

## News Flash!

To help properly preserve and anticipate upcoming Retiree Health Benefits, employer retirement contributions have been increased.

The employer contribution rate payable for members of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System has been increased, effective July 1, 2009, from 8.14% to 8.54% of the covered payroll of members. This rate is required under Senate Bill 287.

The change includes a .4% increase in the Retirees Health Plan Reserve from 4.1% to 4.5%.

Once remitted to the Retirement division, the contributions will be deposited as follows:

- Retirement Systems Pension Fund (3.36%)
- Death Benefit Trust Fund (.16%)
- Retirees' Health Plan Reserve (4.50%)
- Disability Income Plan (.16%)

Optional Retirement also saw a boost of contribution to the Retirees' Health Plan Reserve in the amount of .4%, bringing the total contribution on each members behalf as 4.5% The state's contribution to the ORP carrier remains at 6.84%.

The mandatory employee responsibility will remain at 6%.

## Spotlight on: Protecting your Identity

*Vendors serving UNC Asheville employees are obligated and expected to provide extraordinary measures to insure that employee data is properly maintained. As technology evolves, more stringent measures are put into place periodically to keep security guarded and limit fraud.*

One such change is currently in process at AON Consulting, the company that handles the Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) for employees participating in this NC Flex benefit. Rather than using an employee's social security number for identification of claims, charges and inquiries, the company will be implementing member ID numbers over the next few weeks.

Employees who participate in the health care of dependent care FSA programs will receive their new member ID numbers over the next few weeks. Participants can then use this number to file claims, access their account online or receive customer support via the call center at 877.371.2926.

## July Benefit Changes Have Taken Effect

State Health Plan (SHP) members began seeing slight changes in their health benefits after July 1 including:

- Higher copays, deductibles and out of pocket expenses;
- Medications are now limited to a 30-day supply per copay (rather than the previous 34 day supply allowed)
- Members who prefer a brand name medication even if a generic equivalent is offered, will be required to pay the generic copay plus the difference between the Plan's cost of the brand name drug and the Plan's cost of the generic drug
- Prescription copay and coverage changes especially related to those considered "specialty" medicines. Specialty medications are typically injectable medications administered either by you or a health care professional, and they often require special handling. Conditions commonly requiring specialty medications include anemia, hepatitis C, multiple sclerosis, asthma, growth hormone deficiency, rheumatoid arthritis and hemophilia. For more information about specialty medications or your pharmacy benefits, visit the Pharmacy area of the State Health Plan website at <http://www.shpnc.org/pharmacy.html>

More information about the benefits provided by each plan can be found by visiting [http://www.shpnc.org/pdf/health-plan-benefit-summ\\_2009-2010.pdf](http://www.shpnc.org/pdf/health-plan-benefit-summ_2009-2010.pdf)

## Did You Know?

State Health Plan members may obtain diabetic blood glucose testing strips under the pharmacy benefit.

Members who use insulin may receive up to 150 testing strips every month, and those who do not use insulin may receive up to 150 testing strips every 3 months. The copay for these quantities depends on the brand of testing strips you use. If you use larger quantities, you may obtain additional testing strips under your medical benefit, as before.

Members can also use their NC Flex Health Care Flexible Spending Account through the North Carolina Office of State Personnel to defray the cost of additional strips. For more information [click here](#)

## NC Flex Convenience Card Is Now More Convenient

As of July 1st, filing your Flexible Spending Account (FSA) claims for certain convenience card purchases became a whole lot easier!

New IRS rules allow you to now use your N Flex Convenience card at participating pharmacies, discount stores and supermarkets that can identify FSA-Eligible items at checkout. Officially touted as an Information Inventory Approval System (IIAS), the new rules also mean that you *cannot* use your card at pharmacies, discount stores, department stores and supermarkets that do not participate even if you used your card at these stores prior to July 1.

To determine who is currently participating the IIAS program, visit the special portion of the NC Flex site that provides an up to date list of participants under the 'Compliant Stores' area [here](#) or contact AON Consulting at 877.371.2926

To utilize the new convenience of IIAS, employees will bring their prescriptions, vision products, OTCs and other purchases to the checkout at participating stores. Present your NC Flex Convenience card for payment and, if the swiped transaction is approved (ie: there are sufficient funds in the account and at least some of the purchases are FSA-eligible), the amount of the FSA-eligible purchases is deducted from the account balance. In most cases, no receipt follow up is required. The clerk will then ask for another form of payment for the non-FSA-eligible items. If the card swipe transaction is declined, the clerk will ask for another form of payment for the total amount of the purchase. The receipt will identify the FSA-eligible items and may also show a subtotal of the FSA-eligible purchases.

For more about these enhancements:  
[NC Flex Hot Topics](#)  
[For a list of compliant stores](#)