



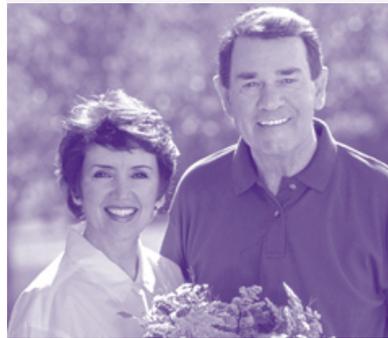
# Planning for Retirement

September 2004

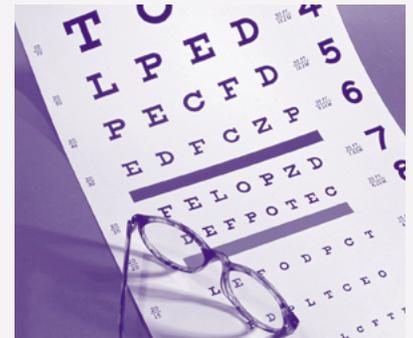
As you plan for retirement, you have important decisions to make about your health insurance and other benefits. This guide explains those decisions and answers many benefit questions.

## Health Insurance Coverage and Related Benefits

Important Information for Employees of the State of New York and Employees of NYSHIP Participating Employers  
Planning for Retirement



**PG 2-7**



**PG 8-9**



**PG 10-11**

# Health Insurance



## *Am I eligible to continue health insurance after I retire?*

### **Three eligibility requirements:**

*To continue NYSHIP coverage for yourself and your eligible dependents after you retire, you must meet all three eligibility requirements.*

*NYSHIP = New York State Health Insurance Program*

*NYSHIP provides your health insurance benefits through the Empire Plan or a NYSHIP approved Health Maintenance Organization (HMO)*

 Talk with your agency Health Benefits Administrator early in your retirement planning to make sure that your service qualifies you for health insurance as a retiree.

**First**, you must have completed a minimum service requirement, determined by the date on which you last entered State service.

- If you were last hired before April 1, 1975, you must have had at least five years of benefits eligible State service or at least five years of combined service with the State and one or more Participating Employers (such as the Thruway Authority or Metropolitan Transit Authority) or Participating Agencies (such as a town or school district) that participate in NYSHIP.
- If you were last hired on or after April 1, 1975, you must have had at least 10 years of benefits eligible State service or at least 10 years of combined service with the State and one or more Participating Employers or Participating Agencies.

*Employees of Participating Employers: Service requirements may vary. Please check with your agency Health Benefits Administrator.*

Retirement System requirements for retirement and NYSHIP requirements for continuation of health insurance in retirement are different. For example, employees with five years of full-time service, or its equivalent, can vest their pensions. Certain part-time employees will qualify for health insurance as a vestee or retiree. Read [Can I end my employment before retirement age and still be eligible to continue NYSHIP coverage?](#) for more information on vesting your retirement allowance and read your New York State Health

Insurance Program (NYSHIP) documents for complete information.

Not all employment counts toward achieving eligibility for health insurance. For example, periods of less-than-full-time employment will count toward the requirement only if you were eligible for health insurance during that employment. Not all Participating Agency or Participating Employer experience counts. Periods on leave without pay do not count. Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator to assist you with calculating your service time.

**Second**, you must qualify for retirement as a member of a retirement system administered by New York State (such as the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System, the New York State Teachers' Retirement System, or the New York State and Local Police and Fire System), or any of New York State's political subdivisions.

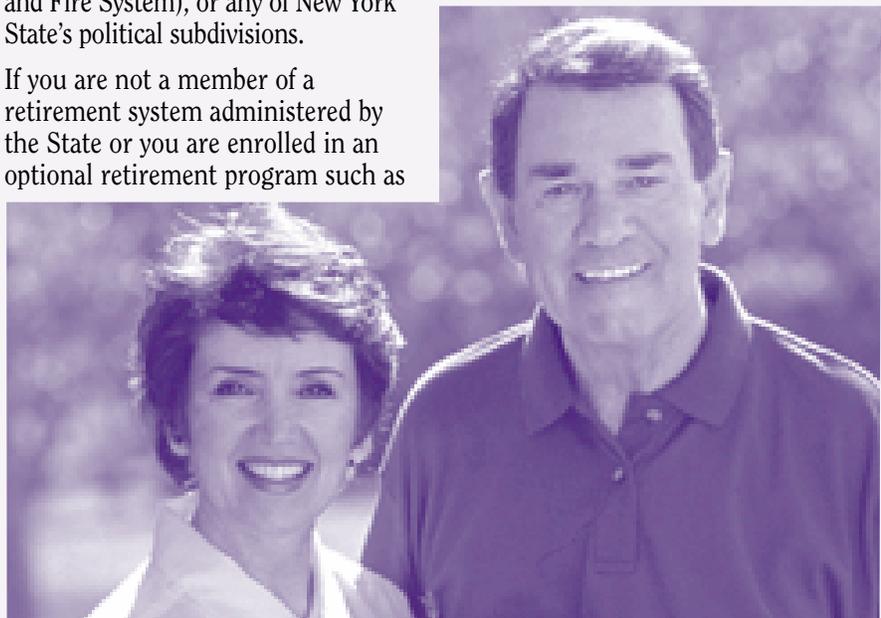
If you are not a member of a retirement system administered by the State or you are enrolled in an optional retirement program such as

TIAA/CREF, you must satisfy one of the following conditions:

- You must meet the age requirement of the Employees' Retirement System retirement tier in effect at the time you last entered service, or
- You must be qualified to receive Social Security disability payments.

