On the Move

August-September 2017

Budget fully funds Community Care Program

The Community Care Program that provides home health care for seniors is fully funded in the FY17 and FY18 state budgets.

AFSCME retirees worked as part of the Illinois Alliance of Retired Americans (IARA) to beat back a harmful 31% cut pushed by the Rauner Administration.

The IARA held actions across Illinois, with AFSCME retirees attending and speaking about the importance of home health care. Due to the hard work of advocacy groups, the Community Care Program will continue to provide seniors with the care they need.

Privatized benefit administration doesn’t work for retirees

The Rauner Administration’s zeal to privatize the administration of group health benefits via a hastily-implemented contract with a Canadian firm—Morneau Shepell—has resulted in a multitude of mistakes in the administration of the state’s health insurance program. Many of those errors have created major problems for SERS and SURS retirees (see page 7 for more on this story.)

The CMS Benefit Choice period for non-Medicare retirees concluded on May 31. Given all the problems that have arisen as a result of Morneau Shepell’s errors, AFSCME is recommending that all non-Medicare eligible retirees who participate in the CMS Group Health plan carefully review your benefit information and monitor your pension check deductions regularly to ensure there are no errors.

If you experience any problems or have any questions, contact the MyBenefits Marketplace Service Center at 844-251-1777 and AFSCME Council 31 Director of Research and Employee Benefits Martha Merrill at 312-641-6060.

Repealing the Affordable Care Act

On the evening of July 25, the Senate Finance Committee approved the Graham-Cassidy-Heller-Essenberg (GCHHE) amendment to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in a vote of 14-11, with Vice President Pence casting the deciding vote to continue to debate the repeal legislation.

GOP Senators voted on a motion to proceed, which is a procedural step to continue to aggressively repeal and replace the ACA. This vote passed narrowly, 50-49, with Vice President Pence casting the deciding vote to continue to debate the repeal legislation.

Following the motion to proceed, GOP senators attempted to pass an amendment on July 25, which included repealing the ACA without a replacement.

Other amendments that failed to get enough votes to pass included a “skinny” repeal, which would have eliminated the employer mandate to offer health care to employees in addition to any individual mandate. Repealing the ACA and making cuts to Medicaid would have harmed 9 million seniors that rely on the ACA for health care. Some 874,000 Illinoisans faced losing their health insurance if the repeal legislation became law.

“Young people. People of color. People in the past who have been the most vulnerable to health care discrimination—people with pre-existing conditions—will lose their health care,” said AFSCME President Lee Saunders.

“With phone calls, emails, rallies and more over the last several months, they demanded that their elected officials in Washington represent their views. And they will continue to raise their voices until Congress abandons any effort to destroy the nation’s health care system.”

Health care victory

Health care bills are a top priority for AFSCME retirees. AFSCME’s retirement security work is driven by AFSCME retirees who have lived through the health care battles. Communication fosters solidarity. Make sure you are up to date on crucial information effecting changes and threats to your retirement security.

If your personal information has changed, please fill out the information below and mail it to:
AFSCME Retirees Chapter 31
815 Second Street
PO Box 2328
Springfield, IL 62705

Ruth Meyer: A woman of distinction

The YWCA of Alton honored AFSCME retiree Ruth Meyer, a Sub-Chapter 59 trustee, with this year’s Women of Distinction Award. Honorees were selected based on their boundless commitment to community through their service to others and their compassionate leadership to help improve the quality of life for everyone in their communities.

Meyer has excelled in advocacy both in and out of the workforce. She dedicated 18 years of public service to the Department of Children and Family Services as a child welfare specialist, while also serving as steward for AFSCME Local 1805.

After retiring, Meyer was a Peace Corps volunteer during the civil war in Nicaragua, volunteered with the Red Cross during the Oklahoma City bombings, and worked as a street medic during the Ferguson protests.

“I was born a social worker and I will die a social worker,” Meyer said. “I represent and stand up for people because it is the proper thing to do.”

Retirees: Update Your Information Today!

Knowledge is a powerful arsenal as we prepare for upcoming battles. Communication fosters solidarity. Make sure you are up to date on crucial information effecting changes and threats to your retirement security.

Contact Information Change Form

Name: __________________________
Address: _______________________
Email: __________________________
Cell Phone*: ______________________
Home Phone: _____________________

* to receive text alerts from AFSCME Council 31
Standard message and data rates apply.

Members of AFSCME Retirees Sub-Chapter 67 (Kane County) at their regular meeting.

Sen. Andy Manar joined members of AFSCME Retirees Sub-Chapter 67 (Decatur) at their regular meeting.

Health care victory

Americans held strong and beat back Republican efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA), an assault that posed a particular threat to millions of America’s senior citizens.

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