

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO OUR SOAR RETIREES WHO UTILIZE THE HRA BENEFIT CARD:

Today, your President and Vice President attended a meeting with Benefit Resource (BRI) facilitated and hosted by Monroe County Human Resources Director Andrea Guzzetta and her staff.

The meeting began with an apology from the senior member of the BRI delegation. A total of six department heads from BRI were there to address the concerns forwarded by our retirees. She stated that BRI is disappointed in the process and understood our concerns and frustrations.

The meeting was cordial and professional, but make no mistake, your voice was heard.

The biggest question on the minds of the majority of retirees (approximately 3,600 retirees and spouses have the HRA Card), was the Roll-Over from the Health Economics accounts. There has been a delay as Health Economics transferred the data to BRI in the wrong format. HR spent many hours reformatting the data and auditing your accounts "to the penny" to ensure accuracy. We have been assured that the Roll-Over will be completed by May 1st.

The next concern on the minds of many of our retirees, is exactly what is covered by the HRA Card? What is covered is delineated in IRS Regulations. Yet, each retiree should go to www.BenefitResource.com as they provide guidelines and in-depth information as to what is covered and what may require additional paperwork requirements (such as providing a "Medical Necessity Directive"). It was shared with BRI, that our previous provider did not require this much paperwork. It was requested that BRI address this issue as well as reimbursement requirements for Part B Medicare or Medicare Advantage Plan Premiums. LOOK FOR THAT TO COME FROM BRI IN THE MAIL, but the problem is that the BILL from Medicare or your Advantage Plan Provider MAY NOT indicate the "Dates of Service." BRI can only reimburse you for and when the services have been provided. If you pay for the entire year, your supporting documents (receipt) must include the dates of service (i.e. 1/1/2024-12/31/2024). Regarding reimbursements, your receipt must be detailed as to what services were provided or the item purchased. An example: Your eye glasses would be covered, but any warrantee would not be, or your teeth cleaning would be covered, but teeth whitening would not. Therefore; if you want to expedite the process, make sure you provide detailed receipts.

Regarding Customer Service, we clearly communicated our dissatisfaction with the wait times for speaking with someone. BRI HAS COMMITTED TO A DEDICATED PHONE NUMBER FOR MONROE COUNTY RETIREES IN THE NEAR FUTURE. In the upcoming communication from BRI, that new dedicated phone number will be published. Other call center improvements were shared to include the hiring of 27 new employees.

Some of our retirees have telemarketing blocking on their phones. Verizon and AT&T customers especially. When BRI calls you, your phone blocks the call assuming it's a telemarketer. This can be fixed by establishing BRI as a contact in your phone.

Other ways BRI is trying to expedite the routing of your call is to tie your phone number to you, thus routing you to the person who can help you. HR and BRI are working on this, but in full knowledge that many of you have several numbers (landline, cell for self and one for your spouse). They are working on this.

There is a major platform upgrade coming in June to BRI which may cause some hiccups, but there IS light at the end of the tunnel.

I can not stress enough the importance of creating an account at www.BenefitResource.com. They have all the forms you may need as well as information which you may find helpful. For instance, on your DASHBOARD, you will be able to see your account balances in real time.

Again, we covered all your concerns and I believe that we are on track to get these issues fixed. In the meantime, you can always reach out to me at soarboard2023@gmail.com and I will do what I can to get you an answer. If you did recently write me, your emails were shared with BRI, and you should be hearing from them directly or through HR.

I am hopeful, but in the immortal words of President Reagan, "Trust But Verify."

All the Best,

President Todd Allen
Vice President Bob Kehoe