

TOWN OF MIDDLEBORO RETIREES INSURANCE GROUP (MRIG)
MIDDLEBORO.RETIREES.INS.GROUP@GMAIL.COM
MAY 2011

MRIG ANNUAL MEETING

MRIG's Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 24, 2011 at 1:30 PM. The meeting will be held at the Senior Multi-Service Center (COA), 558 Plymouth Street, Middleboro, MA.

Below is the slate of Executive Committee candidates as put forward by the Nominating Committee. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

Charles Armanetti	George Chace	Mary Cook	James Farrah
Barbara Hadsell	Lynne Leary	Sue McCusker	Tom Rogers
Gene Turney	Gail Twomey	Betty Wainwright	

The Executive Committee would like to thank Patty Lacerda for volunteering to serve on the Nominating Committee.

The Executive Committee will give a summation of the past years activities and a short question and answer period will be held. If you have any specific questions you would like addressed please e-mail or call one of the Committee members so that any research required to answer your question can be done ahead of time. Any questions directed from the floor we would try to answer then.

We will try to keep the meeting as brief as possible so that everyone can enjoy the social end of our meeting.

DONATIONS TO COA FOOD PANTRY

The COA has been most helpful to us by providing us a meeting place at no cost whenever we have asked. As a Thank You we are asking that anyone attending the meeting to consider bringing a donation to their food program. This is a suggested list of items needed by the lunch program. We have put in bold face what we have been told are the most needed items.

Coffee and Decaffeinated Coffee	Aluminum Foil
Plastic Wrap	Dishwashing soap
Laundry Detergent	Brown Sugar
Cooking Spray	Aluminum pans - Deep Lasagna size
Hot and Cold Disposable Cups	"All Fruit" jams and jellies
Peanut Butter	Canned ham, Spam, chicken
Paper goods – Kleenex, etc.	Canned low salt HEARTY soups and stews
Boxed crackers	Low Sugar (light syrup or juice) fruits
Prepared Jell-O and Jell-O/fruit cups	Low Sugar prepared pudding cups
Canned hash or Vienna sausages	Canned potatoes
Supermarket Gift Certificates and Cash donations	

Because parking is limited the COA has asked that those who can carpool please try to do so.

IMPORTANT UPDATE: MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON MUNICIPAL HEALTH INSURANCE (The information below is drawn from the MTA website <http://www.massteacher.org> - a good place to check frequently for updates)

Most recent update for those with computer/email access – go to www.massteacher.org - read article “Protect your voice in deciding health care coverage”. It will provide easy links for emailing your Senator now.

Mass. House votes to curtail collective bargaining over health insurance

MTA President Paul Toner vowed to take the fight to the Massachusetts Senate after the House of Representatives voted in the middle of the night on April 26 to significantly curtail collective bargaining over municipal health insurance.

“We are very upset, and we are angry,” Toner said. “We deplore any vote against unions and collective bargaining.”

The 113 to 42 House vote gives municipalities the unfettered right to force employees into the Group Insurance Commission or to make plan design changes that increase employee costs to GIC benefit levels. *As the fight now moves to the Senate, it is vital that legislators understand the importance of this issue to us and the extreme disappointment we feel in the actions of the House.*

Action for MRIG members to take:

1. Is your state rep among the 42 who stood up for collective bargaining? Follow the link below to find out – a “Yes” vote was one to *curtail* bargaining rights, a “No” vote stood with us to protect collective bargaining rights. *Contact your state representative to send thanks if he/she voted “No”.* If your representative voted “Yes” you might want to let him/her know how you feel about that.
<http://www.mass.gov/legis/journal/RollCallPdfs/187/00051.pdf?Session=187&RollCall=00051>
For those living in Middleboro, it is interesting to note that **Rep. Calter voted “No”, Rep. Canessa voted “Yes” and Rep. Straus voted “Present”.**
2. The Senate is expected to take up its budget, including the health care measure, in mid-May. After the Senate acts, the budget will go to a conference committee and then to Governor Deval Patrick, who has stated that public employees need a meaningful voice in health care decisions and that he will not sign a “Wisconsin-type” bill. *It is urgent that you contact your senator and ask for his/her support for the union coalition proposal.*