**Third**, you must be enrolled in NYSHIP or be an enrolled dependent of someone who is enrolled in NYSHIP at the time of your retirement. For example, if you were on leave and canceled your coverage, and then retire, you are not eligible for health insurance as a retiree.

If you are enrolled in NYSHIP as a dependent, ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator about sick leave, including dual annuitant and other provisions that affect you.





*I am retiring on a disability. How does that affect my eligibility for NYSHIP?*

For a disability retirement that is not work-related (ordinary disability), the age requirement is waived, but you must meet the minimum service requirement. For a disability retirement resulting from a work-related illness or injury, both the age requirement and the minimum service requirement are waived.

To maintain NYSHIP eligibility, you must continue your health insurance coverage while you wait for the decision on your disability retirement. If you do not continue coverage, or if you fail to make the required payments, coverage may end permanently.

If you have not continued your coverage while on leave or in vestee or COBRA status and a retroactive retirement is granted, call the Employee Benefits Division right away to ask about reinstating coverage. You must apply in writing to the Employee Benefits Division promptly upon receipt of the letter from your retirement system granting your disability retirement.



*Can I end my employment before retirement age and still be eligible to continue NYSHIP coverage?*

 If your employment with the State ends before you reach retirement age and you vest (that is, secure rights to) your state pension, contact your agency Health Benefits Administrator before your last day of work to see if you are eligible to continue health insurance coverage as a vestee. If you are eligible to continue coverage as a vestee but do not do so, or if you fail to make the required premium payments as a vestee, coverage for you and your dependents will be terminated permanently. You may not re-enroll as a vestee at a later date, and you lose eligibility for coverage as a retiree.

As a vestee, you must pay both the employer and employee shares of the premium. You will be billed monthly.

Note: If your spouse or domestic partner is eligible for NYSHIP coverage in his or her own right, you may be able to continue coverage as a dependent of your spouse or domestic partner as a less expensive alternative to full-share vestee coverage.



*If I am eligible to retire but don't want to start collecting my pension, can I still have health insurance coverage?*

If you are eligible to retire and delay collecting your State pension, you may continue your NYSHIP coverage under retiree provisions if you meet the eligibility requirements listed on page 2. Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator about “constructive retirement.” With this option you will pay the health insurance premium (if any) directly to the Employee Benefits Division.



*What portion of the cost of health insurance must I pay as a retiree?*

The amount you must contribute toward the cost of your health insurance coverage as a retiree is roughly the same as what you pay as an employee. You may be able to use sick leave credits to reduce your cost (see page 4).



*How will I pay for my health insurance as a retiree?*

When you retire, you will pay your share of the health insurance premium through deductions from your monthly retirement check or by making monthly payments directly to the Employee Benefits Division or to your former Participating Employer. It may take several months for the Employee Benefits Division to receive the Retirement Number assigned to you by the Retirement System, and begin taking monthly health insurance deductions from your pension. Meanwhile, you will be billed directly each month for your share of the premium. There may be a lag of several months before deductions begin. At the time of the first deduction, any outstanding premiums due will be taken.





## *How will my sick leave credits help pay my monthly share of the health insurance cost?*

*Note: Sick leave credits do not apply to Judges, Justices, and other enrollees who are not entitled to accumulate sick leave. Employees of Participating Employers: Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator about use of sick leave credits.*

At the time you retire, if you are eligible to use sick leave credits, your agency will report your hourly rate of pay and unused sick leave hours to the Employee Benefits Division. The Division will calculate the monthly actuarial value of your sick leave. (See page 7.)

The result is a lifetime monthly credit that is used to reduce your share of the monthly health insurance premium for as long as you remain enrolled in NYSHIP. Although the premium for your coverage may change, the amount of your monthly sick leave credit will remain the same throughout your lifetime.

You can use a maximum of 200 days (165 days for certain groups) of unused sick leave to calculate your sick leave credit. See your agency Health Benefits Administrator for details. Using your sick leave credit for health insurance will not affect the value of your sick leave for pension purposes.

If the credit for your unused sick leave does not fully cover your share of the monthly premium, you must pay the balance. If the credit exceeds your share of the monthly premium, the excess sick leave credit will not be refunded.

Sick leave credits can be applied toward your Empire Plan or HMO premium only if you retire directly from active employment, Leave Without Pay status, Preferred List coverage, or are approved for disability retirement retroactive to your last date of employment. Sick leave credits may not be applied toward health insurance premium costs either while you are in vested status or after retiring from vested status.

To estimate the value of your sick leave credit, see the worksheet on page 7 or our Web site at [www.cs.state.ny.us](http://www.cs.state.ny.us). Click on "Employee Benefits."

