

Retiree Health Insurance Change - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. When will the change take effect?

The effective date of the retiree health insurance rate change is April 1, 2016 and will affect those employees who retired on or after April 1, 1991 (except employees who were represented by Unit 3 (CSEA) at the time of retirement). Payments for health insurance are made one month in advance. Therefore, your new health insurance monthly contribution will be due in March 2016.

2. How much will my benefits cost?

The rate change will increase your monthly contribution between \$33.69 and \$40.85 per month (based on 2016 premium rates) depending on your health insurance plan (see rate chart). Since the contributions are pre-tax, your taxable income for Federal income and Social Security/Medicare (if applicable) taxes is reduced based on the contribution. Therefore, the net change to your pension check may be less than the increase in the contribution amount.

3. Will I be able to change my health insurance option to a cheaper rate?

As a retiree, you are able to change your health insurance plan option once in a 12 month period unless there is a qualifying event that allows another change (see NYS Department of Civil Service website for what is considered a qualifying event). Civil Service considers the change to retiree contribution rates a qualifying event. Review the health insurance plan options and the rate chart for the associated monthly contribution costs of those options to make the best choice.

For additional information on health insurance plan options, go to <http://www.cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits/login/index-retiree.cfm> and enter the following:

- Under “Retirees” check “A Participating Employer (PE)” then click continue. Choose the plan you wish to enroll in or are currently enrolled in - “Empire Plan or HMO” - then click finish.
- Under “Current Topics” click “Health Benefits & Option Transfer.”
- Under “Health Benefits” click “Rates and Health Plan Choices.”
- Under “Option Transfer Information for Retirees of Participating Employer (PE) Agencies” select the pdf “2016 Health Insurance Choices for Retirees.”

To change your health insurance plan, go to <http://www.cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits/nyship/shared/publications-and-order-forms/hipe.cfm> and choose the “PS-404, NYS Health Insurance Transaction Form.” This form will need to be completed and submitted to Civil Service to make a plan change.

You may also contact the NYS Department of Civil Service Employee Benefits Division at 1-800-833-4344 and follow the prompts for the Retiree Unit for additional information.

4. Is the cost of the family plan going to increase?

Yes. The family plan contribution rate includes the individual contribution rate as part of the total premium contribution for family coverage. Therefore, the increased individual cost will result in an increase to all retirees who retired on or after April 1, 1991 who have individual or family health insurance coverage. In 2016, the maximum change to the contribution is \$40.85 a month for either individual or family coverage.

5. Will I be able to use my sick leave credit?

Yes, you will be able to apply your existing monthly sick leave credit to your health insurance premium cost. When you retired, your unused sick leave was converted into a lifetime monthly credit that will reduce your contribution. The application of your sick leave credit is done automatically and the amount is typically reported to you in the health insurance letter from the NYS Department of Civil Service.

6. Are the contribution rates going to increase every year?

Health insurance contribution rates are subject to Board action and negotiated agreements, if applicable.

If you have any additional questions, please contact the New York State Thruway Authority Benefits Unit at (518) 436-2714 between the office hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, or send an email to employeebenefits@thruway.ny.gov.