed quarterly by Medicare.

SERS cannot deduct the Medicare Part B premium from your pension payment. However, we can add $45.50 per month to your SERS payment to help offset the cost of Part B.

To receive this benefit, those new to Medicare must also be enrolled in a SERS’ Medicare Advantage plan. Spouses and dependents are not eligible for this additional reimbursement. It is important to contact Social Security if you receive a letter saying your Part B is being cancelled. Cancellation often occurs due to non-payment of Medicare Part B premiums, but if you don’t know the reason, you need to ask.

If your Medicare Part B coverage is cancelled, your out-of-pocket costs for medical services will increase. You become responsible for paying 100% of doctor visits, X-rays, and other services normally covered under Part B. Medicare will also tell your Medicare Advantage or Medigap plan to cancel your coverage with them since you no longer have Medicare Part B.

**Did you decline SERS health care coverage?**

If you were eligible for SERS health care coverage at retirement but chose not to sign up, you have an opportunity to sign up as you approach your 65th birthday. You can enroll in SERS’ coverage within 90 days of becoming eligible for Medicare.

Call SERS toll-free at 800-878-5853 to find out what your SERS Medicare Advantage premium will be, and to ask that an application and plan information be mailed to you.

Enrolling in our coverage makes you eligible to receive the SERS Medicare B reimbursement of $45.50 per month.

**Already enrolled in SERS non-Medicare coverage?**

If you are enrolled in SERS’ non-Medicare coverage, an “Approaching 65” packet will be mailed to you three months before your 65th birthday.

SERS will automatically switch you to SERS Medicare Advantage plan with Part D prescription coverage once you send us proof of your Medicare Part B enrollment.

SERS will deduct your Medicare Advantage plan premium from your pension payment. Remember, you must still pay the Part B premium directly to Medicare.

---

**School Employees Retirement System of Ohio**

We want to hear from you. Please send comments or story suggestions to: SERS Health Care Services, 300 E. Broad St., Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio, 43215-3746 or email: healthcare@ohsers.org. The information in this newsletter is intended to complement – not take the place of – your health care provider’s recommendations. Consult your physician before making major changes in your lifestyle or health care regimen.