

PSERS Retired Member Newsletter

Volume 2 - 2021

A publication of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Public School Employees' Retirement System

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The Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) provides this document for educational and informational purposes. Information in this document is general in nature, does not cover all factual circumstances, and is not a complete statement of the law or administrative rules. The statements in this document are not binding. In any conflict between the statements in this document and applicable law or administrative rules, the law and administrative rules will prevail. This document is designed solely to provide an overview of benefits available to PSERS members and is not intended to be a substitute for retirement counseling. The contents of this newsletter may not be used for any commercial purpose without PSERS' prior written permission.

Members have reported a significant delay receiving correspondence and checks in the mail due to ongoing postal service issues. PSERS encourages all members to sign up for direct deposit using the form on our website for their monthly benefit check. Members can also sign up for paperless delivery through the PSERS Member Self-Service Portal to avoid any mail delays with their correspondence.

Thinking about returning to school service?

Be sure you are familiar with these return to service exceptions.

Except under specific circumstances, the Retirement Code prohibits retirees from returning to school service in a public school in any capacity, full-time or part-time, qualifying or non-qualifying service, while receiving a PSERS retirement benefit.

If you are a PSERS retiree and return to Pennsylvania public school service as a school employee, your monthly retirement benefit must be stopped unless one of the following exceptions applies, as determined by PSERS:

- **Personnel Shortage** - A shortage of appropriate subject-certified teachers or other personnel initially determined by the employer and approved by PSERS. Certain requirements and time restrictions apply.
- **Emergency that Increases the Workload** - An unforeseen emergency which increases the workload and creates a serious impairment of service to the public initially determined by the employer and approved by PSERS. Certain requirements and time restrictions apply.
- **Extracurricular Position** - An extracurricular position under a separate written contract. Certain contractual and schedule restrictions apply.
- **Independent Contractor** - Contractual arrangement with the employer as a bona fide independent contractor.
- **Employment with a Third-Party Employer** - Employment when validly employed by, and providing services through, a legitimate third-party employer that is not a reporting unit of PSERS.
- **Enrollment in Alternate Retirement Plan** - Employment by any of the state's community colleges, Pennsylvania State University, or the 14 state-owned universities and enrollment in an alternate retirement plan (e.g., State Employees' Retirement System or Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association). Special rules may apply for employment in a community college, public university, or Pennsylvania charter school.

Continued on Page 3

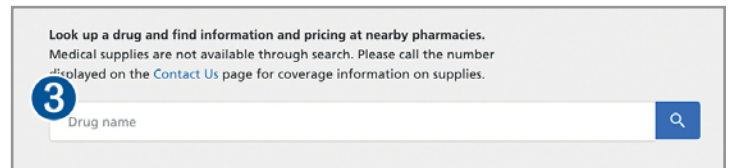


PSERS Health Options Program: Price Your Medications Online

When your doctor prescribes a new medication, how do you know how much it will cost? If you are enrolled in the Enhanced, Basic or Value Medicare Rx Option under the Health Options Program, you can use the OptumRx® Drug Pricing Tool. This online tool is easy to use and provides the information you need to compare local pharmacies and home delivery costs. This tool is available to members enrolled in a Medicare Rx Option under the Health Options Program. You must be registered on the OptumRx website. When you register or sign in on **optumrx.com** for the first time, you will be asked to create a HealthSafe ID. This ID helps protect the security of your personal health information.

How to Use the Tool

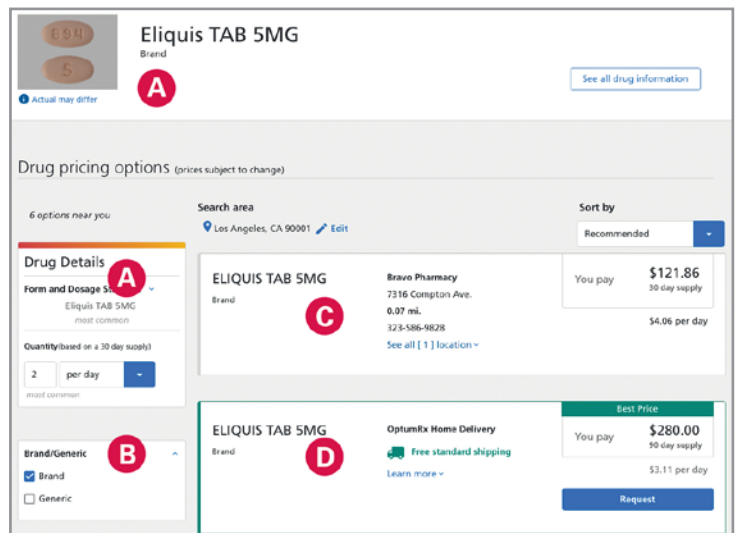
- 1 To get started, log in or register at **optumrx.com**.
- 2 Select the **Price a Drug** option from the main menu.
- 3 Enter the name of your medication, and click the **search** icon.
- 4 Review the results. As a registered member, the tool will know which Medicare Rx Option you are enrolled in and what stage of coverage you are in (e.g., Initial Coverage, the Coverage Gap, or Catastrophic Coverage).



