

FRINGE BENEFIT ARTICLE

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REVIEW YOU HOSPITAL BILL!

Should you find yourself receiving medical services at a hospital, the Fund Office recommends you request an itemized bill when you are released. Why is this important? Many times, a hospital will mistakenly add charges on your bill for services you did not receive or equipment that was never used. These erroneous charges cause both you and your Fund to incur additional expenses unnecessarily.

One member related the following story after having knee surgery at a local hospital. Upon discharge, the member requested an itemized bill from the hospital. While recuperating at home, he reviewed the bill item by item and found there were several charges on the bill for services he did not receive. The hospital also charged for equipment and supplies that were never used. In addition, the member knowing he would need crutches to leave the hospital brought his own with him. However, there on his bill was a charge for crutches which he did not need. After his review, the member contacted the hospital to discuss the items in dispute. As a result, the hospital removed almost \$6,000 from the charges. This member's efforts effectively saved the Health & Welfare Fund from paying the hospital for these erroneous charges and at the same time, the member also saved his 10% co-pay for these charges or \$600.

The above example is just one of many we have seen here at the Fund. So, when you leave the hospital, please ask for an itemized bill and review it while the services and equipment used are still fresh in your memory. If you see something on the bill you do not recognize or understand, please contact the hospital and discuss the charge directly with them. Should you need any assistance with your review you can contact the Fund Office Claims Department at 708-579-6600.

FEDERAL WITHHOLDING TAX

Retirees were recently notified that the Federal Withholding Tax tables changed for calendar year 2008. Monthly pensions below \$1,560.00 are not subject to withholding unless the retiree requests it. The \$1,560.00 is the withholding threshold for a married taxpayer claiming three exemptions.

Your original withholding choice will remain in effect until you file a new W-4P with the Pension Fund. You can obtain a new W-4P from the Pension Department.

Withholding is one way for you to pay a portion of your income tax. If no taxes or not enough taxes are withheld from your pension, you may have to pay estimated taxes during the year or a tax penalty may be assessed at the end of the year. Whether you have to pay income tax on your pension check depends on the total amount of your taxable income. You may wish to discuss this with a qualified tax advisor.

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