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Fall, 2022

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President's Message



They say that time flies. I do believe that it does! My year as EIUAA president has been very enjoyable. We were able to have three in-person meetings for our membership, two chapter meetings and a speaker series presentation. With the exception of the January 2022 meeting, all board meetings were in-person. Zoom meetings work, but there is nothing like the personal connection of an in-person meeting. Everything was moving along smoothly and I was thinking I could slide through the last few months of 2022 when CMS announced only one option for Medicare eligible retirees. Next, we found out that Carle and Aetna weren't agreeing on a contract. Time is ticking as the enrollment period is quickly approaching. This is when having an annuitant association is essential!

EIUAA jumped in and got to work. Information was sent out to our membership. Senator Chapin Rose spoke at our Fall Chapter meeting. He explained how the process at CMS worked and gave us good information on how to move forward. He suggested contacting Governor Pritzker's office, so we all sent letters and emails and EIUAA sent a letter to the governor. EIUAA then joined forces with the University of Illinois Annuitant Association. EIUAA members took a road trip to the U of I Fall Chapter Meeting. Many voices were heard during that meeting. WCIA was in attendance at the U of I meeting and kept retiree issues in the news. More information was sent out to our members. Additional strategies were in the works when an announcement was made on WCIA. On October 31, Carle announced a tentative agreement with Aetna. Thank you to all who sent letters and emails. The issues that faced those who use Carle were made known. The legislature is looking into the CMS selection process. It is amazing what can be accomplished when we come together for a common cause.

It has been my pleasure to serve on the board for the last seven years (one additional year due to COVID). I was very hesitant to serve at first, as many probably are. Now, I'm glad that I decided to join the board. It got me out of my comfort zone and involved. I would like to thank all the board members that I have served with and especially the current board for their help and encouragement. It is very important as we age to stay involved. Volunteering is good for the mind and body. I've met some very nice people, that I can count as friends. Think about joining the board. It doesn't really take up too much of your time. Each year there are five board meetings, three chapter meetings and an annual luncheon (fingers crossed for 2023). Board member terms are three years and can be renewed for a total of six years. Please consider serving on the board. Each year we need new board members. Or maybe you're not ready to serve on the board, but would still like to be involved. You can always volunteer to serve on a committee. It is a great way to learn what EIUAA does and volunteer. It can get exciting at times. And you never know, you could end up as president!

SUAA NEWS

SUAA Fall Meeting

The SUAA Fall Meeting was held on Thursday, November 17, 2022 at the ISU Alumni Center. Rich Wandling and Nancy Dole attended as voting delegates from EIUAA. Prior to hearing from SUAA officers and committee chairs, the program featured two speakers from the University of Illinois-Springfield: Professor Emeritus Kent Redfield who surveyed the changing political terrain of Illinois and Professor Ken Kriz who mapped out economic forecasting scenarios for the Illinois budget.

The SUAA Membership committee chair reported on the loss of members state-wide and the need to increase membership. Along with a variety of membership relationship-building and outreach activities, it was noted that one way to increase membership is through spouse membership. Many spouses also maintain their membership after the retiree dies. (An EIU retiree can register their spouse for \$44 per year. Please consider adding your spouse. Forms are available on the EIUAA website.)

SUAA operates on a very tight budget. As a way to generate additional revenue, SUAA has created a new membership category. A supporting member pays an additional \$100, along with their SUAA/chapter dues. (EIU supporting membership would cost \$100 + \$44.) It takes a considerable amount of money to fight for legislation that protects our pension and benefits, and for this reason it is imperative to have a large membership along with a strong revenue base.

A SUAA employee explained “ancillary” benefits available along with your SUAA membership. Some of those benefits are: savings on car rentals, hotels, flights, prescriptions, AAA and many types of insurance (including pet insurance). The SUAA website provides information and access to these benefits. Using these benefits more than make up for costs of membership dues, and they also generate revenue for SUAA. The SUAA website also provides information on many topics, and it’s a good idea for us to review the website periodically.