## *Can I delay the start of my retiree health insurance coverage or use of sick leave credits after I retire?*

 When you retire, you may delay the start of your retiree health insurance coverage and the use of your sick leave credit if you have other health insurance coverage. If you want to defer

health insurance coverage, you must make that choice before your last day on the payroll.

There may be advantages to delaying the start of (deferring) your NYSHIP coverage. During the period of deferment, you do not have to pay the NYSHIP premium. Also, the value of your sick leave credit will be higher at the time you begin your retiree coverage because it will be calculated when you are older. (The chart on page 7 shows how age affects sick leave credit.) You may re-enroll for NYSHIP coverage at any time without a waiting period.

If you die while your NYSHIP family coverage is deferred, your spouse/domestic partner and any other eligible dependents must write to the Employee Benefits Division requesting re-enrollment in NYSHIP within 90 days of your death. Eligibility requirements for your spouse/domestic partner and eligible dependents to re-enroll in NYSHIP are the same as if you had continued your coverage into retirement.

**90 DAYS**

## *How can I make sure that if I die, my dependent survivors can use my sick leave credit toward their health insurance premiums?*

At the time of your retirement, you may specify that you want your dependent survivors to be able to use your monthly sick leave credit toward their NYSHIP premium if you die. This is called the Dual Annuitant Sick Leave Credit. If you want this option, you must choose it before your last day on the payroll. You do not need to have family coverage at the time of retirement to choose this option.

If you choose the Dual Annuitant Sick Leave Credit, 70 percent of your sick leave credit will be used to offset your premium for as long as you live. Your dependents who outlive you may continue to use the same monthly credit to offset their NYSHIP premium if they are eligible to continue coverage.

For example, suppose your monthly sick leave credit is \$26.61. If you choose the Dual Annuitant option, your monthly sick leave credit will be 70 percent of \$26.61, or \$18.63. The same amount (\$18.63 a month in this example) will be available to your dependents as long as they remain eligible for NYSHIP and are enrolled as dependent survivors. The credit cannot be applied to a COBRA premium and cannot be combined with your spouse's own sick leave credits.

 To elect Dual Annuitant Sick Leave, contact your agency Health Benefits Administrator before you retire. If you do not indicate a choice before your retirement becomes effective, all of your



sick leave credit (up to a maximum of 200 days or 165 for certain groups) will be applied to your premium automatically, and no sick leave credit will be available to your dependent survivors. This means that your survivors may qualify for health insurance, but they will not have any sick leave credit to offset their portion of the NYSHIP premium.

Once you elect Dual Annuitant Sick Leave, you may not discontinue it. If your dependents die before you, you will still have the 70 percent sick leave credit.



### *Will my health insurance benefits change because I retire? Will my option (the Empire Plan or an HMO) change?*

 Your retiree benefits under the Empire Plan or a NYSHIP HMO may differ somewhat from those you received as an active employee. Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator for retiree information for the Empire Plan. If you are enrolled in an HMO, ask your HMO about retiree coverage.

You may be eligible to change health insurance plans (options) at retirement (or any other time) if you move or meet other criteria described in your *NYSHIP General Information Book*. Otherwise you go into retirement with the plan you had as an employee. HMO enrollees: You *must* change to another plan as soon as you no longer live or work in your HMO's NYSHIP geographic service area.

As a retiree, you may change health insurance plans (options) once a year during the regular option transfer period, usually beginning in November. During the option transfer period, you choose the plan you want for the coming year. You will receive information about the option transfer period in the mail each year, including summaries of NYSHIP plans available to you and their costs.



### *If I'm enrolled in NYSHIP, do I have to enroll in Medicare too?*

Yes, NYSHIP requires retirees to be enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B when first eligible. Your covered dependents must also be enrolled when first eligible.

Medicare is a Federal health insurance program for people who:

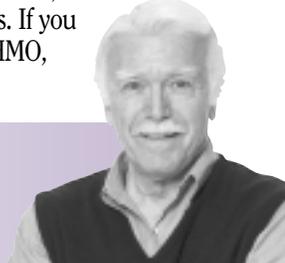
- are 65 or older, or
- have been entitled to Social Security disability benefits for 24 consecutive months, or
- have end stage renal disease (permanent kidney failure).

Requirements for enrolling in Medicare apply to both Empire Plan and HMO enrollees and

dependents. Requirements for enrolling in Medicare also apply if you or your dependent has NYSHIP coverage plus coverage under another employer plan.

If you or a dependent is eligible for Medicare coverage that is primary to NYSHIP (pays first, before NYSHIP), but has failed to enroll when first eligible, you will be responsible for the full cost of services that Medicare would have covered.

 If you are an HMO enrollee, contact your HMO to find out whether it coordinates with Medicare under a Medicare+Choice Contract or a Cost Contract. Under a Medicare+Choice Contract, you assign your Medicare benefits directly to the HMO. You will not receive any Medicare benefits if you choose to receive care outside your HMO. Under a Cost Contract or certain other arrangements, the HMO supplements your Medicare benefits. If you choose to receive treatment outside the HMO, you still qualify for Medicare benefits.



