

IMPORTANT RETIREMENT AND INSURANCE INFORMATION

This benefit information is subject to change and serves only as a summary.

Please see NYSHIP and other benefit program publications for additional rules, requirements, and updates.

Some Steps to Take Before Retirement:

- Contact your retirement system to determine your pension benefit and choose a *retirement date*. Your retirement date is the day **AFTER** your last day of work or paid leave, whichever is later.
Example: If you retire on 10/1/24, your last day of work or paid leave must be 9/30/24.
 - If you are a member of the NYS Employees' Retirement System (ERS), file an Application for Service Retirement between 15 and 90 days before your retirement date.
 - If you are a member of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (TRS), file an Application for Retirement between 30 and 90 days before your retirement date.
 - If you are a member of the Optional Retirement Program (ORP), including TIAA, notify your vendor up to the day before your retirement date.
- Email Benefits@albany.edu or call Benefits at (518) 437-4700 with your retirement date, at least 3-4 months in advance, so that we may send you a retirement benefits packet with next steps and forms to complete before retirement.
- Notify your supervisor in writing of your retirement date 30 days in advance.
- Provide your retirement system, supervisor, *and* Benefits with written notice if you change your date.
- Make sure your leave reporting is updated through your last day of work or paid leave.
- Call Time Records at (518) 437-4700 if you have questions about leave accruals/usage before retirement. Any leave you plan to use (with supervisory approval) must be taken **before** your retirement date.
You may receive payment for up to 30 annual (vacation) days that are unused at your retirement.
- Call your union to ask if and how you could continue membership/personal policies (life, disability, home, auto, etc.). If you have long term care (LTC) insurance, please contact your LTC carrier.
- Go to https://www.albany.edu/eap/questions_comments.htm if you wish to provide your personal email address for continuing Employee Assistant Program (EAP) emails after you stop working.
- Check out the SUNY Retirees Newsletter at <http://www.suny.edu/retirees/newsletters/>.

General New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP) Information

NYSHIP is the statewide insurance program for NYS government employees and retirees. Under NYSHIP, specific carrier choices include The NYS Empire Plan, CDPHP, Emblem HIP, Highmark BS NENY and MVP. Current eligibility requirements for NYSHIP retiree health insurance are summarized below. You must:

- Be at least 55 years of age,
- Have a minimum of 10 years of NYSHIP benefits-eligible service, and
- Be enrolled in a NYSHIP plan or have dependent coverage through a NYSHIP enrollee.

Note: Eligibility for and enrollment in the NYSHIP Opt-out Program satisfies this requirement but cannot continue in retirement. **If you have questions about this or any other eligibility requirements, please call the Benefits Office at least 4 to 6 months *before* retiring.**

If you wish to defer (delay) the start of NYSHIP retiree coverage because you will have other employer coverage in effect, see the Health Benefits Administrator *before* retiring for requirements and instructions.

Once you are retired, you'll receive important insurance updates from your specific carrier and the NYS Department of Civil Service's Employee Benefits Division (EBD). EBD:

- Determines eligibility and serves as your NYSHIP Health Benefits Administrator in retirement;
- May be called at (518) 457-5754 9 am to 4 pm weekdays (please note that wait times can be lengthy);
- **Must** be notified in writing to make certain updates in your retiree health insurance record, including address, phone number, name, or plan changes.

As a retiree, see the *Welcome to EBD* booklet and send EBD written requests to make updates including:

- Changes in your NYSHIP plan once in a 12-month period or with a qualifying event;
- Changes from individual to family coverage or vice versa;
- Additions or deletions of dependents from an existing family plan.

Note: Dependents eligible for and enrolled in your NYSHIP plan **at the time of your death** may qualify to continue coverage as **dependent survivors**. See your NYSHIP General Information Book and make sure your dependents know they must contact EBD within 90 days of your death to enroll in survivor coverage.

NYSHIP Retiree Health Insurance Premiums

When you retire from active employment or approved leave, your unused sick leave is converted into a monthly credit that reduces your health insurance premium as long as you're enrolled in NYSHIP. Although your credit remains the same throughout your lifetime, your balance due may change as premiums rise. Therefore, a credit that covers the premium in full at retirement does NOT guarantee free insurance for life.