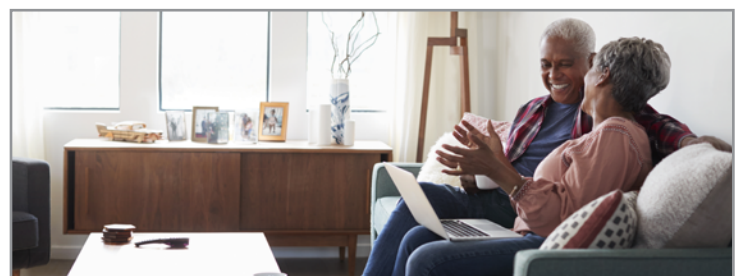
The Tool in Action

This example shows the search results for a member enrolled in the **Enhanced Medicare Rx Option** who is taking Eliquis, which is used to prevent blood clots and stroke. Here's how to read the results:

- A The image and general description of the medication.
- B The type of drug—brand or generic. This makes a difference in how the medication is covered.
- C The name, address, and location of retail pharmacies that can fill the prescription and how much it will cost.
- D Home delivery costs. This is a convenient option if you can't make it to the retail pharmacy.



If you have any questions about the OptumRx Drug Pricing Tool, please **contact OptumRx at 1-888-239-1301** (TTY/TDD: 1-800-498-5428).



(Continued from Page 1...Thinking about returning to service?)

These exceptions are detailed in the *Return to Service Exceptions* (Publication #9682) handbook available on the PSERS website.

Before beginning service, you must confirm with the employer and PSERS that your return is approved by PSERS under one of the exceptions. PSERS will provide written approval to the employer of either a *School Year Approval* or a *Specific Member Approval* that you should request a copy of.

If you are approved to return to service under one of the return to service exceptions, you will not be eligible to earn or purchase service credit for the period of time you render service. If PSERS determines that your return does not qualify under any of these exceptions, your monthly payment will be stopped as of the day you first returned to service and you will again become an active, contributing member of PSERS. You will also be required to pay back the benefit you received, if any, following your return to service.

Please contact PSERS if you have questions on returning to service.

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit is a safe, reliable way to receive your PSERS monthly payments. To sign up, please complete and mail the *Authorization for Direct Deposit – Electronic Transfer of Monthly Benefit* (PSRS-116) located on the PSERS website.

Upon receipt of your properly completed form, we will update your account to stop the mailing of a paper check and authorize the electronic transmission of your retirement benefit to your bank account. **Please note, it may take up to 60 days for direct deposit to become effective. You will continue to receive your paper check until direct deposit takes effect.**

A confirmation letter is sent when your direct deposit request is processed. If you are changing the bank account where you would like to receive your benefit, please be aware that direct deposits will still be sent to the old account until PSERS processes your request.

PSERS Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule

June 10-11, 2021

August 5-6, 2021

October 7-8, 2021

December 1-2, 2021

PSERS Board meetings are held in Harrisburg at PSERS, located at 5 N 5th Street.

In addition to Board meetings, Committee meetings are held throughout the year. All PSERS Board meetings are open to the public.

For exact meeting times or if you would like to attend and require an accommodation to participate, please call Tivia Danner, PSERS Executive Office at 1.888.773.7748, extension 4617.

Follow PSERS on Social Media

Follow PSERS on social media for retirement information, educational videos and fact sheets, PSERS investment highlights, and more! PSERS is on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (PA Public School Employees' Retirement System)!

 @PA_PSERS

 @PennPSERS

PSERS Member Self-Service Portal Reaches Three-Year Milestone

PSERS Member Self-Service (MSS) Portal launched in 2018. Since then, PSERS has **saved more than \$1 Million in printing and mailing costs** through MSS' Paperless Delivery option. As of February 28, 2021, PSERS has sent nearly 2.8 million pieces of correspondence electronically!

Thank you for your continued commitment to help PSERS **Go Green!** If you do not receive your correspondence electronically, PSERS encourages you to register for an MSS account and retain Paperless Delivery.

Members also completed over 255,000 transactions online. Commonly completed transactions include:

- Retirement Estimates
- Nomination of Beneficiary
- Address Change
- Income Verification

PSERS continues enhancements to the MSS Portal to improve user experience. Upgrades to MSS this fall will make it easier to access your account through mobile devices.