### *When should I contact Medicare?*

 If you are planning to retire, and you or your spouse is 65 or older, contact your Social Security office *three months before* active employment ends to arrange for Medicare Parts A and B. NYSHIP will no longer be your primary insurer soon after you retire. Be sure you have Medicare in effect at that time. Your domestic partner must be enrolled in Medicare at age 65 whether you are an active or retired employee.

If you retire before you or your dependent reaches age 65, Medicare becomes primary to NYSHIP *on the first day of the month in which you/your dependent reaches age 65. Contact Social Security three months before the month in which you or your dependent reaches age 65.* If you are planning to retire and you or your spouse become eligible for Medicare due to disability you must enroll when first eligible. Persons eligible for Medicare due to end stage renal disease should refer to the *NYSHIP General Information Book* to determine when Medicare becomes primary.

If you do not apply three months preceding the month of the 65<sup>th</sup> birthday or when you become entitled to Medicare due to disability, you will have a waiting period before Medicare becomes effective. During that waiting period you will have a gap in your coverage that could be very costly for you.

If you or your dependent is eligible for Medicare coverage that is primary to NYSHIP, the State will reimburse you for the usual (base) cost of original Medicare Part B monthly premiums unless you are receiving reimbursement from another source.

For more information on Medicare reimbursement and how Medicare affects NYSHIP benefits, see your *NYSHIP General Information Book*, the *Medicare for Disability Retirees* flyer, other plan documents and your agency Health Benefits Administrator.

For information on Medicare benefits and claims, call 1-800-MEDICARE (633-4227). To enroll in Medicare, call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. If you have any questions regarding the coordination of Medicare with NYSHIP, call the Employee Benefits Division at 518-457-5754 (Albany area) or 1-800-833-4344 (U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands).



### *After I retire, may I cancel NYSHIP coverage and later re-enroll?*

After you retire, you may cancel your health insurance coverage and later re-enroll. Under most circumstances, you will be subject to a waiting period of up to three months before your coverage again becomes effective. Upon re-enrolling, you will receive the same monthly sick leave credit as before you canceled coverage.

Note: If you die after you cancel your NYSHIP coverage, your dependents will not be eligible for dependent survivor coverage.



### *If I have NYSHIP coverage as a dependent through my spouse/domestic partner, can I reinstate my own coverage as a retiree?*

 If you have NYSHIP coverage as a dependent through your spouse/domestic partner and otherwise meet eligibility requirements for coverage as a retiree, you may re-establish coverage as a retiree at any time. (Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator for a State Sick Leave Credit Preservation Form before you retire.) Notify the Employee Benefits Division in writing if a pending divorce or other change means you will need to reactivate your NYSHIP coverage in your own name.



### *If I return to State employment after I retire, how does this affect my NYSHIP coverage?*

Returning to work affects NYSHIP (and Medicare) in different ways. If you are a State retiree and return to work in a benefits-eligible position with a State department or agency, NYSHIP will be primary for you and for your spouse, unless he or she is covered under another employer's plan. (However, Medicare remains primary for the domestic partner age 65 and older unless the domestic partner is disabled.) While NYSHIP is primary, your reimbursement for the Medicare premium will stop. If you begin working for an employer other than the State, Medicare pays primary to NYSHIP whether or not you have health insurance coverage through that other employer's group plan. Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator for complete information. Or call the Employee Benefits Division at 518-457-5754 (Albany area) or 1-800-833-4344 (U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands).



### *If I die, will my dependent survivors be eligible for health insurance under NYSHIP?*

In most cases, NYSHIP protects your enrolled dependent survivors in the event of your death in retirement. To begin the process, your dependent survivors must send a copy of the death certificate to the New York State Employees' Retirement System or New York State Teachers' Retirement System – or to the Employee Benefits Division if you were not a member of a retirement system administered by New York State or you chose not to pay your premium by pension deduction. Dependent survivor coverage and limitations are explained in your *NYSHIP General Information Book*. Make sure your family knows to call the Employee Benefits Division for information on dependent survivor coverage. Note to Participating Employer enrollees: Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator whether your agency offers Dependent Survivor coverage.



**Estimate the value of your sick leave credit below or on our Web site, [www.cs.state.ny.us](http://www.cs.state.ny.us)**

*This worksheet is for estimating your sick leave credit only. The worksheet is for full-time and part-time employees. If you are paid on an hourly basis, use your hourly salary as the Hourly Rate of Pay. (UUP-represented employees: Use the worksheet in your NYSHIP General Information Book.)*

**WORK SHEET**

**Calculate your Hourly Rate of Pay (HRP)**

**Step 1.** Determine "hours worked in a day": Divide the number of hours in a workweek by 5. For example, a 40-hour week divided by 5 equals an 8-hour day, even if you work 4 days of 10 hours each.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Hours worked in a week} \div 5 = \\ \text{Hours worked in a day: } \underline{\hspace{2cm}}. \end{array}$$

**Step 2.** Determine HRP: Divide your total annual salary at the time of retirement (basic annual salary plus additional constant salary factors such as location pay, shift or geographic differential, inconvenience pay) by one of the following predetermined numbers: 2088 for jobs that are 8 hours a day, 1957 for jobs that are 7 1/2 hours a day, and 1827 for jobs that are 7 hours a day. (Please contact your agency Health Benefits Administrator for calculations other than the three stated above.)

