



NARFE

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Official Quarterly Newsletter of the
Houston Association of Chapters

October 2008

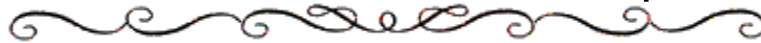
<http://www.narfehouston.org>



President: Dave Bloomer VP: vacant

Secretary: Hazel Hicks Treasurer: Wilbur Doehring

Premiums for BC & BS to Leap 13.3%

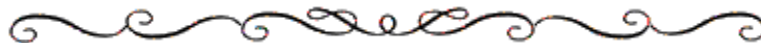


National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) President Margaret L. Baptiste acknowledged recently that while the overall average Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) premium increase of 7.0 percent for 2009 was within the range of increases in other large group health insurance, she was troubled that the share paid by employees and retirees in the program's most popular plan (Blue Cross/Blue Shield (BC/BS) standard option) will jump by 13.3 percent and that enrollees will pay significantly higher copayments and coinsurance for brand-name prescription drugs in 2009. The NARFE President was particularly alarmed by an 85 percent increase (from \$35 to \$65) in copayments for brand name prescription drugs under the BC/BS mail order program. "Although we understand that the cost of brand name drugs should be contained, it is also clear that many workers and annuitants have no other option than taking such medication, especially when there is no generic version of the drug available," said Mrs. Baptiste. However, NARFE was pleased that a hearing aid benefit will be added to FEHBP plans and that OPM decided that a separate and controversial Medicare "Sub-Option" is not currently acceptable.

"Even the six percent cost-of-living adjustment federal annuitants and Social Security beneficiaries are likely to receive next year will do little to help us keep pace with the larger increase in health plan premiums and the spike in prescription drug cost-sharing," said President Baptiste. "In sum, we are losing ground. That's why, more than ever, the 'premium conversion' tax relief that workers enjoy must also be offered to retirees living on fixed incomes." Towards that end, NARFE supports legislation which would allow federal civilian retirees and active duty military personnel and retirees to pay for their share of health premiums with pre-tax compensation.

Moreover, NARFE's President said that FEHBP costs could have been lowered if it were not for the Administration's repeated decision to decline a payment available to employers who provide drug coverage as generous as Medicare. "OMB and OPM leave \$1 billion a year on the table, which could be used to lower worker and annuitant premium costs," she said. The 2003 Medicare reform law provides such employers a payment as an incentive to retain their retiree drug coverage. Note: the law specifically allows the government as an employer to apply for this payment, but the Bush Administration has instructed OPM not to apply for the funds. The reason is that the one billion dollars a year therefore remains in the general treasury instead of being put to use to lower FEHBP health care premiums. Have you asked your Congressman to correct this?

Presidential Candidates Answer NARFE Questions

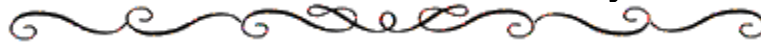


NARFE has made available the responses received from Republican Presidential Nominee, Senator John McCain, and Democratic Presidential Nominee, Senator Barack Obama, to questions on public policy issues critical to the interests of nearly 5 million federal workers and annuitants. Their answers to the survey questions are now available on the NARFE web site at <http://www.narfe.org/pdf/2008NARFEPresidentialCandidateSurvey.pdf> and will be published in the November NARFE magazine which Association members will receive by October 25.

NARFE Websites:

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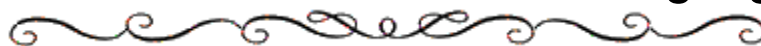
Agenda for October Quarterly Meeting



The next Houston Association of Chapters meeting will be on Wednesday October 29th at 10:30 AM at the Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Drive, Houston, Texas. **Remember Chapters were asked to have their Membership and Legislative Chairs attend this meeting for a roundtable discussion on future events.** Agenda items for the meeting will include:

Report on National Convention
Update on Region VI Training Seminar
Houston Association of Chapters Name Change
Houston Association of Chapters future meetings -- date & place
Report on National Convention Resolutions for recognition of Associations and Councils and to increase children's maximum age of eligibility under the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan (FEHBP).
Discussion of ideas for future events by Representatives and the Membership/Legislative Chairs

NARFE National Convention Highlights



The NARFE National Convention was held in Louisville, Kentucky September 7-11. Margaret Baptiste was re-elected President by acclamation. Joe Beaudion was elected Vice President and Secretary Nat Brown and Treasurer Richard Ostergren were also re-elected. The biggest issue facing the convention was a single national dues. The resolution to have a single dues structure including chapter dues as a part of National dues once again failed to gain the required 2/3 vote. The office of Vice President was not abolished as had been proposed by one resolution. Officer salary issues included approval of equalizing the salary of the National Secretary & Treasurer. The resolution to allow the Federation Executive Board to select future national convention sites was approved. The Legislative Program approved included three new legislative goals: 1. Easing asset rules to allow access for disabled workers to Medicaid Long Term Care benefits, 2. Crediting FERS unused sick leave toward retirement, and 3. Permitting children up to age 25 to remain covered under FEHBP. The Houston Association backed resolution to amend the by-laws to allow Federations to form Councils was recommended for rejection by the Resolution Committee with the incorrect impression that it created an additional layer of organizational structure. An attempt to bring the resolution to the floor for a vote was more successful than expected in that several speakers spoke favorably of the resolution, but in the rush to finish the business that day not enough delegates voted to allow the resolution to be taken off the recommended rejection list for further discussion. Based on the interest shown the resolution will be coordinated with other Federations and brought to the Texas Federation Convention in 2009 with the intent of having the support of several State Federations at the next national convention.

NARFE Legislative Training Conference

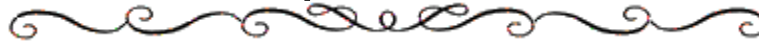


The NARFE National Legislative Conference will be held March 7-10 2009 at the Hyatt Regency, Crystal City, Arlington Virginia. The Conference offers NARFE members training sessions on NARFE's legislative agenda and the political process including grass roots organizing and also offers an opportunity to meet their congressman to discuss NARFE's legislative goals if they have sought appointments with the appropriate official prior to arrival. A link to registration and detailed information on the conference is available on the national website. The second article listed on the home page at <http://www.narfe.org> is "Registration Now Open for March NARFE Legislative Training Conference." Click on the Read More link following the description and you will be taken to a page will complete information about the Training Conference.

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Chapter News



Each Chapter President has been asked to have their Publicity Chair or Newsletter Editor contribute information on their Chapter two weeks before the beginning of each quarter. Each Chapter has also been advised to update their meeting and event information quarterly for the website. Was information submitted for your chapter?

Greater North Houston Chapter 828

At the Chapter 828 meeting on October 21 Chapter 828 will hold its Election of Officers for 2009.

At the Chapter 828 meeting on November 18 Chapter 828 will hold its Installation of 2009 Officers

On December 12th Chapter 828 will hold its Alzheimer Monetary Collection and Christmas Party at 9:00 AM at the Spring Branch Community Center, 1721 Pech Road. Members and visitors are asked to bring finger foods.

Northeast Houston Chapter 1349

No report

Montgomery County Chapter 1350

The Chapter 1350 Annual Picnic will be at 11:30 AM on October 9th at R. C. Burroughs Park in the Barbeque Pavilion. The address is 9738 Hufsmith Road, near Tomball. To get to the park from Kuykendahl, take Hufsmith Road approximately 2.6 miles west. Hufsmith Road is approximately 3.7 miles south of Woodlands Parkway. The Chapter will provide the drinks, meat, buns, chips, napkins, cups, knives, forks, and condiments. Please email or call Danny Ball (936-539-3082) to let him know you plan to attend, what you prefer to drink, and also plan to bring a vegetable dish, salad, or dessert (with serving utensil).

Southwest Houston Chapter 1375

The October Chapter 1375 meeting on October 15th will feature Richard Laster speaking about "Fractional Currency," (also known as coins).

Rosenberg Chapter 2030

At the October Chapter 2030 Meeting on October 8th at 11:30 AM the program planned is a "NARFE Meet Your Candidates" event with Congressman Nick Lampson who is running for re-election in Congressional District 22. Congressman Lampson has been invited to attend and his office has indicated he will attend. Any interested NARFE member and especially those living in District 22 is invited to attend the event which will be held at Fort Bend Country Club 2627 FM 762 Richmond Texas. Should Congressman Lampson need to cancel due to the proposed bailout bill being considered in Washington an effort to notify Houston Association members will be made.

For Chapter Event Month Chapter 2030 invites NARFE members to attend the Rosenberg Opry as a group on October 17th at 7:30PM. Contact Hazel Hicks at 281-499-0929 for a reservation no later than Oct 15th. Tickets are \$7.

At the November Chapter 2030 meeting on November 12th members will receive the report of the Nomination Committee and elect officers for 2009. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the meeting.

The Chapter 2030 annual Christmas Party and 2009 Officer Installation will be in December, final details are yet to be determined, but will likely be the usual meeting time & place (11:30 AM, Dec 10th -- 2nd Wednesday of the month at Fort Bend Country Club). Watch for further announcements.

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2009 Texas Federation Convention



The 55th Texas Federation Convention is being planned and hosted by the San Antonio area chapters. Although the convention will be held April 24-27, 2009 --information on registration and hotel reservations has already been made available. A package has been sent to Chapter Presidents, and information has been posted on the Texas Federation Website at <http://www.txnarfe.org/TFCconv.html> Note: A link is available on the website to make a reservation with the hotel. Convention Registration and Hotel Reservation forms are also available on the website.

The 55th TFC Convention will be held in the Hilton San Antonio Airport Hotel. Located on Loop 410, two miles from the airport. The hotel is North of Loop 410 across from North Star Mall. Hotel parking is \$4 a night in a covered parking garage. For people not staying at the hotel, the parking day rate is \$2.50. Convention Hotel Rates are: Single Rate: \$85.00, Double Rate: \$85.00, Triple Rate: \$100.00 & Quad Rate: \$115.00, plus tax. This rate is available for 3 days before and after the convention when booking for the convention.

The tentative agenda is:

Friday 24th: Committee meetings and Executive Board meeting -- general membership attendees should report for registration.

Saturday 25th: full day of meetings -- Mexican Buffet in evening

Sunday 26th: full day of meetings -- Banquet in evening. The banquet theme is "American Heritage Night".

Members are encouraged to come in ethnic attire.

Monday 27th: half-day session

**NARFE Houston Association of Chapters
C/O Dave Bloomer, President
1934 Mustang Springs Drive
Missouri City, Texas 77459**

To:

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