- When your monthly premium exceeds your monthly credit, you owe the balance.
- When your monthly credit exceeds the monthly premium, you owe nothing.

The credit is based on your hourly rate and unused sick leave at the time of retirement, divided by your actuarial life expectancy in months. Finally, the credit is determined by your choice of one of these options:

- **Single Annuitant:** **100%** of your credit is applied toward NYSHIP premiums during your lifetime but the credit ends at your death. If you pre-decease your covered dependents, **they may qualify for survivor coverage but no portion of your credit will be available to pay their survivor premiums.**
- **Dual Annuitant:** **70%** of your credit is applied toward NYSHIP premiums during your lifetime. If you pre-decease covered dependent(s), this 70% credit will reduce survivor premiums while they remain NYSHIP-eligible and enrolled. If they lose eligibility or predecease you, your credit will remain at 70%.

You must elect one of these options by submitting a PS-405 Form to Benefits **before** you retire. Your election is **irrevocable** as of your retirement date, so please consider your options carefully. If Benefits does not receive your PS-405 Form before your retirement date, you will automatically and permanently default to the single annuitant option.

It takes several months for sick leave credit to be processed. Meanwhile, you may be billed directly for retiree insurance premiums without the credit reflected. To avoid cancellation of coverage, pay your NYSHIP retiree premiums! If you have any billing questions, contact EBD directly and immediately.

Once the credit is applied, your balance due will be deducted from your ERS or TRS pension checks, but it may take several months for deductions to start. In the interim, Civil Service will bill you. If you're in ORP (TIAA) or not receiving a pension, you will receive NYSHIP retiree bills directly from Civil Service.

Medicare and the Social Security Administration (SSA)

Medicare is **federal** insurance that works with NYSHIP for people age 65 and older who are no longer in benefited employment, and certain people under 65. Medicare has four parts:

- **Part A** for inpatient care including hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and hospice;
- **Part B** for outpatient care including doctor's visits, certain equipment, and other services/supplies;
- **Part C** for Medicare Advantage Plans through certain NYSHIP HMOs;
- **Part D** for prescription drugs.

While in benefited NYS employment, you are generally not required to enroll in Medicare, even at age 65. The same is true for NYSHIP-enrolled dependents, except domestic partners (who must have Medicare when 65), and certain employees/dependents when Medicare eligible due to end stage renal disease.

When you are no longer in benefited NYS employment due to retirement or job reductions, you/your dependents must each enroll in Parts A and B when first eligible for Medicare primary coverage. (This means Medicare pays claims first and NYSHIP provides secondary coverage.) General rules for determining when Medicare is primary are summarized below. Please see *Medicare & NYSHIP* booklet for exceptions, rules and details.

If you're under 65 when your benefited NYS employment ends:

- Medicare must be primary on the first of the month in which you/your dependent turn 65; or
- If the birthday falls on the first of a month, Medicare must be primary on the first of the preceding month. (Example: If you turn 65 on June 1, 2024, Medicare becomes primary on May 1, 2024.)
- If you/your dependents are under 65 and disabled, have ESRD or ALS, see *Medicare & NYSHIP*.
- Call SSA 3 months before Medicare should become primary to start the enrollment process.*

If you are 65 or over when your NYS benefited employment ends:

- Medicare must be primary on the first of the month following the end of employee coverage.
- Employee coverage doesn't end on your retirement date but continues approximately 4-6 weeks from your last day on the payroll. *To confirm the specific Medicare-primary date for you/your NYSHIP dependent(s), call the Benefits Office at least 3 to 4 months before your retirement date.*
- You/your NYSHIP dependents must call SSA 3 months before Medicare should become primary. Tell SSA that you/your dependents didn't enroll when first eligible because you had NYS coverage.*

**When you call SSA at 1-800-772-1213, ask for Parts A and B. If enrolled in CDPHP, MVP, HIP, or BlueShield of Northeastern NY HMO under NYSHIP when Medicare becomes primary, you/your enrolled dependents will automatically move to a Medicare Advantage Plan with Part D. Empire Plan also has a Part D prescription program to which you'll automatically transition. Immediately read and respond to Medicare information sent by EBD or your plan.*

The standard monthly cost for Part B is **\$174.70** for those newly enrolling in **2024**. Enrollees earning incomes above certain amounts also pay income-related monthly adjustment amounts (**IRMAA**) for Medicare. Currently, IRMAA applies if you earn above **\$103,000** and file individually or above **\$206,000** and file jointly.