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Annual Salary} \div \text{Predetermined Number} = \\ \text{Hourly Rate of Pay (HRP): } \underline{\hspace{2cm}}. \end{array}$$

**Calculate your Sick Leave Credit**

**Step 3.** Determine the total dollar value of your sick leave: Multiply your hourly rate of pay by the number of sick leave hours you have accumulated up to a maximum of 200 days (165 days for certain groups). See your agency Health Benefits Administrator for details.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{HRP} \times \text{Hours Unused Sick Leave} = \\ \text{Total Dollar Value of Sick Leave: } \underline{\hspace{2cm}}. \end{array}$$

**Step 4.** Determine your monthly credit: Divide the total dollar value of your sick leave by your life expectancy from the table below.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Total dollar value} \div \text{Life Expectancy} = \\ \text{Monthly Credit: } \underline{\hspace{2cm}}. \end{array}$$

**EXAMPLE**

You want to retire at age 62 (three months from now). Your gross annual salary is \$30,000 and you have 400 hours of unused sick leave.

**Step 1. Hours Worked in a day:**

$$\begin{array}{r} 8 \text{ (hours worked in a day)} \\ 5 \overline{) 40 \text{ (hours worked in a week)}} \end{array}$$

**Step 2. Hourly Rate of Pay (HRP):**

$$\begin{array}{r} \$ 14.37 \text{ (HRP)} \\ 2088 \overline{) 30,000 \text{ (Annual Salary)}} \end{array}$$

**Step 3. Total dollar value of your sick leave:**

$$\begin{array}{l} \$14.37 \text{ (HRP)} \times 400 \text{ (hours unused sick leave)} = \\ \$5,748 \text{ (Total Dollar Value)} \end{array}$$

**Step 4. Your Monthly Credit:**

$$\begin{array}{r} \$26.61 \text{ (Monthly Credit)} \\ 216 \overline{) \$5,748 \text{ (Total Dollar Value)}} \end{array}$$

Life expectancy - 216 ) \$5,748 (Total Dollar Value)  
(from table below)

*(To use the electronic calculator on our Web site, [www.cs.state.ny.us](http://www.cs.state.ny.us) click on "Employee Benefits." Choose your group under New York State Actives. Choose "Continuing Coverage When You Retire" and click on "Estimate the Value of Your Sick Leave Credit." Click on "Sick Leave Credit Calculator".)*

<b>ACTUARIAL TABLE*</b>					
<b>AGE AT RETIREMENT</b>	<b>LIFE EXPECTANCY</b>	<b>LIFE EXPECTANCY</b>	<b>AGE AT RETIREMENT</b>	<b>LIFE EXPECTANCY</b>	<b>LIFE EXPECTANCY</b>
	<b>TABLE 1**</b>	<b>TABLE 2***</b>		<b>TABLE 1**</b>	<b>TABLE 2***</b>
50	308 months	302 months	59	240 months	217 months
51	301 months	292 months	60	232 months	208 months
52	293 months	282 months	61	224 months	199 months
53	286 months	273 months	62	216 months	190 months
54	279 months	263 months	63	208 months	181 months
55	271 months	254 months	64	200 months	173 months
56	264 months	245 months	65	192 months	164 months
57	256 months	235 months	66	184 months	156 months
58	248 months	226 months	67	176 months	148 months
			<i>Etc.</i>		

Using the example in the box above, you would have \$26.61 of sick leave credit each month to help pay the cost of your health insurance as long as you live. If, for example, your share of the monthly cost of health insurance is \$100.00, your total monthly cost would be \$100.00 minus your sick leave credit of \$26.61, or \$73.39. The amount of \$73.39 would be deducted from your pension or billed to you directly each month. **Keep in mind, as the premium increases or decreases, the amount you must pay each year will also increase or decrease.** Your monthly credit of \$26.61 will not change.

This chart shows the use of single annuitant sick leave credit. If you choose Dual Annuitant Sick Leave Credit at the time of your retirement, 70 percent of the monthly credit (\$18.63 in this example) is available to you and your surviving dependent to apply toward the health insurance premium.

\* For regular retirement only. A different actuarial table applies to disability retirements.

\*\* Table 1 is for all employees in the Employees' Retirement System and Teachers' Retirement System. It also applies if you are enrolled in an Optional Retirement Program such as TIAA/CREF.

\*\*\* Table 2 is for employees in the Police and Fire Retirement System.



# Other Benefits

## Can I continue dental and vision coverage after retirement?

*COBRA = The Federal Government's Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, which entitles an individual or covered dependents to continue (for a limited period of time) certain benefits at group rates when coverage would otherwise end. (If you are enrolled through a Participating Employer, ask your employer if you are eligible for COBRA.)*

Vision coverage is available only through COBRA when you retire.

Dental coverage is available through COBRA or through the group dental plan for New York State retirees.

