

Special Anniversary Edition

The Newburgh Teachers' Association

Benefit Trust Fund News

Robin Eitel, Assistant Administrator

March 5, 2012

Russell Coughlin, Administrator

Trust Fund Celebrates 25 Years

On November 19, 2011, the NTABTF celebrated 25 years as an independent, self-administered, Trust Fund. Our original dental benefits were one of the contractual enhancements resulting from the NTA's strike in the fall of 1973. The settlement specified that the District provide teachers with dental insurance. Initially, and for the following 8 years, the District contracted with the Prudential insurance company. However, because the benefits were very minimal, there was no family coverage, and claims often took a month or more to process, the plan was underutilized by our members. NTA negotiators were able to change the contract language so that the District paid the premium directly to the newly established NTA Dental Welfare Fund. We were now in business!

Third Party Administrator

Between 1982 and 1986 we used a third party administrator (TPA) who managed our original Dental Welfare Fund for a fee of approximately 25% of our total annual income. Realizing that we could do a better job at a much lower cost, the NTA created an independent, free standing Dental Trust Fund which began operating on November 19, 1986.

More and Better Benefits With Lower Overhead

Since going independent, we have increased our services and now offer vision and prescription co-pay benefits as well as dental. These benefits have been added while keeping overhead at just over 10% of total expenditures. Benefits are increased when it is fiscally responsible to do so.

Trust Fund History and Personnel

Since 1982, every NTA President has also served as Trust Fund Chairperson. In 1986, when the Trust Fund became independent, then-president Frank Colone appointed Alan Leontovich to be the first Trust Fund Administrator. As Dental

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Trust Fund founder, Alan was responsible for the nuts and bolts of putting a plan together. He went on to serve as Administrator for 15 years. The current administrator has served for 11 years.

The Assistant Administrator has been with the Trust Fund for 25 years. In addition to her Trust Fund duties, she participates in the annual New Teacher Orientation Workshop and will meet with any member individually, by appointment.

The Fund also employs two part-time claims processors. All Fund employees' responsibilities overlap in the event that it becomes necessary for one employee to do another's job.

Premiums, Negotiations, and the Board of Trustees

The NTA negotiates with the Board of Education for its annual payment of premiums for active members. Retirees must pay their own premium. Members of the Board of Trustees are responsible for determining retiree premiums, establishing the Fund's policies, adhering to the Agreement and Declaration of Trust, adjudicating member appeals, and adjusting benefit levels. Membership on the Board of Trustees changes when new individuals are elected and when others retire. However, because of the Fund's solid foundation and management, these changes have had no effect on the Fund's stability or daily operations. In this regard, the administrator would like to thank the veteran and new Trustees who have selflessly taken on the stewardship of their colleague's benefits.

Trust Fund Communications

The Fund publishes the Dental Benefits Booklet and revises it on a regular basis as Trustees adjust benefits and change Fund policies. The Fund also publishes the **Benefit Trust Fund News** which is sent to members via the District courier and the U.S. Mail and is posted on the NTA website at www.newburghta.com. It announces more immediate information on Fund procedures and reminds members of current Fund rules and policies and also important dates.

The Most Benefit Dollars to the Most Members

Over the years, the Fund has always tried to operate in a professional, courteous, and friendly manner. When it comes to Trust Fund benefits, the fund's goal has always been to provide the most benefit dollars to the most number of people. In addition, we have always tried to pay your claims and return your benefit checks in the shortest possible time, many times the next day. We hope that our efforts have assisted our members in lessening the financial burden of their dental, vision and prescription costs. Thank you for your continued support!