



# **Staff Education Association Retirees VEBA**

## **Newsletter**

**April 2020 – vol. 10**

**SEARV 2019-2020**

The issue on everyone's mind right now is the Covid-19 pandemic and not only its impact on our families but on our health care trust and its ability to survive such a tragic event. As a Board we initiated from the beginning an Investment Policy Statement (you can find a copy on the web site ([www.searveba.com](http://www.searveba.com)) that lays out a framework for our portfolio. This includes structure (low cost and conservative), makeup (well diversified/allocated) and most importantly the monitoring of the funds in an unemotional way. There is no doubt that so far the current crisis has had a negative impact on the fund's investments. That being said because of the nature of the emotional reaction by the markets, we believe we are in a very solid position going forward to provide all of the promised benefits.

Should you have any questions or concerns please feel free to ask any Board member and we will do our best to answer.

### **Crisis Impact on Services –**

Unfortunately the crisis has impacted how everyone does business and that includes our very valuable Administrator, CW Breitsman and Associates and our Investment Advisor Josh Smittkamp of Dover Consulting Group. Most of the staff will be working from home but are still available via phone or email (preferred). That being said they continue to do their excellent job of supporting our Trust.

### **New Benefits –**

As everyone should know by now the Trust added two new benefits for our participants. Those benefits are Dental, through Delta Dental and Vision through NVA. You should have received documents by mail detailing those benefits. If you have question, please don't hesitate to contact a Board member, Michele or Charlie at CW Breitsman.

## **Audit -**

Salter and Company, LLC are in the process of completing our 2019 audit. We also encourage you to review this report when it is released later this year.

## **Trust Participants –**

As of January 1, 2019, the Trust had 328 covered participants. There were 34 active employees and covered spouses, 23 future participants under age 65, 33 participants that currently opted out of coverage, and 238 currently receiving benefits.

## **Turning 65?**

Start early! If you need to sign up for Medicare and Social Security, we recommend that you visit your local Social Security office - especially if you try online and have any difficulties. We continue experiencing some challenges with retirees failing to sign up in a timely manner. Please give us as much notice as you can, as it is imperative that you complete your paperwork and get it in to Charlie and Michele at least 30 days prior to your turning 65. Remember that failure to sign up in a timely manner could result in a gap in coverage as well as a penalty for late sign up for Medicare Part 'D' prescription drug coverage. Remember the TPA is there to help you as are your Board representatives. Do not hesitate to call.

## **SEARV/CORE RELATIONSHIP:**

The **Coalition of Retired Employees of the Ohio Education Association (CORE)** was established in 2004 and spearheaded the successful settlement between the OEA and the organization's staff retirees. That settlement enabled CORE to create the **Staff Education Association Voluntary Employees Beneficiary Association (SEARV)** which now provides Medicare Supplemental and Prescription Drug Insurance as well as Dental and Vision to post-65 retirees.

CORE continues to represent OEA retirees to ensure everyone receives all benefits entitled by contract.

CORE membership is not now--nor has it ever been--a condition of representation. Neither is it a condition of eligibility for SEARV benefits. But in recognition of its hard-fought battle with OEA that led to the establishment of SEARV, we would urge that everyone who is now or will be eligible for benefits at age 65 become a member of CORE.

Annual dues are \$20 for each individual eligible for benefits. Make your membership dues check to **CORE of OEA** and send it to:

Jim Prater  
2000 Malvern Road  
Columbus, OH 43221

Please include your mailing and e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers with your check. Also, don't forget to attend the luncheons coordinated by Denny Roberge. They are a great way to both stay connected with fellow retirees and to stay updated on the issues of the day.

## **VENDORS –**

### **General Counsel – Cook and Logothetis, LLC**

Counsel is responsible for making sure the Trust is run in compliance with applicable laws that govern and regulate tax exempt VEBA Trusts. They also advise the Board with respect to legal matters associated with Trust administration. Please do not contact counsel directly, but you may ask questions or communicate through the TPA CW Breitsman Associates.

