

Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (RHPAB)

Public Comment from May 2020

From: Charles Hagan [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2020 8:42 AM
To: Rasmussen, Teri L (DOA) <teri.rasmussen@alaska.gov>; Gamble, Michael T (DOA) <michael.gamble@alaska.gov>; Ricci, Emily K (DOA) <emily.ricci@alaska.gov>
Subject: Life time Medical Coverage

I am writing this email to all of you, to make sure it gets in the correct hands, and at the correct place. I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to voice my requests, to change the life time coverage of our medical insurance. The extreme hardships this set amount of lifetime coverage, when is depleted, will have on my life's finances will be absolutely devastating. With the care and medical treatments that my wife is having now, my estimate is that she will deplete this lifetime coverage in a year and a half, and she will be 61 1/2 years old. Once this is used up, I will continue to personally pay for treatments for her for as long as I can, and then have to file for bankruptcy. I have checked into purchasing coverage for her when the lifetime coverage has expired, but this also is completely unaffordable with the premium cost and the amount of deductible before any insurance coverage begins, and then coverage is only 80%.

I have done some research into the cost of living increase since this lifetime coverage was put in place in 2003. The average cost of living has increased 36%, the cost of medical care has increased 68%, housing has increased 46%, electricity has increased 53%, even bananas increased 20%. Health insurance premiums have increased 76%. I do not know how much our premiums have increased. I do however know that our lifetime coverage has not increased at all, and this needs to be changed some how, and the lifetime coverage be increased.

From: Larry Yerich [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 5:33 AM
To: Vrana, Paula R (DOA) <paula.vrana@alaska.gov>
Cc: Ricci, Emily K (DOA) <emily.ricci@alaska.gov>; Wood, Betsy R (DOA) <betsy.wood@alaska.gov>
Subject: Re: Requesting assistance

Dear Paula,

Thank you for your email and information pertaining to the issue I shared. I will participate today at 8:30 a.m. I am fine with my email being part of the public record. I deeply appreciate your thoughtful and gracious invitation for today's virtual meeting.

I am not on my computer every day, so apologize I didn't see your response yesterday.

Thanks,
Larry Yerich

From: Vrana, Paula R (DOA) <paula.vrana@alaska.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 10:06 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Ricci, Emily K (DOA) <emily.ricci@alaska.gov>; Wood, Betsy R (DOA) <betsy.wood@alaska.gov>
Subject: Re: Requesting assistance

Dear Mr. Yerich,

Thank you for sending in your feedback and for highlighting this important issue. The Division of Retirement and Benefits has been working with the Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (RHPAB) on a suite of proposals intended to modernize the AlaskaCare Retiree Health Plan. Adding a fitness membership benefit like you describe is one of the items that has been previously suggested by some of your fellow retirees, and the Board has included this item on its most current list of draft proposals to consider.

With your consent, we would like to share your comments with the Board, so that they may read them and so that they will become part of the public record on this topic. If you are not comfortable with us sharing your comments, please let us know. We will not forward your email without your express permission.

The RHPAB meets quarterly – your email is very timely as their next meeting is tomorrow, [May 27 at 8:30 am Alaska time](#). The meeting will be held via WebEx and is open to the public. You can find the meeting information here: <https://doa.alaska.gov/drb/alaskacare/retiree/advisory.html>. I highly encourage you to participate in the meeting and consider giving public testimony on your desire to see fitness memberships added as a benefit to the AlaskaCare retiree health plan.

Thank you again for contacting us, and thank you very much for your service to the State of Alaska and to the United States.

Kind Regards,
Paula Vrana
Deputy Commissioner
Department of Administration
(907) 500-8650

From: Larry Yerich [REDACTED]
Date: May 23, 2020 at 11:52:01 AM AKDT
To: "stephanie.alexander@alaska.gov" <stephanie.alexander@alaska.gov>
Cc: "kelly.tshibaka@alaska.gov" <kelly.tshibaka@alaska.gov>
Subject: Requesting assistance

Hello Stephanie and Kelly,

I am writing this Memorial Day weekend to ask your guidance in how to surmount an issue, for which no one seems to have paid attention to or know anything about resolving.

This encompasses supporting the physical fitness, emotional state, mental health benefits and overall well-being that State of Alaska retirees would attain through having an available gym membership.

I find it incomprehensible there are absolutely no provisions through the State's retirement medical insurance policy, Aetna, providing any such vehicle for retirees, of which I am one.

On a similar, personal note – I turned 65 [REDACTED] at which time Medicare came into my life. Even they have nothing for seniors pursuing a healthy lifestyle of fitness through a gym membership in Alaska.

I find all this unfathomable, in the face of every medical and scientific source, that physical fitness for (in my case) seniors/retirees is a necessity for quality of life and longevity.

I am a disabled military veteran (Vietnam-era). I maintained a healthy lifestyle through a gym membership at "The Alaska Club" for many years. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. It is of paramount importance I have access to my gym to begin the process of a pursuit of fitness, and all other aforementioned benefits only such an establishment can provide. There is no other option for me.

As a retiree, I cannot afford the \$80.00 per month basic membership at The Alaska Club. I am baffled there is no provision for me (or any other retiree) to avail themselves to a gym membership. And, that is what brings me to both of you.

I spoke to my Aetna case manager, who suggested I reach out to you to bring this exceedingly ignored subject in efforts to not only shed light on it, but to initiate change. Time is of the essence.

I look forward to hearing back from you in this regard.

Most respectfully,

Lawrence "Larry" Yerich

[REDACTED]
2401 Bentzen Circle, Apartment A-24

Anchorage, AK 99517

Home phone: (907) 929-1319 (landline)