



State Retiree Health Care Programs

Dear Legislator:

As a constituent and a retired state employee represented by the Public Employees Federation (PEF), I write to express my pleasure that this Executive Budget does not include any proposals which would unilaterally cut the health care benefits of state retirees. The previous administration's Executive Budgets included several proposals which were ultimately rejected by the Legislature.

Instead of cuts to retiree health care programs, I ask that you include in the final budget a way to ensure that New York state retirees do not lose healthcare benefits when they are required to enroll in Medicare. Specifically, there is pending legislation (S.4465/A.3896) that would allow for the state's insurance to continue as secondary insurance in order to provide the same level of skilled nursing care for state retirees and dependents who are now covered by Medicare.

In some instances, Medicare coverage represents a reduction in the number of days nursing care is provided and also requires prior hospitalization for the benefit. This is a reduction in service for some state retirees who are allowed more days of skilled nursing and no prior hospitalization under the state's insurance plan. While PEF understands that the state requires Medicare enrollment for eligible state retirees to reduce the financial cost, we believe that no reduction in services should be allowed.

This legislation would rectify the situation that some retirees have encountered. While it may only impact a few former state employees, it is needed to correct a flaw in the system and provide them with the peace of mind that New York is still providing the quality healthcare to its retirees that they were promised.

As my elected representative, I kindly ask that you work with the leadership in your house to include this legislation (S.4465/A.3896) as part of the final negotiated budget. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,
