

UCI EMERITAE/I NEWS

VOL. 2, NO. 3

April, 1995

LOCK-IN: A LOSS OF ANNUITANT MEDICARE RIGHTS

Donald Fosket
UCI Representative to UCFW

The systemwide Faculty Welfare Committee (UCFW) recently considered an issue that may be of great concern to some emeritae/i, specifically those annuitants with HMO-type medical insurance who are Medicare eligible. The Office of the President (OP), in negotiating health care insurance contracts for this year, deprived these annuitants of the right to receive Medicare payments for medical services received outside their HMOs. They are "locked-in" to the HMO health care provider network and cannot seek covered medical treatment outside this network.

Previously, annuitants who were Medicare eligible and covered by Kaiser-North, Health Net and PacifiCare were able to obtain Medicare coverage for medical services they received from health care providers who did not belong to their HMO. This was highly valuable for some. It permitted individuals

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REFLECTIONS ON RETIREMENT

Murray Krieger
University Research Professor

So far retirement has, for the most part, seemed to me not that different--in my academic busyness--from my lengthy pre-retirement years. In part this results from the fact that I was fortunate enough to have my title of University Professor changed to University Research Professor in order to minimize any disruption in my various endeavors. So I have been engaging in many of the same sort of pursuits as before, except that, with the elimination of my teaching obligations, my research and professional activities have actually increased.

First, I have been free to expand my travel and lecture program. Indeed, my retirement has opened up my calendar, so that I can accept engagements abroad whenever they occur, without having to restrict my travel to periods outside the teaching quarters. For example, beginning in late November, I was able to spend three weeks of lectures, consultations, and conferences in Taipei, Kaohsiung, Hong Kong, and Singapore. In previous years my

normal teaching schedule would not have permitted such an extended absence. Second, I have been free to concentrate in greater detail upon my role in collaborative research activities. I am currently organizing projects and symposia for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences as well as the newly constituted International Conference on Humanistic Discourses, which is headquartered in my office at UCI. Finally, I have been free to continue and indeed to increase my work on articles and booklength manuscripts; and publication proceeds at a faster rate than ever.

But I would be misrepresenting the "feel" of this first retirement year if I did not report also the special joy I have taken in the freedom occasionally to play the truant from the scholar's life: a week in the desert last fall, two weeks in the Caribbean in last winter, and the days here and there when Joan and I, without previous planning, just have taken off.

So it's been a great first year. VERIP III was undoubtedly a self-inflicted disaster for the university, but so far it's been an unmixed blessing for me.

ABOUT SPEAKER: WERNER Z. HIRSCH

- ◆ UC Retirement System Board: Member 1986-90
- ◆ UCRS Subcommittee on Investments: Chair 1986-90
- ◆ UC Welfare Committee: 1984-86 (Chair), 1989-90
- ◆ UCWC Retirement Subcommittee: 1986 ff.

NEXT EMERITAE/I LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday May 2, 11:45 to 2:00 p.m.
Library Lounge, University Club

TOPIC: IS THE LONG-TERM SAFETY OF THE UC RETIREMENT SYSTEM THREATENED?

UCLA PROFESSOR EMERITUS, WERNER Z. HIRSCH
Former Member of the State Retirement Board

(See stub below for reservation and other details)

Cut on this line

FOR LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS: Please mail this stub with your check (\$16 per person, \$28 per couple) payable to UCI EMERITAE/I ASSOCIATION. Send to Robert C. Warner at 1609 Temple Hills Drive, Laguna Beach, CA 92651. [Tel. 714-494-6434]

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We would appreciate corrections in address or contributions date shown on label. SPECIAL MENU: _____

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LOCK-IN (continued from page 1)

who may have been forced to join an HMO in recent years to retain the services of physicians who knew them and their medical problems and had been treating them for many years. Of course, they still are free to seek medical services outside their HMO, but now it is at their own expense. With the "lock-in" provisions of the new health care contracts, they no longer are able to receive Medicare payments for any medical care obtained outside their HMO.

The UC Faculty Welfare Committee is concerned because: (1) the action was taken without consultation with, or even the knowledge of, UCFW, and (2) eligible annuitants could have been given the alternative of accepting a particular HMO either with the "lock-in" provision or with a "non-lock-in" provision. In the latter case, the additional cost of the insurance might be borne by the annuitant. We assume that the reason the Office of the President (OP) negotiated contracts with a "lock-in" provision is that this appeared to reduce the overall cost of the health insurance.

Certainly this is a laudable goal, provided that it does not infringe upon the rights of some of the insured. But, a valuable benefit and right appears to have been negotiated away without faculty discussion or prior notice.

On March 1, 1995 UCFW passed the following resolution: In view of the harmful Medicare "lock-in" decisions made by OP without proper consultation, (a) serious efforts should be made to undo the "lock-in" decision and, if that is not legally possible, an effort should be made to create its equivalent, (b) no additional UC health plans should be "locked-in" without providing for continuation of "non-lock-in" coverage for those eligible for this benefit, and (c) OP should formulate a plan to consult with UCFW when contemplating any further changes in medical coverage for annuitants--or others.

As the UCI representative to UCFW, I would be interested in hearing from those annuitants who may have been affected by the "lock-in" provision. You may contact me by email (DEFOSKET@UCI.EDU), phone (714-824-4709), or FAX (714-824-4709).

ASSOCIATION FINANCES

Your mailing label affixed below shows the date of your most recent dues contribution.

Association dues are voluntary. They cover such expenses as reproduction and mailings, travel twice a year by our representative to CUCEA meetings, and \$1.00 capitation dues sent annually for CUCEA's support.

A donation for Fiscal 1994-95, payable to the UCI EMERITAE/I ASSOCIATION, sent to our Treasurer (see address on the Luncheon Coupon on Page 1) will help defray Association expenses. A \$25 check is suggested (or whatever you may wish to offer).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LETTERS-TO-THE-EDITOR:

We warmly welcome letters to the editor. Letters selected for publication will be those that give readers a fuller understanding of topics of common interest. Because space is limited, a letter should be no more than 500 words (two manuscript pages, typed double-space).

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APRIL 3 ACTIONS:

Extended congratulations to David Easton upon his selection by the Alumni Association for Lauds and Laurels *Distinguished Research Award*.

Noted with strong approval that the university is aiming to extend Prudential High Option insurance for next year.

Noted with thanks Don Fosket's favorable audit review of Treasurer Bob Warner's reliable accounts.

Applauded Chair Gottschalk for arranging a voice mail line for the Association: (tel.) 824-8989, (password) 6204.

NEXT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING:

Monday, May 1, 9 to 11 a.m.

in our offices (545 Administration).

All Association members including spouses are encouraged to participate in these monthly meetings.

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