



Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 17 – Lewis County

Kathie Mills, President: (360) 219-3779

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Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 6th, 2024
Meeting Time: 11:30 AM
Meeting Place: Ramblin' Jack's Rib Eye
Meeting Address: 1336 Rush Rd, Napavine, WA 98532

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF CHAPTER NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS

Nominations: March 6th meeting | **Elections:** April 3rd meeting

Hello fellow Chapter 17 members,

Chapter 17 nominations of officers will open at our meeting on March 6th, and elections will be held at our April meeting.

Any Chapter 17 member in good standing (current on dues) can take on an officer role, if they are elected accordingly. If you are nominated for a position and are unopposed, you win the election by acclamation. Chapter officers are crucial in maintaining the chapter structure, so please consider supporting the chapter in a leadership capacity.

If you are interested and would like to know more about the officer positions, feel free to reach out to me.

Kathie Mills
RPEC Ch 17 President

Did you know? You will be receiving a meeting reminder telephone call about two days prior to our meetings. If you want to opt out of the calls, or didn't get the call, please call me at 360-219-3779.

February 2024 Executive Director's Report

Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Update

In response to our budget proviso from the 2023 legislative session, the Health Care Authority (HCA) released the findings of a study highlighting healthcare plan options that would have the same excellent benefits available through the Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Classic Medicare but would have more affordable premiums. The report will be discussed by the PEBB Board at its annual retreat on February 1st. HCA is recommending the adoption of a new configuration of UMP Classic Medicare. The medical benefits will remain unchanged in the new configuration. The pharmacy benefit would shift to an employer-managed Plan D pharmacy plan that nearly mirrors what is currently available in UMP Classic Medicare. HCA estimates this change will save retirees upwards of \$200 per month on premium costs. The

new configuration is more affordable because the Plan D pharmacy benefit would be eligible for federal pharmaceutical drug subsidies. HCA will be hosting three virtual public forums and one in-person public forum in February to give retirees an opportunity to share feedback on this proposed new configuration. Details about how to register for the public forums will be available at www.hca.wa.gov. Information will also be published in the weekly NewsFlash and at www.rpecwa.org.

State Advocacy

Legislative Day 2024: Eighty-three meetings were conducted with legislators and staff. All told, nearly 200 RPEC and WEA-R members participated. We appreciate the excellent meeting summaries provided by attendees. This information will be useful in the spring as RPEC's Political Action Committee (PAC) considers endorsements for those seeking reelection.

Ad Hoc COLA for PERS/TRS 1: Thanks to your efforts and meetings that we have also coordinated with top fiscal policy decision-makers, Substitute HB 1985 is poised for a House floor vote. The bill will provide a one-time 3% COLA for retirees vested in Plans 1 with a cap of \$110 per month. Please reach out to your legislators and urge them to continue to support this bill.

Slightly lower premiums for the priciest PEBB healthcare plans: Through our efforts with the Office of Fiscal Management and fiscal policy leaders, the Governor provided a \$10 increase to the Medicare Explicit Subsidy in his preliminary operating budget. The state provides the subsidy to lower monthly premium costs. Those who have chosen the more expensive healthcare plans will benefit from the increase. As budget negotiations begin in February, we will be advocating for this increase to remain in the final budget act.

Weekly Legislative Update & bill tracker: All members are invited to attend the weekly Legislative Update held each Friday via Zoom from 2-3 p.m. The bill tracker is also updated each Friday. The tracker and Zoom link for the Friday Legislative Update are available at www.rpecwa.org.

Federal Advocacy

Fiscal Commission Act of 2023 Moves to House Vote: Your federal retirement benefits are, again, at risk thanks to legislation that was approved in January in the House Budget Committee and is poised for a full House vote. The [Fiscal Commission Act of 2023 \(H.R. 5779\)](https://www.congress.gov/bills/117/5779) will create a 16-member fiscal commission to search for ways to reduce the national deficit and balance the national budget. Retiree and senior advocacy organizations fear the Commission will prioritize Social Security and Medicare funding cuts over other federal expenditures. RPEC is sending official communication to House delegation members urging them to protect Social Security and Medicare benefits. A detailed [position paper](#) about the proposed debt commission is available at <https://retiredamericans.org>.

Executive Board Approves Strategic Plan

The Executive Board approved RPEC's strategic plan at its November meeting. The plan will guide RPEC's priorities through 2027. The plan was informed by research conducted in spring 2023 by AFSCME Retirees and data gathered by the Council Office. A background document, summarizing the strategic plan goals, is available at www.rpecwa.org.

Upcoming Events

Visit www.rpecwa.org for a full calendar of Council Office and chapter meetings.

Feb. 22 – PEBB UMP Classic Medicare Town Hall (2:00 pm, virtual)
Feb. 22 – Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 pm)
Feb. 23 – Legislative Update Call (2:00 pm)
Feb. 26 – Executive Board Meeting (9:00 am)
Feb. 29 – PEBB UMP Classic Medicare Town Hall, in-person in Olympia (10:00 am)
Mar. 1 – Legislative Update Call (2:00 pm)
Mar. 7 – Sine Die (end of Legislative Session)
Mar. 8 – Legislative Update Call (2:00 pm)
Mar. 14 – Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 pm)
Mar. 15 – Legislative Committee Meeting (10:00 am)
Mar. 15 – Legislative Update Call (2:00 pm)