



## Monthly annuity payment dates

- **December 31, 2015**
- **January 29, 2016**  
*If you are Medicare-eligible, benefits and Fall Enrollment changes for Plan Year 2016 will be reflected in the payment you receive at the end of January.*
- **February 29, 2016**
- **March 31, 2016**
- **April 29, 2016**
- **May 31, 2016**

Get your money faster and more safely: As a rule of thumb, direct-deposit annuities are deposited into your account on the last business day of each month. Paper checks are mailed on the second-to-last business day of the month. This applies to both ERS retirees and TRS retirees who have authorized ERS to deduct from their TRS annuity.

[www.ers.state.tx.us/Customer\\_Support/Online/Manage\\_Your\\_Annuity\\_Payments](http://www.ers.state.tx.us/Customer_Support/Online/Manage_Your_Annuity_Payments)

## Trust Fund Update

The 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature authorized increases in state and employee contributions to the ERS Retirement Trust Fund. With these important changes, the trust fund is on the path to actuarial soundness – preserving retirement benefits for current and future State of Texas retirees, with no new reductions in benefits. According to the 2015 actuarial valuation for ERS-administered pension plans, the funding period (for paying off unfunded liabilities) is now 33 years.

## HealthSelect of Texas deductibles start over on January 1

If you are enrolled in HealthSelect<sup>SM</sup> of Texas, the medical and pharmacy deductibles and coinsurance maximums for you and your family start over on January 1, 2016.

A deductible is the amount you pay before your insurance starts to pay its share of the cost.

You have a pharmacy and medical deductible if you:

- are eligible for Medicare and enrolled in HealthSelect,
- are not eligible for Medicare and live outside Texas, or
- live in Texas and use a provider that is not in the HealthSelect network.

You have only a \$50 pharmacy deductible (no medical deductible) if you are enrolled in HealthSelect in-area (non-Medicare) and use a network provider, Community First Health Plans, KelseyCare powered by Community Health Choice, Scott & White Health Plan, HealthSelect<sup>SM</sup> Medicare Advantage or KelseyCare Advantage HMO.



## Find your money!

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts has identified individuals who have unclaimed property. Currently, Texas has more than \$4 billion in unclaimed money from forgotten bank accounts, uncashed checks, overpayments, refunds, insurance premiums and mineral royalties. We guarantee you know someone who has missing money! It could be you, your neighbor or even a local business. Search now at [ClaimItTexas.org](http://ClaimItTexas.org) or call 1-800-654-3463 during business hours.



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Porter Wilson

With the holiday season coming up, I'm already thinking about how I'm going to get more exercise and rest. Here at ERS, we're always looking for ways to take care of ourselves so we can better serve you.

I hope you'll enjoy a healthful holiday season. You are an important part of the ERS family, and we want you to be healthy all year long. Don't forget that all ERS health plans offer wellness programs – at no cost to you – that can help you achieve better fitness and nutrition, overcome harmful habits and manage chronic conditions.

Once the holidays wind down, it will be tax time again. ERS will soon begin to send you information you need to file your income taxes, including your 1099-R form if you received an annuity or other payments from ERS in 2015. ERS is required to provide this important tax information.

I want to bring your attention to a new tax document you will receive from your medical coverage provider. The federal Form 1095-B is being sent to you this year for the first time.

Starting in tax year 2015, almost every person in the United States is required to have medical coverage and to report it as part of his or her federal tax filing.

If you do not report your medical coverage—and coverage for your tax dependents—you could be subject to an IRS fine. Form 1095-B will document that you had coverage.

**Have a safe and healthy holiday season!**

*Porter Wilson*

## Retirees to receive new federal Form 1095-B

The federal Affordable Care Act requires most Americans to be covered by some kind of health insurance. Beginning with the 2015 tax year, medical coverage providers will be required to report medical coverage enrollment information to the IRS. They will also be required to issue federal Form 1095-B to each individual who received coverage under one or more of their plans. Form 1095-B must be mailed to covered individuals by January 31, 2016.

People who don't have at least a minimal level of coverage could have to pay a fine to the IRS. Your Form 1095-B is proof that you and your covered dependents had medical coverage, so you can report it on your 2015 tax filing and avoid paying the fine. Receiving Form 1095-B does not mean you owe income taxes on the value of the health care benefits you receive. You do not have to file the form with the IRS, but you should keep it with all your tax records as supporting documentation.

