

Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (RHPAB)
Public Comment from December 2019

From: Lois Wirtz <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, December 31, 2019 9:09 PM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: Retiree Comments

To the Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board:

I have just read Sharon Hoffbeck's letter (Dec.26) to State retirees regarding the State DRB's use of premium monies to re-implement the Legacy dental plan.

Would you PLEASE remind the State DRB that *we are supposed to be on the same side??*

Lois Wirtz

P.S. Also, of less importance, but also exasperating, would you please respectfully request that Emily not ask every caller for a "weather report" during the Town Hall events?

Thank you
LW

From: Suzanne W. Strisik <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, December 30, 2019 2:10 PM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: Improper use of DVA funds

Dear members of the Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board:

As a member of the Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA) I am deeply concerned that the managers of the Division of Retirement and Benefits mismanagement of the retired public employees' DVA account. A letter sent to the Commissioner recently by the RPEA outlines three requests:

1) requesting that the DRB immediately refund to the DVA trust account all premium money used to correct its unconstitutional 2014 dental plan, 2) to discontinue paying any further costs from the DVA premium trust account needed to comply with the Court's April decision, and 3) to immediately pay RPEA the attorney fees and costs awarded by the Court--but not out of any DVA trust funds.

I urge you to take a responsible approach to this matter.
Sincerely, Suzanne Womack Strisik

Suzanne Womack Strisik, PhD

From: Susan Hawkins <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, December 30, 2019 7:15 AM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: DVA state retiree plan

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Pretty low and dishonest to use premium payments for the non actual dental costs of reimplementing the legacy dental plan to comply with court orders. The RPEA attorney fees and costs were also awarded by the court and should be paid now - but not from the DVA trust fund.
Susan and Tom Hawkins

From: Judith Anderegg <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Sunday, December 29, 2019 4:34 PM

To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: My Opinion about DRB actions on our Dental/Visual/Audio Coverage which we as retirees pay for

To Health Advisory Board:

Recently I have heard through RPEA that DRB has spent over \$218,000 to design and put into effect the so called "legacy plan" which in reality should still have been in place since it is the dental/visual/audio plan that I signed up for as a retiree in 2003 and it was my understanding that it was protected constitutionally. I have also come to understand that these costs were charged to the retiree dental/visual/audio premium account(the retiree trust account). This is "our"(the retirees) trust account where all of our (the retirees) premiums have been deposited each month from the date we retire. The State has not put ANY money into this account. I object vociferously to the State using money out of the retiree trust account to re-establish a plan that the State should never have diminished. (And the Court has said so!!!!) It is the State's responsibility to use the trust account only to pay for dental/visual/audio expenses of retirees that are part of the plan and administrative costs to implement the plan.

I have also come to understand that the Court awarded attorney fees from the State of Alaska to RPEA regarding the dental/visual/audio lawsuit, and they have not been paid by the State.

As a retiree of both the State and Teacher Retiree plans, who not only worked for almost 25 years but also lived in Alaska for most of my life, I am a very disappointed, frustrated and angry retiree. You have abused me and violated my trust that the State wants to care for its employees and residents.

I want the State to:

1. Replace any and all funds to the Trust Account (where our retiree premiums go) which were used to set up the Legacy Plan, which should never have been shut down in the first place.
2. Stop using any funds from the Trust Account to pay for any more costs incurred by the State because the Courts found in favor of retirees.
3. Pay RPEA all attorney fees and costs because of the case related to the diminishment of retiree dental/visual/audio services which the Court charged the State to pay.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. I would appreciate a response so that I know you have read and heard what I, as a retiree, have to say about how I am being treated.

Sincerely,

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Judith Anderegg

From: Susan Blalock <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, December 29, 2019 7:31 AM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: Legacy Plan

No ey should NOT be stolen from our premium fund to pay for illegally depriving us our rightful dental plan. SHAME ON THE PEOPKE WHO ARE BEHIND THIS MOVE. We served our state for over 20 years and GREED seeks to deprive us of our health. Dental health is Paramount for the elderly. This dishonest activity should be criminal.

From: Carol Johnson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 5:03 PM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: Retiree DVA insurance

Dec. 27, 2019

It has come to my attention that DRB is using retiree's money incorrectly. Payments made by retirees for the purpose of covering dental / visual / audio expenses are to be used for that purpose – dental / visual / audio related expenses. They are not to be confiscated by DRB administration to re-implement the legacy plan. The standard dental plan that DRB has been using has been found to be illegal, and the court has ordered that these funds be returned.