### COBRA

- Employees who receive dental and vision benefits through a union Employee Benefit Fund may be eligible to continue coverage through their Union Employee Benefit Fund under COBRA. Contact your Union Employee Benefit Fund for information.
- M/C, PEF, NYSCOPBA, Council 82, PBA, PIA and certain Court employees who currently receive dental and vision benefits through the State will automatically receive information on continuing dental and vision coverage under COBRA.

 If you do not receive an application for COBRA coverage within 30 days of retiring, write to the Employee Benefits Division for a COBRA application. Send your name, Social Security number, address, telephone number with area code and reason for requesting the application to:

COBRA Unit  
Employee Benefits Division  
State of New York  
Department of Civil Service  
The State Campus  
Albany, NY 12239

You must request continuation coverage under COBRA no later than 60 days after your coverage would otherwise end, or within 60 days from the date you

**60-DAY DEADLINE**

are notified of eligibility for COBRA, whichever is later. If you do not continue coverage under COBRA, your employee dental and vision coverage will end 28 days after the last day of the payroll period in which you worked.

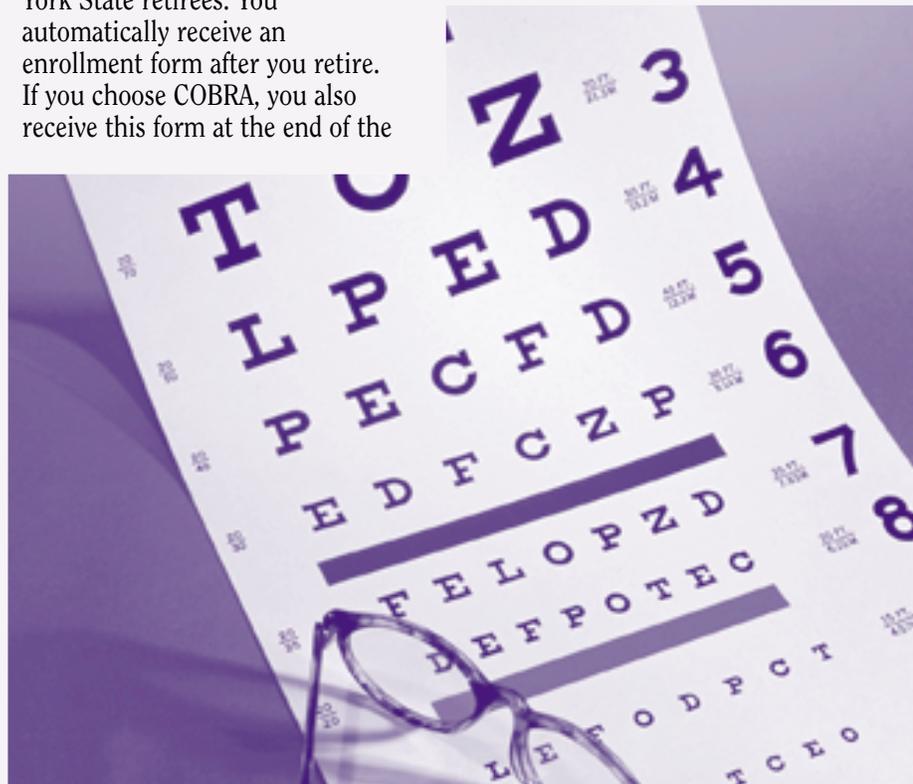
### Dental Plan For Retirees

As a retiree, you may also choose to enroll in the GHI Preferred group dental plan offered to New York State retirees. You automatically receive an enrollment form after you retire. If you choose COBRA, you also receive this form at the end of the

18-month COBRA period. If you do not receive the form, call the Employee Benefits Division for information on how to request one. See "Where can I get more information" on page 11.

If you wish to enroll in the group retiree dental plan, you must do so at the time you retire or at the end of your COBRA coverage. These are your only opportunities to enroll.

Note: Dental and vision benefits are not part of your health insurance and do not continue automatically. Also, sick leave credit cannot be used to reduce the premium for these benefits.





*How can I continue hearing care coverage after retirement ?*

If you are in an HMO, check to see whether hearing care coverage is part of your current benefits package. If your current HMO coverage includes a hearing benefit, you continue to be eligible for it as a retiree. Ask your HMO if this benefit changes at age 65.

If you are an Empire Plan enrollee, a hearing benefit is part of the retiree Empire Plan benefits package.



*If I had an Income Protection Plan, will it continue after retirement?*

Your coverage under the Income Protection Plan ends when you retire. Coverage ends on your last day on the payroll as an active employee.



*Can I continue life, accident, and sickness insurance ?*

If your position is assigned to a negotiating unit that provides Life/Accident and Sickness Insurance through a union Employee Benefit Fund and you have coverage under that program, contact your union Employee Benefit Fund for information about your right to continue that insurance after you are separated from State service.

If you are an M/C employee with Accident and Sickness Insurance, there are no conversion rights for this coverage. You may not continue it when you retire.



