



UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA  
ASHEVILLE

# Benefits Roundup

*June 2009*

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## News Flash!

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Retirement statements are now available online through the NC Treasurer's [ORBIT link](#). A copy of this report will be sent to members at their listed addresses in June. To view Frequently Asked Questions about these statements, click [here](#)

## Spotlight on: Recent Benefit Changes

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There have been a variety of changes affecting UNC Asheville employees over the past few months. While some changes are small, others are more long-lasting. An overview of some of these adjustments include:

- An Executive Order 11 by Governor Beverly Purdue mandated that all state employees' pay be reduced by .5% of their annual salary split between the months of May and June. A deduction in June will be the second and final deduction required by Executive Order 11. This will be noted in the 'deductions' area of your payroll stub under the term 'salary reductio.'

- New time sheets have been released to help

## Treasurer Updates Members on Retirement System

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*The Message from the State Treasurer listed below was printed in On the Horizon: A Newsletter for Public Employees in North Carolina sent recently to members via U.S. Mail. To view the newsletter in its entirety, visit [here](#).*

There has been a steady stream of news reports in recent months about the financial crisis and its impact on pension funds, both public and private.

Know that our retirement system remains healthy. We have enough cash on hand to meet our obligations, now and in the future. We continue to be one of the strongest pension funds in the country, despite the current market volatility and the change in North Carolina's pension fund value.

However, we must cope with the new reality resulting from the market losses of 2008. The General Assembly and local governments will need to dramatically increase employer contributions. The funding status and health of the system can rapidly erode if these contributions are not made, even if we continue to meet our investment return goal of 7.25%.

My staff and I are working with elected leaders to help them understand the pension system and their obligation to fully fund it. North Carolina has a tradition of fiscal prudence and honoring its obligation to people like you - people who dedicate their lives to public service each day. It's a tradition we must uphold in bad times and in good.

As for the Office of State Treasurer's role, I am working with our expert investment managers to navigate the markets to get the best return on every dollar we invest.

We will continue to diversify our holdings in stocks, bonds and other financial instruments to help fortify our pension fund from potential economic volatility. This contributes to the continued overall financial strength of the retirement system.

At times like these, it helps to take the long view. There will always be storms, but it's how we sail our ship that counts.

You can do your part by taking the time to review your Annual Benefits Statement. It contains helpful information about your membership in the North Carolina Retirement System and provides a snap-shot of what you have vs. what you need at retirement.

Reading the benefits handbook and guidance publications found on the Retirement Systems website, [www.myncretirement.com](http://www.myncretirement.com), can help answer most questions. If you have additional questions, please contact our member services center at 1.877.627.3287 or 919.807.3050 (Raleigh area only).

employees track and document the Flexible Furlough time mandated by Executive Order 11. In addition to noting the furlough time on time sheets, a separate request form similar to a bonus leave request is available. It must be signed by both the employee and supervisor and turned in to Human Resources. Both forms can be found on the Human Resources Web site [click here](#).

- July 1 brings changes to the State Health Plan (SHP) including new rates for dependent coverage. Higher copays, deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses will go also into effect at this time. Employees who cover dependents on the State Health Plan can expect the new premiums to take effect in their June payroll check.

- There will be shifting of fund lineups for some Optional Retirement Program and 403b accounts as some funds are closed and transitioned into new funds. Separate communications from your retirement provider will be sent to those affected by the changes.

It is an honor to service as your State Treasurer, and I hope this information will be helpful to you in planning for your financial future.

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## **Did You Know?**

Effective July 1, 2009, the state health plan has redefined when a stepchild is able to be covered under the state health plan? The ratified bill states that the term, "dependent child also includes a stepchild of the member who is married to the stepchild's natural parent. To be eligible, the stepchild must have his or her primary residence with the member," which is later defined as living in the member's primary household 50 % or more of the time.

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## **Help At Your Fingertips**

Several Web Sites are available to help employees gain in-depth information about their benefits. Some helpful links include:

UNC Asheville Human Resources: <http://www.unca.edu/hr>

The State Health Plan: <http://www.shpnc.org/>

General Administration's Office of Human Resources:  
<http://www.northcarolina.edu/content.php/hr/index.htm>

The NC Retirement System: <http://www.nctreasurer.com/dsthome>

NC Flex Benefits: <http://www.ncflex.org>

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## **Remember!**

Identification cards reflecting the new SHP changes may be up to three weeks late due to an unusually late enrollment period. Your subscriber and group number will remain the same so use your old card until the new one arrives. If you have not received a new card by July 20, contact Amy Owenby at [aowenby@unca.edu](mailto:aowenby@unca.edu) or 250.2357.

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## **Social Security Validation Requested**

Federal law now mandates that claims payors like Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) report the Social Security Numbers (SSN) for all enrollees ages 45 and older on a quarterly basis. The applicable law is section 111 of the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007 (MMSEA) (Public Law 110-173). To ensure accuracy and validate the SSN on file, BCBSNC mailed letters on June 9, 2009, to all State Health Plan dependents over the age 45. To review a sample copy of the letter, [click here](#). For further information on the mandatory reporting requirements under this law, please visit the Centers for

Medicare and Medicaid Services Mandatory Reporting Section at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MandatoryInsRep/>.