Linda Brookhart, SUAA Executive Director, spoke on the importance of building relationships with our legislators. She represents the SUAA in ways such as attending fundraisers and legislative events, while taking steps to build support for the interests of the SUAA. Chapters were encouraged to get to know their district legislators, which will be helpful in pursuing the SUAA legislative platform. She said, “SUAA is assurance of benefits for retirees and also current employees”.

In addition, two days prior to the SUAA Fall Meeting, SUAA had representatives at a hearing held by the Illinois Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability (CGFA). Testimony from CMS and other interested individuals focused on the RFP process that left retirees with only a single TRAIL option, the Aetna Medicare Advantage PPO. Rich Wandling/EIUAA and John Marlin/U of I SUAA were thanked for their testimony offered during this hearing. SUAA participation in the hearing served an important role in communicating concerns to state legislators, as one step toward making our presence known in Springfield on a topic of great concern to state retirees.

TRAIL EIU Meeting

11/21/22

[Total Retiree Advantage Illinois \(TRAIL\) Program](#)

CMS and AETNA representatives were on campus on November 21 to share information on the TRAIL program. The full presentation is on the CMS website (cms.illinois.gov/benefits/trail.htm) or click the link above. I would recommend that you watch this presentation. Included in this presentation is not only information on the new AETNA plan, but also information such as:

- Extra benefits available with this plan
- Information for those enrolling for the first time as well as those annuitants currently covered by United Health
- Medicare information
- Drug coverage
- How to enroll or make changes to your coverage

One of the most important pieces of information you will need to know is that they will be sending out a letter to current TRAIL members by mid-late December. **This letter will contain your ID number. You need to hold onto this letter until your detailed coverage packet arrives. You will need this number if you contact AETNA regarding coverage or if you do not receive your packet. ID Cards should arrive by the end of December.**

Also, if you have a chronic condition, call AETNA Customer Service at the number below and ask for a Case Manager. They will help you with the transition to AETNA!!

Below is a list of phone numbers and web addresses.



Questions?

- **Aetna:**
Call 1-855-223-4807 from 8am to 8pm CT or visit StateofIllinois.AetnaMedicare.com to learn about plan benefits, find providers, and look up prescription drugs.
- **MyBenefits Service Center:**
Call 1-844-251-1777 from 8am – 6pm CT or visit mybenefits.illinois.gov to ask about eligibility, make changes to your coverage, or opt out of the Aetna MAPD PPO plan.
- **Medicare:**
Call 1-800-633-4227 visit www.medicare.gov to ask questions about Medicare Parts A and B.
- **CMS:**
The recorded presentation and TRAIL guides can be found at cms.illinois.gov/thetrail

Fall Chapter Meeting

10/6/22

Illinois State Senator Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, told Eastern Illinois University retirees Thursday that an agreement can still be worked out so they can keep getting health care from Carle Foundation Hospital and its clinics, despite the announced changes by the state. “I think there’s a good chance that Carle and Aetna will work something out,” he told more than 60 people attending an Eastern Illinois University Annuitants Association chapter meeting on Oct. 6. “Is that guaranteed? No, it’s not.”



The Illinois Department of Central Management Services has announced it will make Aetna PPO the sole provider of supplemental health coverage for Medicare-eligible Illinois retirees over a bid from United Healthcare. Aetna currently does not

include Carle Hospital and Clinic in its coverage area, which means that Medicare-eligible retirees from Eastern Illinois University and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign would have to switch to another provider.

Rose told retirees that they should be angry about this move by CMS, which did not take their health care needs into consideration. He laid the blame directly on Gov. J.B. Pritzker and his administration. “CMS administration is woefully mismanaged,” he said. “Why didn’t they make this decision last March and give everyone notice and not wait until 15 days before open enrollment period begins?”

CMS will be holding hearings around the state on the health provider change, but none will be in Charleston. They are scheduled for Champaign, Danville and Effingham. He told audience members they should contact the governor’s office and local state representatives and senators to call for a CMS hearing in Charleston. Rose won’t officially become the senator from this area until after the elections when the new redistricting maps go into effect.