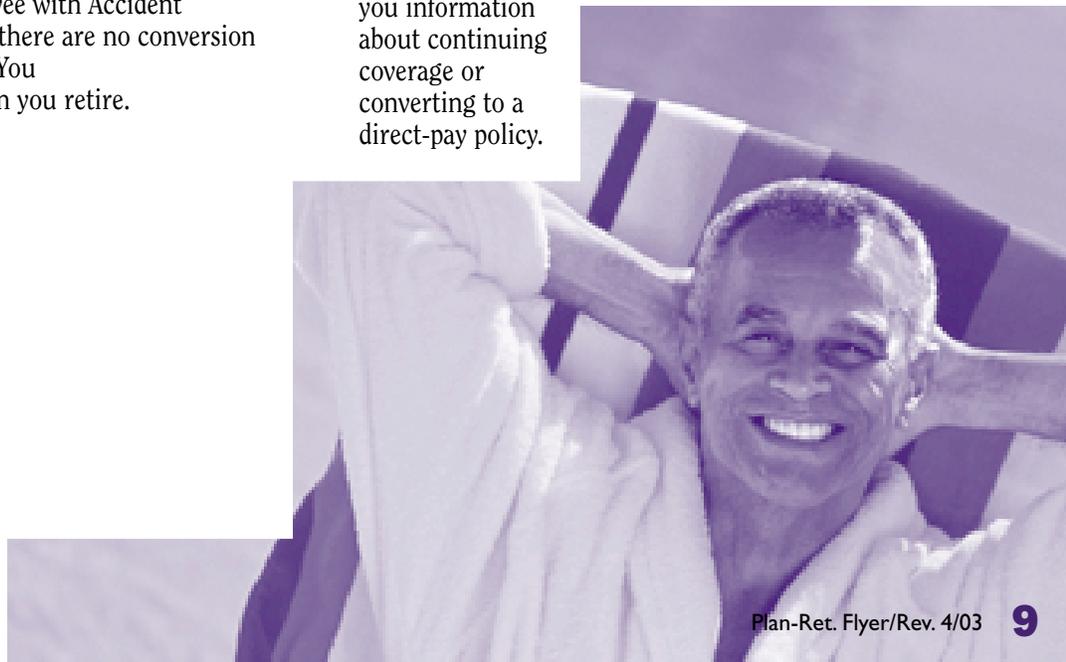
*If I am enrolled in the M/C Life Insurance Program, can I continue it after retirement?*

You may continue your M/C Life Insurance as a retiree if:

- You retire as a member of a retirement system administered by New York State (such as the New York State and Local Employee's Retirement System, the New York State Teacher's Retirement System, or the New York State Police and Fire Retirement System) or any of its subdivisions, or
- You are eligible to retire from one of the retirement systems listed above, but choose to defer receipt of the pension after you separate from service, or
- You are not a member of any retirement system administered by the State or its political subdivisions, but on the date of your separation from service you met the age and service requirements of the retirement plan appropriate for you if you had joined the retirement system at the time of first employment.

If you are not eligible to continue participation in the M/C Life Insurance Program, your life insurance coverage will terminate on the last day of the coverage period for which a contribution was made. At that time you may be eligible to convert to a standard direct-pay policy with the carrier.

If you are enrolled in the group life insurance program for M/C employees, you may choose to continue in the program or convert to a direct-pay policy. If you choose to remain in the program, you may continue both personal and dependent life insurance in retirement, subject to the age-related life insurance reductions. Your agency Health Benefits Administrator will give you information about continuing coverage or converting to a direct-pay policy.



# Getting Started



*What steps should I take before I retire?*

## Talk with your agency Health Benefits Administrator (HBA)

Here are some things to discuss:

- ✓ Make sure you meet the minimum service requirements for continuing benefits in retirement. For health insurance, be especially sure to check any part-time or local government service.

If you do not meet the requirements to continue coverage, COBRA or a direct-pay policy will allow you to continue health insurance benefits. Read the chapters on COBRA Continuation of Coverage and Changing from NYSHIP to a Direct Pay Conversion Contract in your *NYSHIP General Information Book*. Read about COBRA and your other benefits. Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator for details.

- ✓ If you meet the requirements for continuing benefits in retirement, ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator to change your status from active to retired. If you meet the requirements but do not want your health insurance to

continue after you retire, you must notify your agency Health Benefits Administrator.

- ✓ Make sure the information on your enrollment record, such as dates of birth, correct spelling of names, and addresses, is accurate and up to date.

- ✓ Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator to explain the benefits you will have as a retiree, especially if there are any differences from your employee coverage.

- ✓ If you have accrued sick leave, ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator to provide information about the

Dual Annuitant Sick Leave Credit (through which your sick leave credit can be applied toward your surviving dependent's premium).

- ✓ Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator to provide information about Deferred Health Insurance Coverage.

- ✓ Ask your agency Health Benefits Administrator for the latest publications on health insurance and other benefits information available to retirees.