Let my voice be added to those who request that the \$200,000+ be returned to the DVA Premium account.

Concerned Retiree,
Carol

From: Mary Ann Borchert <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 3:37 PM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: Alaska retiree DVA coverage

I have just read information from RPEA saying that the DRB is paying expenses from the DVA premium trust account to implement the court-ordered 'legacy' plan for retiree DVA coverage. I agree with RPEA on the following:

"We have today delivered a letter to the Commissioner of Administration as the first step in 1) requesting that the DRB immediately refund to the DVA trust account all premium money used to correct its unconstitutional 2014 dental plan, 2) to discontinue paying any further costs from the DVA premium trust account needed to comply with the Court's April decision, and 3) to immediately pay RPEA the attorneys fees and costs awarded by the Court--but not out of any DVA trust funds."

Sincerely, Mary Ann Borchert

Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (RHPAB)
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Mary Ann Borchert
Educational Consulting
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK 99709
[REDACTED]

From: Con Dietz <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 3:35 PM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Illegal Action

It is troubling to see the consistent effort of state employees to act in a way that is contrary to the interests of state law, current and past employees. There could be consequences to such actions.

Thanks much to Sharon Hoffbeck and RPEA for keeping the state legal and conscientious of its responsibilities.

From: Donna White <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 1:31 PM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: DRB Actions

I am incredulous that the state is using funds not authorized to pay for their ongoing mistakes. I encourage you to fight to have the money returned to the trust fund and the payment of legal fees.

Donna White

From: Anne Stadnychenko <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 12:34 PM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: The Retired Public Employees of Alaska, Inc. v. Kelly Tshibaka, Commissioner; Case No. 3AN-16-04537 CI

Dear Board Members,

The referenced case number was brought to my attention by the RPEA (of which I am a member), specifically regarding the December 26, 2019 letter written to Commissioner Tshibaka.

After going to countless meetings regarding our 2020 DVA health plan, listening to the State Town Hall conference calls, reading DRB handouts, and finally attending RPEA sponsored meetings on the plan, I am appalled by the Department of Administration's lack of transparency and questionable legal shenanigans with using our funds from the DVA premium account for fees itemized in the Dec. 26 letter.

The RPEA exists to protect the rights and benefits of Alaska's retired state and municipal government employees and teachers, and to support a fiscally sound retirement system. Ignoring a payment of \$289,386.96 awarded by the Court for attorney fees and costs is unacceptable. RPEA has to hire lawyers to help them write all these lawsuits and follow-up letters. It very much appears to me that the State DRB is stalling at every turn of this case and is not conducting business in the best interests of retired employees.

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I'm writing this email to advise you that as a legitimate PERS retiree I completely support all that RPEA has been doing to uphold their mission statement, including all assertions made in their December 26, 2019 letter to Commissioner Tshibaka. It is IMPOSSIBLE for individual retirees to scrutinize every cost and policy associated with our health plan on our own. We rely on RPEA's ongoing work to do that for us.

Thank you,
Anne Stadnychenko, retired CBJ employee
[REDACTED]

From: Jerome B. Johnson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 10:37 AM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: DRB actions to reduce Alaska retiree's constitutionally protected health benefits.

I am writing to express my objection to the Alaska's Division of Retirement and Benefits (DRM) refusal to pay attorneys fees and also to charge the retiree DVA premium account for their work to implement the court's ruling to reimplement our legacy plan. I am deeply disturbed by DRB's actions to reduce our health coverage and then to charge their costs in implementing court ordered redress to the DVA premium trust account that retirees pay for DVA coverage. I also object to the DRB unilaterally making changes to constitutionally protected retiree health coverage without first consulting we retirees. It is egregious that DRB first forces us through the Retired Public Employees of Alaska (RPEA) to take DRB to court to force redress and then force RPEA to return to court to force implementation of redress. And, then not only not pay RPEA attorney fees as awarded by the court, but to then charge our retiree account for DRB's work to implement the redress plan. These cost belong to DRM and the State of Alaska and shouldn't be shipped to the retirees. I expect better of DRB.

Jerome B. Johnson, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK, 9909
[REDACTED]

From: ddonald@gci.net <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 9:45 AM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: Legacy Plan development and Implement cost

No way should the DVA premium account pay this cost. Why should we pay the cost of an effort to screw us. I started work and in this retirement system 1982 and retired 1995. Since MODA took over have seen my dental benefits for implants reduced each year.