Rose believes the hearings may make a difference because CMS appears to be oblivious to East Central Illinois health care needs. If nothing is done after the hearings, he told audience members, that would be the time to get aggressive. He said Aetna may be a great option for retirees who travel or go away for the winter. “It’s just not good in East Central Illinois” for people who use Carle and Carle doctors.

Traditionally, health care contracts are renewed every 10 years, Rose said. Similar problems have come up in the past and been fixed at the 11th hour. He said there are several options to correct the oversight of no agreement between Aetna and Carle.

He said the governor could amend or extend the contract to cover Carle. He said retirees could appeal to the federal CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services), which oversees all TRAIL plans in the country. The federal CMS has the responsibility to ensure that state plans have adequate coverage networks.

He said retirees could sue the State of Illinois, arguing that the move diminishes their health care benefits, which are protected by the state constitution. Or, he said, they could sign up for another plan that includes Carle and pay for it out of pocket. Having said that, he also recommended individuals not rush into changing their plans. He said they should wait to see what happens once the CMS hearings start.

Rose also said he is considering introducing a bill calling for the state to give retirees funds for supplemental insurance and they could purchase their own coverage. However, he doesn’t think it would pass in a Democrat-controlled General Assembly, but it would get the discussion going.

In a questions and answers session, he told one audience member worried about an upcoming operation with a specialist at Carle that in the past Aetna has extended coverage for such patients so that they can get their scheduled treatments.

Submitted by EIUAA Board member, John Ryan, Secretary

EDITORS NOTE: Please be aware that since the time of this meeting, CARLE and AETNA have reached a tentative agreement. We have been told that both are in the process of finalizing paperwork. Check <https://www.suaa.org> or watch emails, website or Facebook for changes/updates!

EIUAA People

From Dale Wolf:

Dale and Deborah Wolf have spent a good deal of time traveling this year. Trying to make up for some cancelled events from the COVID months. Two trips to Europe included Iceland, Zurich, Oslo, Paris and a few other cities. Also in 2022 was a trip to Canada to see the Calgary Stampede and in addition Glacier National Park.

With a trip to Japan that was scheduled for September cancelled due to their COVID restrictions, we chose to instead spend a week in New York City and see a few shows on Broadway.

Making up for lost time we also have a few excursions scheduled for 2023 including a cruise to all the Great Lakes and another to the Columbia and Snake River area of the US.

From John Schmitt:

John D. Schmitt spent 17 days in July exploring Iceland and Greenland. Iceland is truly a mystical and beautiful place with more waterfalls than can be imagined and landscapes and seascapes which are beautiful. Greenland which is the largest Island in the world has a population of just 56,600 and is mostly covered in ice/glaciers. Both Iceland and Greenland were experiencing round the clock daylight at the time of the visit.



Like us on Facebook

Group name: Eastern Illinois University Annuitants Association

The EIU Annuitants Association now has a Facebook group as an additional way of keeping in touch with our members and sharing key association and university-related updates, news and events with everyone. All you need to do is find us on Facebook; you can readily access us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/961164987992076>

FAREWELLS

*Following are brief notices only. To read a full obituary or leave condolences, visit www.jg-tc.com
www.mitchell-jerdan.com www.adamsfuneralchapel.com*

Charles Lee Christmas, (Mathematics Department), 93, Statesboro, GA died July 6, 2022. Dr. Christmas is survived by his wife of 67+ years, Alice Ann; daughters Deborah, Barbara Tillman, Louise Quattlebaum (John); son Charles (Angela); seven grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren.

Donald Ray Davidson, 88, Mattoon, IL, died October 6, 2022. Donald is survived by his sons Michael Ray, Timothy Bryan (Karen), and Dennis Arthur (Christine); daughters Donna (Mike) Parkhurst, Colleen Rene; eleven grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Jean Dilworth, (Home Economics Department), 84, Waxhaw, NC, died August 30, 2022. Jean is survived by son Doug (Lisa), daughter Sondra (Chad) Brown, two granddaughters; brother and sister.