### **Third Party Administrator (TPA) – CW Breitsman Associates, LLC**

Charlie Breitsman [charlie@cw-b-a.com](mailto:charlie@cw-b-a.com)

Michele Gentile [michele@cw-b-a.com](mailto:michele@cw-b-a.com)

Three Gateway Center, Suite 1625, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Phone – (412) 325-2805, Toll Free – (866) 520-9174, Facsimile – (412) 325-2801

The TPA is responsible for handling the day to day administration of the Trust including interfacing with each of the other vendors, records retention, and interface with Trust members and the Ohio Education Association concerning Trust matters.

### **Custodial Bank – Huntington National Bank**

The bank is the initial holder of funds and investments monies. Questions concerning banking need to be directed through the TPA.

### **Medicare Supplemental Provider – Transamerica Premier Life Insurance Company**

The Medical Supplemental carrier is contracted on an annual basis. You may communicate directly with the provider concerning your account or you may contact the TPA for assistance and contact information.

**Transamerica Premier Life Insurance – Company Customer Service: 1-800-752-9797**

### **Prescription Drug Provider (PDP) – United HealthCare/OptumRx**

The Prescription Drug (Part D) provider is contracted on an annual basis. You may communicate directly with the provider concerning your account or you may contact the TPA for assistance and contact information.

**UHC Customer Service: 1-888-556-6648**

### **Dental Coverage – Delta Dental**

This coverage is now included in the benefits package. You may communicate directly with the provider concerning your account or you may contact the TPA for assistance and contact information.

**Delta Dental Customer Service: 800-524-0149, [www.DeltaDentalOH.com](http://www.DeltaDentalOH.com)**

### **Vision Coverage – NVA National Vision Administrators**

This coverage is now included in the benefits package. You may communicate directly with the provider concerning your account or you may contact the TPA for assistance and contact information.

**NVA Member Services 800-672-7723, [www.e-nva.com](http://www.e-nva.com)**

### **Investment Advisors – Dover Consulting Group, Josh Smittkamp**

The investment advisor assists the Board in creating and maintaining the Trust's formal investment policy and works with investment managers to ensure the Trust investments are in compliance with the guidelines that policy establishes. They also provide investment reporting to the Board on a regular basis.

### **Auditors – Salter and Company, LLC**

As required by law and for the prudent management of the Trust, independent auditors are engaged to review the finances of the Trust and prepare required annual reports.

### **Other Actions of the Board –**

In addition to those items mentioned above the Board took the following actions:

- Renewed the term of Trustee Bob Hockenberger for 3 more years ending 2023,
- Monitored the performance of the supplement providers and other vendors,
- Determined annual budgets,
- Approved investment strategies, and
- Took actions necessary for special circumstances for some members of the Trust

### **How are we doing? –**

Your Board of Trustees would like to thank all of you for your support and having the confidence in us to allow us to serve as your Trustees on the Board of the Staff Education Association Retirees VEBA Trust. Your feedback is always welcomed, and we will work to keep you informed. Please don't hesitate to contact any of the Trustees or the TPA with your questions.

## **SEARV Board of Trustees -**

The Board of Trustees is comprised of five (5) members; three (3) members whom are “Class Members” and two (2) members whom are “Public Trustees”, as required under the VEBA Trust Agreement.

- **John Wardell**, Chairman SEARV Board of Trustees  
Ohio – (740) 474-3004, Florida (941) 429-2803, Cell (614) 203-3135 - [COREofOEA@aol.com](mailto:COREofOEA@aol.com)
- **Bob Hockenberger**, Co-Chairman SEARV Board of Trustees, HIPAA Privacy Officer, Investment Committee Chairman  
(614) 499-1073 - [hocko@insight.rr.com](mailto:hocko@insight.rr.com)
- **Priscilla Roberge**, SEARV Board of Trustees (614) 774-2190 - [prisroberge@gmail.com](mailto:prisroberge@gmail.com)
- **Paul Gonzalez**, Public Trustee, Budget Chairman, member Investment Committee  
(517) 242-4739 - [gonz2006@aol.com](mailto:gonz2006@aol.com)
- **Garrett Harbron**, Secretary SEARV Board of Trustees, Public Trustee, member Investment Committee (317) 439-0053 - [garrett.har@gmail.com](mailto:garrett.har@gmail.com)

**Please visit the SEARV web site:**

**[www.SEARVeba.com](http://www.SEARVeba.com)**

*Please notify Michele or Charlie of any address, telephone, email or other contact information changes*