Who ever thought this up should be removed from their position.
David N Donald

From: Jeff Graham <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 9:24 AM

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To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: DVA trust funds

Please investigate the use of DVA funds to develop and implement the legacy plan. The newer "standard plan" was unconstitutional and the State Administration should be financially responsible.

From: Ed Beek <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 9:18 AM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: Latest spectral

After reading about the states latest avoidance of cost and court orders in the states lost RPEA moda lawsuit I cannot help but wonder who is the clown responsible for wasting the states time and soon court ordered funds. Is it some commissioner or administrator trying to prove his or her importance by Losing lawsuits and then ducking and dodging to prove importance. If I was his or her boss it would be out the door it doesn't take a rocket scientist to lose. Is this what Alaska want. Would look very closely at job performance and see if there is actually any wisdom in decisions.

Thanks Ed Beck
Ps Remember hopefully you will all be looking at retirement from the other side of the door. Is this the attitude you want to face.

From: Debbie <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 9:10 AM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: Encourage DRB to comply

I recently read where the DRB has been using inappropriate funding sources to pay for the DVA conversion. Also that they have not paid RPEA attorney fees as mandated by the Court. I encourage you to oversee this responsibility of the State of Alaska and remedy the situation. Thank you. Deborah S Boyd

From: Doug Norton <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 8:44 AM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: Concern about improper use of DVA premium funds

I agree with RPEA that "use of premium monies to re-implement the dental plan that the DRB unconstitutionally diminished in 2014 is in violation of the 3 statutes that control the trust, and that it violates the State's fiduciary duty to use the funds solely to pay for dental benefits and legitimate administrative costs."

I was assuming that the monies that have been accumulating in that fund since 2013 would be used to reimburse us for the charges we have had to pay out of pocket for the last six years.

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Thank you very much for all the time and effort the Board puts into protecting our constitutionally promised health benefits.

Sandra Smith-Norton

From: Cheryl Gilmour <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 8:42 AM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: DVA

I am sadden and greatly disappointed that the SOA would use retirement account funds to pay for administration legal fees occurred during court case with RPEA. This appears to be a fraudulent use of retirement trust funds. I suspect this use of retiree funds is not within the spirit of the law; when the court order required the state to pay legal fees and make the Dental plan whole. It is unreasonable to expect retirees to pay for legal action in which the court found the SOA provided a substantial diminishment of dental benefits.

Sincerely
Cheryl Finney -retiree

From: Susan Shaffer <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 7:54 AM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Subject: Stop taking money from your retired employees to pay YOUR fees for screwing up

TWIMC —

I have been informed that you are now charging the Legacy Plan in our retirement insurance account over two hundred thousand dollars as a fee to fix the illegal changes you made back in 2013 and for which you were fined by the courts. It is not coincidence in my view that the amount you are taking from our account is almost as much as the court awarded us, which you have yet to pay!

You are in violation of the State Constitution and State law. How dare you steal from accounts that we have built over the years. I implore you to do two things: Pay your court fine and return our money.

Individuals have to pay for their mistakes. States do too, especially when they abuse their retirees and survivors accounts. So said the courts. Do we have to take you to court yet again, simply to get what the court has already awarded us? You will lose again. You have been told that our retirement medical account is not your piggy bank, and if you do not pay what you owe, the court will undoubtedly fine you even more for deliberately stalling should we have to go back to court again. You need to just suck it up, apologize, and simply pay your bills!— Susan Shaffer

From: Bill Burgess <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2019 7:48 AM
To: Alaska Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (DOA sponsored) <alaskarhpab@alaska.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: DVA Premium Account Misappropriation of Funds

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I am a State of Alaska retiree. I am 78 years old and have been witnessing the outrageous corruption in our Federal Government. Now it seems the great State of Alaska is also becoming or has always been corrupt.

How dare you try and sneak mis-appropriating my DVA Premium account funds.

You not only disregard the State's Supreme Court decisions but are doing it in a routine way. You have disregarded three court decisions that I am aware of (attempt to reduce my dental benefits, get retirees to pay for setup of reduction coverage plan and not paying your legal fees to RPEA).

PLEASE HONOR THE STATE'S CONSTITUTION ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO US RETIREES.

I served the State of Alaska as an employee in and honorable way, please you serve the State in the same way.

It saddens me to have to write a letter like this one.

Sincerely,

William Burgess