Keep Your Account Secure

One of the most critical and easiest steps you can take to keep your accounts safe is to register them online. If you have not registered your PSERS MSS account, you are at a greater risk of having your accounts compromised. Fraudsters, for example, like to target unregistered accounts that they can set up with their own data points like phone number and email address. As a result, you are more secure by registering your accounts online.

Now Available in PSERS MSS Portal: Secure Messaging

Secure Messaging is now available in your PSERS Member Self-Service (MSS) account! Secure Messaging allows you to contact PSERS directly in the MSS Portal. Your conversations with PSERS retirement representatives are confidential and retained for your convenience.

Why Secure Messaging?

- **Enhanced Security** – Conversations in Secure Messaging are linked to your PSERS account. You will not have to provide any personally-identifiable information through email for PSERS to verify your identity. Furthermore, PSERS retirement representatives will be able to discuss your account details with you through a more secure method than email.
- **Faster Responses** – PSERS prioritizes member-specific messages received within the secure MSS Portal over generic emails received to our general resource account or through our website contact form.
- **Messages Retained in MSS** – All of your retirement information will be in one place at your fingertips in the MSS Portal, including your correspondence with PSERS. You'll even have the ability to filter messages to make certain correspondence easier to find.

How will Secure Messaging Work?

You can send a secure message of up to 4,000 characters through the MSS Portal. You will then be notified by email once a response has been posted in your account. Coming later will be the ability to include attachments with your secure messages to PSERS.

To send a secure message in your MSS account, click on **Send a Secure Message** in the **Quick Links** section of the **Home** tab or go to the **Contact PSERS** tab.

PSERS Board Chairman and Vice Chairman Election

PSERS Board of Trustees voted to elect a chairman and vice chairman at the annual public organizational meeting (Jan. 14, 2021) held at PSERS headquarters. Both positions have one-year terms and are responsible for running PSERS public Board meetings in accordance with Pennsylvania law.

Trustee Christopher SantaMaria, an active certified member representative, was re-elected to the post of board chairman. Trustee Francis X. Ryan, who represents the state House Republican Caucus, was re-elected vice chairman.

Mr. SantaMaria has been a trustee since 2017. He is a social studies teacher in the Lower Merion School District in Montgomery County. He was formerly president of the Lower Merion Education Association. Mr. SantaMaria holds a bachelor's degree in history from Washington College and a masters' degree in education from Cabrini College.

Representative Ryan has been a trustee since 2019. He is an elected state representative, representing parts of Lebanon County. He is a certified public accountant and retired Marine Reserve colonel. He holds a bachelor's degree from Mt. St. Mary's College and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Maryland.

The 15-member Board of Trustees is an independent administrative board of the Commonwealth. The Board stands in a fiduciary relationship to the members of PSERS regarding investment decisions and disbursements of the System's funds. The Board also performs other functions outlined in the Public School Employees' Retirement Code, such as certifying contribution rates, authorizing the actuarial valuation and independent audit of the System, and publishing an annual financial statement of the condition of the Retirement Fund. In addition, the Board oversees the operational activities performed by the System's Executive Director and Chief Investment Officer.

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**PSERS is proud to be
an equal opportunity
employer supporting
workforce diversity.**

PSERS Behind the Scenes

Introduction to PSERS' Bureau of Benefits Administration (BBA)

Mission: The Bureau of Benefits Administration (BBA) upholds PSERS' mission to serve the members and stakeholders of the system by providing timely and accurate payment of benefits, maintaining a financially sound system, clearly communicating member and employer rights and responsibilities, and effectively managing the resources of the system.

Processing Member Benefits Accurately and Efficiently is Our Top Priority

BBA is charged with maintaining accurate account data, determining membership and benefit eligibility, and calculating benefits for PSERS members. BBA staff review, analyze, and update data in member accounts to ensure accuracy. To increase efficiency, employees in BBA are cross-trained to work in various business areas based on operational needs within the bureau.

BBA is composed of the Member Account Division and Benefits & Exceptions Division that work closely together to ensure data integrity and the timely payout of benefits.

- The Member Account Division reviews data and information prior to processing a member's account to ensure data integrity. This division also processes purchases of service, account adjustments, and refunds of contributions and interest.
- The Benefits & Exceptions Division processes benefits such as retirement applications, death benefits, domestic relations orders, multiple service elections, and return to service. The division also issues disability determinations and handles complex retirement calculations.

Commitment to Our Members

BBA employees currently work from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They quickly adapted to a teleworking environment to continue to protect the accuracy of member data and process benefits timely. BBA has also been able to maintain and, in some instances, exceed expected processing time frames during the pandemic.



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Public School Employees' Retirement System
Important Information from the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania