

# THE FUND OFFICE REPORT

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OCTOBER 2011

## STEAMFITTERS

### WELFARE FUND TRUSTEES ADOPT CHANGES TO HEALTH COVERAGE

The Welfare Fund Trustees have adopted changes to your health coverage. A special notice was previously mailed to all members. The following is an excerpt from that special notice. These changes will be discussed at the Quarterly Meeting on October 26th when Fund Administrator Kevin Driscoll will be present.

#### ACTIVE AND NON-MEDICARE RETIREES

##### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The \$250 per person annual front-end deductible for all active and retired non-Medicare eligible members and dependents will be eliminated. All other aspects of the drug coverage remain unchanged.

##### HOSPITAL & MEDICAL BENEFITS

The Empire Deluxe PPO will be discontinued. All active and retired non-Medicare eligible members and dependents will be enrolled in the Empire EPO. **The EPO has the same exact hospital and medical providers in its network as the Deluxe PPO has.** There will be no change in the co-pays, national scope of providers or other components of the plan. **However, there are absolutely no out-of-network benefits (other than in cases of an emergency).** You must use a hospital or medical provider that is in the EPO network. The entire cost of using a non-EPO hospital or provider will be your personal responsibility.

Empire BlueCross BlueShield will be mailing information and new ID cards during the month of December.

#### MEDICARE RETIREES

##### HOSPITAL, MEDICAL & PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

All Medicare eligible members or dependents who are covered under the Welfare Fund's retiree coverage will be enrolled in the **Empire MediBlue Freedom PPO**, a type of program that is commonly referred to as a "Medicare Advantage-Prescription Drug" (MA-PD) plan. Thus, retired members and dependents (spouses and/or children) may be enrolled in two separate plans (Empire EPO or Empire MediBlue Freedom PPO) depending on their individual status under Medicare. If you are eligible for Medicare (based on age or disability) you must be enrolled in both Parts A and B.

The Empire MediBlue Freedom PPO is a national network. You can use any medical provider in the network or any provider who participates with Medicare and pay the same co-pay and receive the exact same benefits. However, if you use a provider outside of the network who **does**

not participate with Medicare you will have absolutely no benefits. The entire cost of using a provider who **does not** participate with Medicare will be your personal responsibility.

All prescription drugs will be obtained through the MediBlue Freedom PPO, including both retail and mail order. Certain generic drugs under their *Select Generics* program are free. If you obtain any drugs outside the plan you will have no coverage.

You will be receiving a detailed schedule of benefits and information packet from Empire in the next few weeks. New ID cards will be mailed to you from Empire in mid-December. **In addition, several educational meetings and a Dial-In group conference call, specific for the Empire MediBlue Freedom PPO plan, will be scheduled and announced in the near future.**

Some highlights of the MediBlue Freedom PPO plan include:

- inpatient and outpatient hospital services at no cost
- ambulance services at no cost
- emergency room care with a \$65 co-pay
- \$30 co-pay for office visits (same co-pay as active and retired non- Medicare retirees pay)
- diagnostic tests (x-rays, lab services, etc.) at no cost
- prescription drugs with the following co-pays:
  - \$10 retail for generic drugs for 30 day fill  
(*Select Generic* drugs are free)
  - \$ 30 retail for brand name drugs for 30 day fill
  - \$ 60 retail for specialty drugs for 30 day fill
  - \$ 20 mail order for generic drugs for 90 day fill  
(*Select Generic* drugs are free)
  - \$ 60 mail order for brand name drugs for 90 day fill
  - \$ 60 mail order for specialty drugs limited to a 30 day fill
- dedicated customer service

You will be automatically enrolled in the Empire MediBlue Freedom PPO medical and drug plan. If you do not want to enroll in this plan, you can complete an opt-out form which will be in the benefits and information packet you will receive in the near future from Empire. Please note that if you opt-out of the Empire MediBlue Freedom PPO plan no other coverage is available to you through the Welfare Fund.

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#### **REVISED ELIGIBILITY RULES (ACTIVE)**

The four rotating quarter 750 hour requirement for eligibility will be increased to 1,000 hours as of **January 1, 2013**. Thus, to maintain or obtain eligibility as of January 1, 2013 you must have worked in covered employment for 1,000 or more hours, in total, during the fourth quarter of 2011 and the first, second and third quarters of 2012.

#### **REVISED ELIGIBILITY RULES (RETIREE)**

In order to qualify for retiree health coverage, as of January 1, 2012, you must retire with no less than 20 years of credited service in the Pension Fund. The current requirement is 15 years of credited service. In addition, you must be covered the day before your pension effective date or 20 of the 40 quarters immediately prior to your pension effective date.