Toner noted that the unions’ efforts on municipal health insurance are centered on protecting retirees and the very sick, which can be best accomplished by ensuring that current employees and retirees have voice in the process of determining their medical plans. He also pointed out that the unions have offered a proposal that would save towns and cities \$100 million in health care costs, the same amount as the House plan, while preserving collective bargaining.

The Senate has generally taken a more positive view toward the unions’ position that cost –shifting can take place, but that employees should have a chance to negotiate over how changes unfold.

The unions' have two other major "asks" – that some of the savings be dedicated to reducing costs for very sick employees who have high out-of-pocket expenses and that retirees have a seat at the table through Section 19 coalition bargaining. A key goal is to protect the vulnerable from having to choose between medical care and food or housing.

HEALTH INSURANCE NOTIFICATIONS

The Town Manager and Treasurer, Judy MacDonald have advised us that the Town may be contacting retirees who currently subscribe to Medicare and use the HMO as their supplemental insurance. The reason the Town will be contacting you is the Town and the retiree may be able to save money by changing insurance plans. It would be wise to get a printout comparing the benefits of your current plan with those of the Managed Care for Seniors plan before making a change. The Town Treasurer's Office should be able to provide you with such brochures. Please note also that you are currently paying 20% (currently under litigation for the increase from 10%) of your HMO Blue plan and would be paying 25% of the Managed Care for Seniors plan.

Also, all retirees should be on the lookout for updated insurance information being sent out from the Treasurer's Office. As part of the new law "The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" also known as national health care reform, certain preventative services (routine adult exams), screenings (blood pressure, cholesterol) and tests (colonoscopies, mammogram) can no longer require cost sharing (co-pays). (Those in parenthesis are only examples of what is covered.) Some of the information being sent out is time sensitive, in that it is only available during the open enrollment period. So watch your mail.

MIIA has also been meeting with the Town regarding setting up the next years Wellness Program. Starting in September the Heart Matters program will be starting. This program includes nutrition, exercise and some stress reduction. They are also trying to set up a Walking Program for retirees and in 2012 a stress reduction series "Relax, Renew & Rebalance".

TOWN ELECTION

We want to thank everyone who went out to vote at the recent town election. The Executive Committee is hopeful for an open line of communication with the Town with the new Board of Selectmen.

DUES / CONTACT INFORMATION

Most recently there has been a rush of information we have wanted to share with our membership regarding legislative action on health insurance for retirees. If you are still receiving this newsletter via the U.S. Postal Service and have an e-mail address please share it with us as we can't produce notices and mail them as rapidly as we can e-mail information.

In case you need to change any information, or haven't paid your dues for the current year we have again included a dues form. If you don't know whether or not you are paid please contact our Treasurer, Mary Cook, at richard.cook2@verizon.net or 508-821-2112 and she will verify the information for you.

TOWN OF MIDDLEBORO RETIREES INSURANCE GROUP (MRIG)
MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION – 2011 - \$5.00

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY/TOWN: _____ ZIP: _____
E-MAIL: _____
TELEPHONE: _____

(This information is confidential and will not be shared with any other person or organization.)

Make checks payable to: MRIG
 c/o Mary Cook
 130 Scadding Street
 Taunton, MA 02780

Frequently the Executive Committee has had to make “educated guesses” about the number of people enrolled in HMO, PPO and Medex plans with the Town. Because the HIPPA laws regarding giving out information about peoples medical coverage prevent the Town from giving us this information we are asking the following Survey Question:

What type of medical plan are you currently enrolled in?

HMO individual HMO family
PPO individual PPO family
Number of MEDEX supplement plans carried