## Contact your Social Security Administration office

If you or a dependent is already 65 or over, call your Social Security Administration office three months before you retire to enroll in Medicare Parts A and B. You must have Medicare Parts A and B in effect soon after you retire. (Medicare becomes primary to NYSHIP on the first day of the month following a “runout” period of 28 days after the payroll period in which you retire.) Also, regardless of age, Medicare provides coverage that is primary to NYSHIP when you retire if you or your dependent is disabled or develops end stage renal disease (permanent kidney failure). After you retire, when you or a dependent reaches age 65, NYSHIP requires you to have Medicare Parts A and B in effect on the first day of the month in which you reach 65. Plan to sign up three months before turning 65.

Your dependent must also have Medicare Part A and Part B in effect when first eligible for Medicare coverage that is primary to NYSHIP.

## If you are moving when you retire:

- Before you retire, notify your agency Health Benefits Administrator of any address or phone number change, and check with your agency to see if you need to change your health insurance option.
- After you retire, write to report enrollment and address changes to: State of New York Department of Civil Service, Employee Benefits Division, The State Campus, Albany, New York 12239. Be sure to include your name, address and your enrollee Health Insurance Identification Number.

## Where can I get more information?

Here are some sources for information on continuing health insurance and related benefits in retirement:

- Talk to your agency Health Benefits Administrator. After you retire, the Employee Benefits Division will serve as your Health Benefits Administrator. To speak to a representative call 518-457-5754 (Albany area) or 1-800-833-4344 (U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands) between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Eastern Time. *Be prepared to provide your Health Insurance ID number (usually the Social Security Number).*
- The Employee Benefits Division Web site, [www.cs.state.ny.us](http://www.cs.state.ny.us), provides information on retiree benefits.
- The *NYSHIP General Information Book for Retirees, Vestees, Dependent Survivors* and employees covered under Preferred List provisions provides information on NYSHIP and coordinating benefits with Medicare.
- The Empire Plan Certificate, or your HMO Contract, provides details of plan coverage.
- *Choices* provides option transfer information and brief descriptions of all NYSHIP options and rates.
- Medicare, which is part of the Social Security Administration, can be reached at 1-800-MEDICARE (633-4227) for medical benefits and claims information. Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to enroll in Medicare.

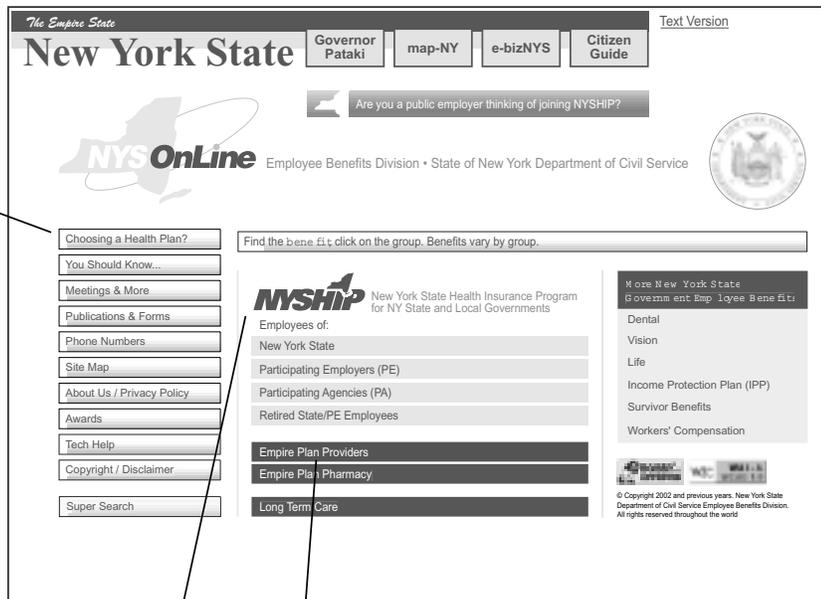


**PLEASE VISIT US ON THE WEB AT [WWW.CS.STATE.NY.US](http://www.cs.state.ny.us)**

Check our New York State Department of Civil Service Employee Benefits Division Web site at [www.cs.state.ny.us](http://www.cs.state.ny.us). Click on Employee Benefits for timely information about your Empire Plan benefits.



Choosing a Health Plan?  
Health insurance options for New York State Employees and Retirees and for Employees and Retirees of Participating Employers



Health Insurance  
Choose a group to go to the contents page of the General Information Book and other group-specific health benefit information

Empire Plan Providers  
Link directly to the Participating Provider Directory on the United HealthCare (UHC) Web site

*Planning for Retirement* is published by the Employee Benefits Division of the State of New York Department of Civil Service. The Employee Benefits Division administers the New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP). NYSHIP provides your health insurance benefits through the Empire Plan or an HMO.



State of New York  
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It is the policy of the State of New York Department of Civil Service to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure effective communication of information in benefits publications to individuals with disabilities. These publications are also available on the Employee Benefits Division Web site ([www.cs.state.ny.us](http://www.cs.state.ny.us)), which meets universal accessibility standards adopted by New York State for NYS Agency Web sites. If you need an auxiliary aid or service to make benefits information available to you, please contact your agency Health Benefits Administrator. COBRA enrollees may call the Employee Benefits Division at (518) 457-5754 (Albany area) or 1-800-833-4344 (U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands).