Health Service Committee Report

By Claire Zvanski

Health Service Board President Dr. Stephen Follansbee is an infectious disease specialist. He opened the meeting with a message on two topics:

- “No one is safe until everyone is safe.” He urges all within our own Health Service System membership to get vaccinated; and
- noted that ICER (the Institute for Clinical and Review), a watchdog organization, published the result of an evaluation of selected high-impact drugs noting substantial price increases (2017-18) of $4.8 billion. Seven of the nine drugs reviewed showed no justification for the price increases based on new clinical evidence.

HSS staff and AON (our actuaries) are reviewing the issue of pharmacy rebates and will report back to the board soon. Pharmacy rebates go to employers and not individuals (who pay set copays). The rebates go into the HSS trust and are used to offset healthcare costs.

Director Yant reported that all HSS staff is 100% compliant with reporting their vaccine status as required. A few new hires are undergoing training and will be ready for open enrollment. Virtual consultations remain in effect.

There have been over 2500 telephone calls to Member Services from retirees, June through August. The highest number of calls to the EAP occurred in July.

Delta Dental reviewed the two key changes to its PPO plan. The Smile Way Program remains in effect for those

Retirement Committee Report

By Claire Zvanski

As is their usual habit, the 9/8/21 meeting began with a closed session. When reconvened in open session, there was public comment. It was stated that the letter from RECCSF President Tostanoski exceeded the 150-word limit, so it was included in the commissioner packets instead of being read in public comment. The letter addressed the issue of combining the vacant CEO and CIO positions.

The report on the end of quarter June 30, 2021, puts the fund at a healthy $34.6 billion. The most recent report has the fund now at $36 billion. The policy decisions that worked for the fund during that time included private equity, public credit, emerging debt market, and global equity. It is important to note that relative to peers—public funds with assets over $1 billion—for the one year, three year, five year, and 10 year time periods, SFERS ranked in the top 10%.

Comments from NEPC (investment manager) included a statement that the Fed remains committed to continuing stimulative action as needed to support the U.S. economy during the pandemic and its balance sheet continues to grow.

Last February, SFERS reinstated a securities lending program with BNY Mellon. There was much discussion as it was recommended to adopt euro dollar and pound sterling guidelines, and a proposed change to the U.S. dollar guidelines for the securities lending collateral reinvestment accounts with BNY Mellon. Commissioner Bridges asked a number of probing questions.
President’s Message

By John “Skee” Tostanoski

Well, the bad news seems to be streaming along in trainloads. A close friend called to let me know that she may have pancreatic cancer and is coming to San Francisco for treatments. I realize that when we get older there seem to be so many more losses and hardships, and too many more condolences and get-well cards rather than congratulation cards.

Fortunately, my wife and I are scheduled to welcome new grandchildren this year, and that inspires thoughts of how I need to maintain myself in my best health, both mentally and physically.

As a city retiree, I am grateful for our many healthcare options, since recently I seem to be using my insurance a great deal. (After one recent test, I was shocked to note that the hospital charged the insurance company $20,000!)

The northern California fires have personally devastated the lives of many residents due to the losses of their homes and memories, as well as negatively impacting California’s economy. Many more people are finding themselves in need again this year, and I sincerely hope that none of our members are so affected.

Once again, I would would like to thank all of those who continued to make donations to RECCSF. Your help is critical in order to ensure us to continue to keep you informed on evolving city retiree health and financial benefit issues.

Also, I am asking you to continue to invite your retired friends and coworkers to join RECCSF to take advantage of the $25 new member introductory promotion. There is strength in numbers!

Again, a huge “thank you” to members who have joined our monthly raffle, led by Frugal Few Committee Chair Linda Tabor-Beck after each monthly general membership meeting.

On a final note, I am once again asking for members to volunteer to help us keep our organization functioning at an optimal level. We need new members on our executive board and various committees. Your only requirement is the desire to help RECCSF continue to succeed, and you can conveniently join us from home since all our meetings are conducted on Zoom. I am the definitive proof that previous experience is not necessary!

If you have any comments or questions, please free to contact me at sfskee1@gmail.com.

Stay safe and be well.

Health Service Committee Report

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qualifying with chronic conditions. PPO Delta dentists offer the best discounts (Premier, a bit less) and are prohibited from balance billing. Out of network dentists can balance bill you for services. Delta has almost 3500 network dentists in the Bay Area. Preventive services are safe, and all are urged to return to pre-covid utilization practices. (https://www.deltadentalins.com/ccsf/) SmileWay provides additional services for members with diabetes, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, rheumatoid arthritis, and stroke, including up to four teeth cleanings and periodontal maintenance per year. This program continues to be underutilized.

The HSS benefits trust fund remains solid. The general fund administrative budget ended up with about $225K unused, which are being requested to be carried forward to next year. The continuation of pandemic reduced or delayed interdepartmental services contributed to these unused funds. The audit will be completed on time.

HSS has joined Catalyst for Payment Reform (CPR) which is working to catalyze employers, public purchasers, and others to implement strategies that produce higher-value health care and improve the functioning of the health care marketplace. AON, CalPERS, Covered California, and Unite HERE Health also belong. It also seeks to sponsor legislation requiring price transparency for hospitals, health plans, in-network negotiated rates, etc., in all states and at the federal level. As of Jan.1, 2022, the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) prohibits insurers from agreeing to gag clauses on prices or quality and provider directories must be up to date regarding network status; no balance billing allowed if participant is incorrectly informed that provider is in network!

Over 76,628 open enrollment packets are being mailed. ALL open enrollment changes will be handled by telephone and online with a special online open enrollment page. Read your open enrollment materials very carefully. Call HSS with questions at: 1 (628) 652-4700 or 1 (800) 541-2266.

Due to October open enrollment, there will be no HSS Board meeting held in October.

The board will continue to hold remote meetings until further in-person policy guidelines are decided. The offices remain closed to the public.

Questions? Comments? Please feel free to contact Claire Zvanski at czvanski@gmail.com.
Recruit for a senior portfolio manager for the buyout portion. The Deferred Compensation Plan continues to perform very well and is preparing for National Retirement Security Month in October. There will be an exciting campaign with very nice prizes. It is also anticipated that many employees will be returning to their work sites. The full value of the fund is over $4.8 billion.

The big question of the year remains the supplemental COLA analysis as of July 1, 2021. The SFERS board confirmed that the system is fully funded (including 100% market value) as of June 30, 2021, so members retired prior to Nov. 6, 1996 and retired members hired on and after Jan. 7, 2012 would be eligible for a July 1, 2021 supplemental COLA benefit (1.5%). Full COLA value is 3.5% (which includes the 2% annual COLA).

The other major issue involves the recruitment need to fill both the executive director and chief investment officer positions. There has been much discussion among retirement board members, senior staff and the deputy city attorney about the consideration of merging the positions (CEO/CIO). An extensive report was given to the board that included changes in the terms of reference for both positions. The cost of filling both positions separately was also noted. The discussion was extensive to amend the Executive Director Terms of Reference to allow for the possibility of a new merged position. This continues to be a very challenging undertaking and issue given the national impact of COVID.

The final business involves the board’s self-evaluation survey and an update on staff’s return to office plans. The city is requiring all employees to be vaccinated by Nov. 1, 2021, in order to return to the workplace. The travel ban remains in effect and all staff must have a California residential address. There must be reconsideration of which services will be available in the office and if modifications are needed in the service areas.

President Casciato thanked all staff and consultants for their diligence and work during these difficult times and urged all to stay well.

Questions? Comments?
Contact Claire Zvanski at czvanski@gmail.com, or Herb Weiner at h.weiner@sbcglobal.net.

Friends of RECCSF

By Linda Tabor-Beck, Frugal Few chair

We thank the following RECCSF member who so generously donated this past month. Please note that the asterisk denotes a life member.

☆ Leo Martinez

Sept. 21 Zoom Electronic Board Meeting Results

- The Treasurer’s Report was accepted without objection.
- RECCSF needs an increase of $1,000 per month from membership dues to stay financially solvent.
Richard Rothman, native San Francisco photographer specializing in preserving and documenting the famous murals of the 1930s Federal Works Progress Administration, presented images of some San Francisco murals.

Above is a sampling of RECCSF members in attendance at the RECCSF Sept. 8 Zoom Electronic General Membership meeting.
Submitted by Claire Zvanski

Over 76,628 Open Enrollment packets are being mailed. All open enrollment changes will be handled by telephone and online with a special online open enrollment page. Read your open enrollment materials very carefully. Call HSS with questions: 1 (628) 652-4700 or 1 (800) 541-2266.

Virtual Open Enrollment Webinars:

September 27: eBenefits Account Registration (for online enrollment)

September 30: Early Retirees, General Health Plan Overview, 1 p.m.

October 4: eBenefits Account Registration (for online enrollment)

October 13: Early Retirees, General Health Plan Overview, 11 a.m.

October 14: Navigating eBenefits to make Open Enrollment Elections

October 18: eBenefits Account Registration (for online enrollment)

October 25: Navigating eBenefits to make Open Enrollment Elections

October 26: Early Retirees, General Health Plan Overview, 12 p.m.

Information regarding COVID-19 vaccine clinics for boosters will be forthcoming after federal and state approvals and guidance is received. HSS does not currently have plans to offer this in conjunction with or in replacement of the flu vaccination clinics.

FLU Vaccination Clinics available September 28 through November 4. These are open to retirees (including spouses & domestic partners). Partner with Kaiser. By appointment is best.

City Hall:
October 7 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

County Fair Bldg (9th & Lincoln, GGPark):
October 14 8 a.m.–3 p.m.

1 South Van Ness (at Market):
October 19 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

HSS HQ at 1145 Market:
October 27 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

HSA (110 Otis):
October 28 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

SF War Memorial:
November 2 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Pier 1 (Embarcadero):
November 4 7 a.m.–1 p.m.

Ignore Those Health Insurer Mailers!

At this time of year, a flood of health insurer flyers tend to hit our mailboxes, enticing us to change to various health plans, or to sign up for drug or Medicare-supplement plans. Ignore their pleas—whether by mail, telephone calls or TV ads—and chuck their materials into your recycle basket. Respond only to the packet issued by the Health Service System during October. Open Enrollment for coverage in calendar year 2022—that counts.
Abbreviated Financial Statement for RECCSF
For the Fiscal Year ended July 31, 2021

Revenue:
Membership Dues $8,578.00
Contributions 12,414.00
Others 285.87
$21,277.87

Expenditures:
News and Views $3,850.00
Meeting & Office Expenses 19,305.06
Others 233.94
$23,389.00

Deficit for the year $(2,111.13)

Daily Money Management Programs
From Your Friends at San Francisco Federal Credit Union

A daily money management program, or DMM, is a service for seniors who struggle to handle their financial responsibilities.

How does it work?
A DMM can be thought of as a personal money assistant. You can get help with:
• remembering important financial dates;
• paying bills;
• making deposits;
• maintaining financial records;
• communicating with creditors;
• guarding against identity theft; and
• creating and maintaining a spending plan.

What are the benefits?
• A DMM can not only help protect seniors' assets but spare the embarrassment of money missteps.
• It can help an elderly person stay in his or her own home instead of needing to move into a retirement facility.
• Family members have less stress knowing that their loved one has some help taking care of their finances.
• DMM staff can help a senior understand complicated medical bills that are difficult for persons of any age to interpret.
• If a senior has trouble writing checks or going to the bank, a DMM can help alleviate these problems.

Why should I be particularly careful?
There is no direct government oversight of the DMM industry, so it is important to choose carefully when selecting a DMM plan. Seek out referrals from friends or family if possible. Set up interviews with two or three different providers to learn about their services and safeguards. Ask for references and contact them.

Who provides the service?
The following websites have developed a reputation for providing information on trusted DMM providers: www.eldercare.gov, www.aarpmmp.org, and www.aadmm.com.

This article is courtesy of San Francisco Federal Credit Union. For more information, call 1 (415) 775-5377, visit https://www.sfmanufacturers.com, or stop by one of our branches.
Membership and Subscriptions
for retired city employees
Membership application: www.sfretirees.org; email: reccsf@att.net.

$68, annual
$600, lifetime (payable over four months in four payments of $150 per month, or annually over four years in increments of $150 per year)
Members without computer access should contact the RECCSF office at 1 (415) 681-5949.

News & Views
November Deadline:
Friday, Oct. 15, 5:30 p.m.
Please email your submissions to:
sheilamullen@me.com.
Letters to the editor and opinion pieces are welcome. All submissions subject to further editing.

I want to know!
Join
RECCSF
Retired Employees of the City and County of San Francisco

San Francisco Health Service System representatives will be addressing the membership on current HSS issues.

Zoom Electronic Executive Board Meeting
All in-person board meetings cancelled until further notice. Your RECCSF Executive Board is meeting by Zoom for the foreseeable future.
The next Executive Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 19, at 10 a.m.

Visit our website:
sfretirees.org
RECCSF office
email: reccsf@att.net
3915 Irving St., San Francisco, CA 94122