The standard Part B premium is reimbursed for you *and* each Medicare-primary NYSHIP dependent in your NYS pension checks. If you don't receive NYS pension checks, reimbursement for standard Part B is applied as

a credit to reduce your monthly NYSHIP premium. If your Medicare credit exceeds your monthly NYSHIP premium, you will receive a quarterly refund check from the Office of the State Comptroller.

NYS also reimburses Part B IRMAA, but you must apply by following annual instructions from EBD. Part D IRMAA is currently not reimbursed.

If you/your dependents enroll in a Medicare Advantage or Part D Plan that is NOT part of NYSHIP, you may have no benefits available through NYSHIP! Please see *Planning for Retirement and Medicare & NYSHIP* for details. Enrolling in any non-NYSHIP Medicare plan may cancel all NYSHIP coverage for you and your dependents. Be sure you understand the impact that other coverage may have and call EBD with questions.

Retiree Dental Insurance and Vision Coverage

Free employee dental and vision coverage does not end immediately upon retirement. It continues for 4 or more weeks from your last day worked, depending on your negotiating unit. (If in CSEA or UUP, check with your union.) After free coverage ends, you may continue coverage at a premium, as outlined below.

UUP and CSEA employees may continue dental/vision coverage under COBRA through their union. (UUP employees must be dues-paying members at retirement, not agency FEE payers). UUP or CSEA will send you time-sensitive information. Call your union directly with COBRA questions.

PEF, M/C, NYSCOPBA, PBA employees may continue **current** dental and vision programs under COBRA through Civil Service for at least 18 months. Civil Service will send time-sensitive information.

All retiring employees may elect NYS retiree dental coverage through GHI/Emblem as an alternative to, or after expiration of, COBRA **dental** coverage. GHI/Emblem will notify you after employee benefits ends. If you have questions, contact GHI/Emblem. **Civil Service does not offer NYS retiree vision coverage.**

***Post-Retirement Employment**

Contact Benefits at Benefits@albany.edu or (518) 437-4700 before post-retirement employment starts, changes or ends!

Notify HR if you return to work for UAlbany. Regulations impose earnings limits on NYS retirees under age 65 who continue to work for the State. **Currently, you can't earn more than \$35,000/year** without jeopardizing your pension. (TRS retirees should contact TRS if planning post-retirement employment with any "public" employers in addition to working for any State agency.) This limit is subject to change. Please contact benefits@albany.edu if you have questions. **The Social Security earnings limit in 2024 for anyone under full retirement age is \$22,320/year. A return to work has other implications:**

You will be considered "benefited" if, for *6 payroll periods (approximately 3 months)*, you return to work at a regular schedule of 50% or more. **Exception:** If you are in a UUP-represented position and primarily teaching, you'll be "benefited" if you teach at least 6 credit hours or contact hours per semester.

If you **do not** meet the benefited criteria above,

- Your return has no impact on Medicare status.
- You will not qualify for free dental/vision coverage but may elect COBRA or NYS retiree dental benefits.

- ***If you return and meet the above criteria WITHOUT a break in service after retiring, you/your NYSHIP dependents will generally have NYSHIP-primary status and may delay Medicare enrollment until benefited employment ends.***
- ***If you return, meet the above criteria WITH a break, and you/your dependents are 65 or over, Medicare ceases to be primary after a waiting period. Please contact the Benefits Office immediately upon return to NYS employment.***

See Medicare & NYSHIP regarding exceptions to general rules, including disability, ALS or ESRD.

NYS will not reimburse Part B premiums while NYSHIP should be primary. For benefited rehired retirees, it may take several months for NYSHIP to recognize Medicare is not primary and to process claims, so always inform your health care providers of changes in your Medicare status. ***Please call Benefits 3 to 4 months before your benefited NYS re-employment ends for instructions about timely Medicare enrollment!***