

RISE Delaware™ Legislative Update and CALL TO ACTION!

From Sen. Karen Peterson (ret.), Legislative Liaison for RISE Delaware™

Important bills are moving through the General Assembly that RISE Delaware™ is actively supporting. One bill, House Substitute 1 for HB350 relating to hospital costs, is scheduled for a public hearing on Wednesday, March 27, at noon. **WE URGE YOU TO ATTEND THE MEETING IN PERSON OR ONLINE TO SUPPORT THE BILL.**

As a hospital cost containment measure, it is important to our effort to keep Medicfill long-term. The biggest pushback on HB281 (from the administration and legislators) is the cost of our good MedicFill plan. Thus, bills giving cost containment measures will help the passage of HB281. You can be confident that the hospitals are showing up against it.

We are grateful to Rep. Paul Baumbach and Speaker of the House Valerie Longhurst for introducing these bills that seek to codify various recommendations and suggestions of the Retiree Healthcare Benefits Advisory Subcommittee (RHBAS).

HOUSE BILL NO. 281 W/HOUSE AMENDMENT NO. 3 (Rep. Baumbach) (Medicare Supplement)

This bill requires that current retirees and current employees receive a Medicare Supplement plan (like our current Medicfill plan). This bill is important because without it, we could have to fight the State every 2-3 years as our healthcare contracts expire. This bill would codify the rights of retirees and employees to keep the benefits they were promised.

House Amendment No. 3 allows the State to offer a Medicare Advantage plan only as an option (but always with a supplemental plan) to new employees hired after January 1, 2025 – and only if the plan is selected and adopted as a regulation under the Administrative Procedures Act (APA). This bill was unanimously approved by the House of Representatives on March 12 and is now awaiting a hearing in the Senate Executive Committee. I will let you know when that hearing is scheduled.

HOUSE BILL NO. 282 W/HOUSE AMENDMENT NO.1 (Rep. Baumbach) (SEBC improvements)

This bill: (1) adds procedural requirements to meetings of the State Employee Benefits Committee (SEBC); (2) revises membership on the SEBC; (3) requires the Secretary of the Department of Human Resources to inform employees and retirees about proposed changes in benefits; and (4) replaces the governor-appointed pensioner on the SEBC with two pensioners (eligible to receive healthcare benefits) appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate and Speaker of the House. **This bill was unanimously approved by the House of Representatives on March 12th and is now in the Senate Executive Committee awaiting a hearing. I will let you know when that hearing is scheduled.**

HOUSE SUBSTITUTE 1 FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 350 (Rep. Longhurst) (Hospital charges)

One of the main cost-drivers of our healthcare costs is what hospitals charge. Studies show that Delaware hospitals are either 4th highest in the nation (or 7th, depending on the study) and have been for many years. HS1 for HB 350 seeks to address this issue by creating the “Diamond State Hospital Cost Review Board,” to be responsible for review and approval of annual hospital budgets beginning in 2026.

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As a temporary measure until then, hospitals are required to charge no more than 250% of Medicare costs to any payer for hospital services in 2025. **IMPORTANT: THIS BILL IS SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING IN THE HOUSE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE ON MARCH 27 AT NOON IN THE HOUSE CHAMBER IN DOVER. WE URGE RISE SUPPORTERS TO ATTEND THE MEETING IN PERSON OR VIRTUALLY TO SUPPORT THE BILL.**

Here is the link to attend online. <https://legis.delaware.gov/MeetingNotice/33281>

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RISE Delaware™: Retirees Investing in Social Equity Delaware

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Our Web site: www.risede.com

Checks may be made payable to: RISE Delaware

Address: RISE Delaware, P.O. Box 7262, Newark, DE 19714

Public Meeting Calendar: State of Delaware

<https://publicmeetings.delaware.gov/#/>

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