Retirees who received medical coverage through ERS in 2015 will receive Form 1095-B from one of the following medical providers:

- UnitedHealthcare for HealthSelect<sup>SM</sup> of Texas,
- Community First Health Plans,
- KelseyCare powered by Community Health Choice and/or
- Scott & White Health Plan.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services will mail Form 1095-B to every participant enrolled in Medicare, including those enrolled in HealthSelect MA PPO or KelseyCare Advantage HMO.

More information is available on the ERS website at frequently asked questions about [Form 1095-B](#).

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## Look for your 1099-R form in the mail

By January 31, 2016, ERS will mail 1099-R forms to anyone who received annuity payments from ERS in 2015. The forms will be mailed to the address on file with ERS by January 31, 2016. ERS provides this form for tax filing purposes and will mail it to the address on file. If you don't receive this form by February 15, 2016, you may request that another form be mailed to you.

### To view your information:

1. Visit [www.ers.state.tx.us](http://www.ers.state.tx.us).
2. Access your ERS account online by clicking "Access My Account" button in the upper right corner.
3. Confirm your mailing address under "Addresses and Eligibility Basis."
4. Click the 1099-R Information link from your Member Home Page.
5. Click the link under 1099-R Description.



## Moving?

Please be sure to notify ERS to update your address and contact information. ERS needs to have your current contact information on file so you will receive information about your coverage and other important documents.

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## Humana-Aetna Merger

ERS is aware of the proposed Aetna merger with Humana, which is the current administrator of the HealthSelect<sup>SM</sup> Medicare Advantage PPO plan. Because the ERS-designed merger process is in its beginning stage, we do not have any information about how it might or might not affect ERS members enrolled in HealthSelect Medicare Advantage. It's important to remember that ERS, not the administrator, designs the plan for HealthSelect Medicare Advantage. We will share information with you as it becomes available.

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## New medical codes

Beginning October 1, 2015, thousands of new medical codes became available to health providers nationwide, as part of a federal requirement. This means you may see a difference in the coding and descriptions of health services on your Explanation of Benefits statements (EOBs). But there's no difference in the benefits. The new medical codes provide a better way to evaluate your care and ensure medical safety. They also should improve claims processing.

All Texas Employees Group Benefits Program health plans have taken many steps within their organizations and with their network providers to make sure there are few issues with the new codes. And we haven't heard about many issues since the new codes became available. If you do experience any problems with a claim, please contact your health plan.

## Sunset Review: Public invited to provide input on ERS

This year, the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature tasked the Sunset Commission--a legislative agency made up of state legislators and members of the public--to review ERS. Unlike other state agencies undergoing Sunset review, ERS isn't subject to abolishment under the Sunset Act. However, based on the recommendations of the Sunset Commission, the Texas Legislature could decide to make changes to improve ERS' performance.

The Sunset review involves three steps:

1. Sunset Commission staff will evaluate ERS and issue a report at the end of April 2016 recommending solutions to any problems they find.
2. About a month later, the Sunset Commission will meet to hear public testimony on ERS, as well as Sunset staff recommendations.
3. Based on public input and the staff report, the Sunset Commission will adopt recommendations for the Legislature to consider when it convenes in January 2017.

Through the Sunset review, every Texan has the opportunity to suggest ways in which ERS can strengthen its operations. If you'd like to share your ideas about ERS, you may send an email to the address below, use the comment form on the Sunset Commission website, or contact Emily Johnson of the Sunset staff.

Sunset Advisory Commission  
P.O. Box 13066  
Austin, Texas 78711  
(512) 463-1300  
Fax: (512) 463-0705  
Email: [sunset@sunset.state.tx.us](mailto:sunset@sunset.state.tx.us)

Information about the Sunset process, Sunset Commission meetings, and how to receive Sunset Commission email updates is available at [www.sunset.texas.gov](http://www.sunset.texas.gov).



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**Gardening, walking or weight training?**

What's the most popular exercise for ERS retirees? Find out in the online version of Your ERS Connection at [www.ers.state.tx.us/Retirees/News/](http://www.ers.state.tx.us/Retirees/News/)



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