Charles Evans (VPAA/Political Science Department), 81, Tulsa, OK, died December 11, 2021. Charles is survived by his wife of 58 years, Celia; three daughters and four grandchildren.

Julian J. Hamerski, (Chemistry Department), 92, of Onalaska, WI died September 13, 2022. Julian is survived by six children, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Samuel Willis Jenkins, Jr., (Sociology Department), 91, Hutton Township, IL died August 18, 2022. Sam is survived by his wife of 64 years, Kathleen; his four sons Samuel Mark (Tina), Timothy (Sherrie), Sean (Andrea) and Michael (Patricia); and nine grandchildren.

James K Johnson (Art Department, Chair), 81, Charleston, IL died May 7, 2022. Jim is survived by his wife Wanda; sons Kirby (Bridget), Brent (Ingrid) and Tyler; four grandchildren; his brother and sister.

James Krehbiel, Sr. (Music Department), 93m Charleston, IL died July 5, 2022. James is survived by his wife of 70+ years, Barbara; three children: James, Jr. (Natalie), Mark, and Elizabeth (Kenneth) Kutzko.

Donald Morlan, (Speech Department), 81, Woodruff, WI died September 19, 2022. Donald is survived by his children Jeff (Rae), Brad and Kristina Casariego; five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Darryl Mudra, (Football Coach), 93, Tallahassee, FL died September 21, 2022. Darryl is survived by his daughter Sherry Kawaguchi (Eitaro); sons Steve (Anne) and Darryl, Jr. (Sandy); two brothers, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Susan L Propst (Purchasing Department), 47, Martinsville, IL died June 23, 2022. Susan is survived by her husband Darin; daughters Payton, Ella and Ashley; mother Janet Wolfe, brother Jay (Leslie) and sister Dinah.

Charylene Deloris “Dee” Sloat (Cook), 88, Kansas, IL died July 7, 2022. Dee is survived by two sons, James Douglas (Julie), and Bruce Alan (Cris Handley); one daughter, Debra Darlene (Sissy Launer); 6 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren.

Nancy Taitt, (Math Department), 85, Charleston, IL died October 28, 2022. Nancy is survived by her husband of 63 years, Henry; three children and five grandchildren.

Ronald Wohlstein (Sociology Department), 77, Charleston, IL died September 12, 2022. Ron is survived by his wife, Donna Marie; daughter Ronalle (Jerry Hayes) and several nieces and nephews.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative Committee

The CMS decision on the 2023 TRAIL MAPD plan reminds us of the value of support from our state legislators. This was clearly illustrated in State Senator Chapin Rose’s role as a voice—and information resource—for state retiree concerns over the announced Aetna MAPD PPO plan that was rolled out without an agreement with Carle. Senator Rose’s visit at our chapter’s October 6th meeting was not only informative on the central issues but also instructive on steps for EIUAA members to register our concerns. The SUAA-UIUC chapter meeting at the Alice Campbell Alumni Center on October 25 is another example of what can be gained

through connections with state legislators. Two area legislators--State Senator Scott Bennett and State Representative Mike Marron—were introduced at the outset, and they heard firsthand accounts of anxiety and uncertainty created for annuitants facing significant, including life-threatening, health care coverage issues. Recently, with an informal agreement earlier struck between Aetna and Carle, the bipartisan Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability held a hearing (November 15) that featured officials from both CMS and Aetna, along with United Health Care. State Senator Rose also arranged for the legislators to hear from key constituent groups affected by the CMS Medicare Advantage decision. Representatives of SUAA and the EIU and UIUC chapters were among those providing comments during the public part of the hearing. While the commission is an advisory body, there's no doubt that strong messaging came through for both CMS and Aetna, including compelling testimony from a state retiree encountering disturbing insurance coverage obstacles related to his need for a transplant. In addition, we also owe the scheduling of a CMS in-person seminar at Eastern Illinois University on November 21st to Senator Rose. In sum, legislative relationships matter to us, and we need to nurture and sustain them.

