

RISE Delaware™ Update: UD's Departure from the State Healthcare Plans

All,

The University of Delaware (UD) has officially announced that it is going off the State's healthcare plans due to the huge increases in premiums (27% in FY 2025 and further increases projected). Those of you who are a UD retiree or employee are getting full announcements from UD or other UD organizations, as appropriate, about specifics and how this change affects you, e.g. the UD Association Of Retired Faculty (UDARF) has emailed further information to retired faculty.

But I am happy to say that the Healthcare Committee of UDARF (of which I am a member) negotiated for and achieved a great result for currently retired faculty (and spouses) who are now guaranteed to stay on Special Medicfill (or its equivalent) for their lifetimes (assuming no financial disasters for UD or disasters at the federal level). After two painful years of helping RISE in its successful fight with the Carney administration to keep our Special Medicfill, there was no way we were going to complacently standby and be pushed off a different cliff into Medicare (Dis)Advantage quicksand! Please note that the UD unions (AAUP, AFSCME and FOP) are responsible for negotiating benefits for current employees, including their retirement healthcare benefit, so UDARF's ability to directly help protect future UD retirees (as RISE did for future State retirees) is limited.

Importantly, and given that UDARF and the UD unions have negotiated for continued input to UD, I believe that the efforts by RISE will not suffer from some of us having to go off the State plans. We still care! Indeed, much remains to be done with managing and lowering healthcare charges – in particular monopoly hospital charges and the profiteering of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) at the expense of employers and their plan members (whether the State or UD). It is in the mutual interest of State retirees and employees, and UD retirees and employees, to stay on top of those critical issues. We all need to keep educating ourselves about what is wrong with the current system and push for implementation of better options. All of us at RISE will continue our supportive efforts and advocacy.

The “new” SEBC is a very different SEBC from the one fighting us for over two years. For one thing, the formidable member dream team of Paul Baumbach, Karen Peterson, Bill Oberle and Jeff Taschner is clearly committed to attacking the excessive monopoly hospital charges and PBM profiteering that will continue to put pressure on healthcare benefits. I personally plan to stay engaged with the SEBC and hope you will too, as I believe that efforts by the SEBC to control hospital and PBM charges can benefit UD, and vice versa.

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Never a dull moment!

Regards,

Mary Graham, Vice President RISE Delaware

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RISE Delaware: Retirees Investing in Social Equity Delaware

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