Scholarship Committee

Currently, our EIUAA Scholarship award is \$1,000. Eligible applicants are children or grandchildren of current EIU employees or retired EIU employees with five or more years of service to the University. For a complete list of scholarship criteria and to apply, use the EIU Academic Works portal. The deadline to apply is March 15, 2023.

As a member of EIUAA, you are also a member of SUAA, the state association. SUAA offers up to six scholarships of up to \$1,000 annually. In addition, the SUAA Foundation offers up to two grants of up to \$1,000 per grant annually for professional development activities (travel expenses are excluded). The applicant must be a SUAA member in good standing who is currently employed at an Illinois institution of higher education. Application material are available on the SUAA Foundation website.

If you are making end of the year donations, please think about donating to the EIUAA Scholarship Fund. As higher education costs increase, our goal is to grow our corpus enough to award a \$2,000 scholarship. Donations to the EIUAA Scholarship can be mailed to the EIU Foundation Office, 860 West Lincoln Avenue, Charleston, IL 61920 or gifts can be made through the EIU Foundation website.

Nancy Dole, Chair
EIUAA Scholarship Committee

Membership Committee

EIUAA's Greatest Asset

Our membership is our greatest asset. Increasing and sustaining membership in EIUAA/SUAA is essential to the success of our organization. Here are a few tips for sustaining our membership:

- #1 - Renew your membership as soon as you receive the first renewal notice from SUAA.
- #2 - If you pay annually, switch to payment through a monthly deduction of \$3.67 from your SURS annuity so that you don't have to renew each year.
- #3 - Thanks to all of our members who do pay dues through SURS deduction! That helps EIUAA and SUAA be more cost effective and efficient!

Thanks for maintaining your membership! EIUAA and SUAA will continue to advocate on your behalf to maintain your retirement and health care benefits.

John Ryan, Chair
Membership Committee

EIUAA OFFICERS (BEGINNING SP 2023)

Richard Wandling rawandling@eiu.edu	President
Nora Pat Small npsmall@eiu.edu	President-Elect
	Past President
Amy Lynch ajlynch@eiu.edu	Secretary
Kathy Reed ksreed@eiu.edu	Treasurer

Web Page: <https://www.eiu.edu/annuitants>

BOARD MEMBERS - 2023

Peter Andrews, Lisa Dallas, Cathy Engelkes, Steve Lane, Gloria Leitschuh,
Wendy Long, Amy Lynch, Marita Metzke, Kathy Reed, Billie Rawlings,
Nora Pat Small, Richard Wandling

COMMITTEES

Communications: Wendy Long (Chair), John Ryan

Events: Billie Rawlings (Chair), Margaret Messer, Rich Wandling

Legislative: Rich Wandling (Chair), Kathy Reed, Peter Andrews, Sue Kaufman

Membership: Wendy Long (Chair), John Best, John Flynn, Dale Wolf, Joan Zieren

Scholarship: Nora Pat Small (Chair), Nancy Dole, Margaret Messer, Nancy Murray

CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
January 26, 2023	Board Meeting	Neal Welcome Center
February 23, 2023	Chapter Meeting	Neal Welcome Center
March 23, 2023	Board Meeting	Neal Welcome Center
April, 2023	Annual Luncheon	
May 25, 2023	Board Meeting	Neal Welcome Center
July 13, 2023	Chapter Meeting	Neal Welcome Center
September 7, 2023	Board Meeting	Neal Welcome Center
October 5, 2023	Chapter Meeting	Neal Welcome Center
November 9, 2023	Board Meeting	Neal Welcome Center
<p><i>Note: Chapter meetings at the Neal Welcome Center begin with an 8:30 a.m. social time and come to order at 9 a.m.. Watch your email or Facebook for any updates!</i></p>		