



Spotlight on retirement

LOS ANGELES COUNTY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION • MARCH 2011 • VOL. 22, NO. 1

1.5 Percent COLA Approved for 2011

At its February 10th meeting, the Board of Retirement (BOR) approved a **+1.5 percent 2011 cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA)** for retirees and eligible survivors. **The increase, which is effective April 1, will be reflected in your April 30th check.**

Statistics released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics on January 14, 2011 indicate the percentage difference between the December 2009 and December 2010 CPI Indexes for All Urban Consumers for the Los Angeles-Anaheim-Riverside area is +1.3 percent. When rounded to

the nearest one-half of one percent, as prescribed by law, the difference becomes 1.5 percent.

One-and-a-half percent is less than the maximum increase allowed in LACERA retirement plans. **The maximum allowable increase in Plan A is 3.0 percent. In Plans B, C, D, and E the maximum allowable increase is 2.0 percent.**

According to the provisions of LACERA retirement plans, if the COLA percentage exceeds the maximum allowable (as it often did in past years), the excess percentage

cont'd on pg. 5

When Is Payday?

LACERA retiree and survivor allowances are issued on the last business day of each month.

If you're registered for Direct Deposit

- Your allowance is deposited into your bank account and is available for use on the last business day of each month.

If you receive a paper check

- Your check is dated the last business day of the month.
- It is mailed the day prior to the last business day of the month.



**2011 PAYDAY
CALENDAR ONLINE**
Visit lacera.com,
Benefits, Retired
Member

Upcoming Holidays



LACERA will be closed on:

- Monday, May 30
in observance of
Memorial Day.

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Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association

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ROBERT HILL

Assistant Executive Officer

JANICE GOLDEN

From the Executive Desk

Gregg Rademacher – CEO, LACERA



Our Retirees Are Living Longer

I love to share good news with our members. And I have some to share... **our retirees are living longer than ever.** I tell you this based on the Investigation of Experience study recently conducted by our actuaries. The report studies the actual experience of our plan over the last three years to create actuarial assumptions regarding certain factors about each member, including life expectancy. In studying the statistics, our actuaries determined the life expectancies for members who retired for service have increased. This is great news! As I've told you before, we look forward to paying you a monthly allowance for many years to come.

Actually, there's more good news associated with this. While changes to certain actuarial assumptions can affect the future retirement benefits of active members, your allowance will not be affected. **The amount of the monthly allowance you received at retirement cannot be reduced.**

Staying Healthy (and Living Longer) Together

The merits of staying active after retirement are well-documented. Our Staying Healthy Together program is designed to assist you in finding ways to stay active and healthy throughout retirement. This year, Staying Healthy Together will focus on Active Living and explore the numerous benefits associated with staying active, both mentally and physically. Information about the program's free half-day workshops scheduled for this spring is included in this issue.

2011 COLA

I know COLA is generally on the minds of retirees this time of year. Retirees and eligible survivors will be interested to know the Board of Retirement has approved a 1.5 percent cost-of-living (COLA) increase, effective with April 30 allowances. To learn more about COLA, COLA Accumulations, and how the 2011 COLA affects you, take a look at the articles included within this newsletter.

Upgraded Service Feature

As you know, LACERA constantly strives to enhance the services we offer our members. Our latest service advance increases our efficiency in processing phone requests for name and address changes. We recently updated the technology in our Call Center to enable our Retirement Benefits Specialists to make name and address changes to your member account in real time. Previously, when members called in requesting a name and/or address change, the specialists in the Call Center were able to record the information, but were unable to make the change directly into the member's file. Rather, they had to forward the requested change to another LACERA area for entry into the member's account. Now they can take the information over the phone and make the requested changes directly to the member's file, in real time.

Stay active, stay healthy, and stay tuned for coming service enhancements.



Experts Offer Valuable Insight at Annual Offsite Conference

Staying well-versed on matters affecting retirement is a priority at LACERA. We believe our members benefit by having educated Board members and management. Each January, we hold an offsite educational and fiscal planning conference. This year's conference included presentations by LACERA management and staff and experts on legislation, investments, health care, economics, and real estate.

Conference highlights included:

- **LACERA's Future Initiatives:** Robert Hill and LACERA management staff Bernie Buenaflor, Mike Mikhail, John Popowich, and John Nogales spoke on "A Quality Ecosystem." The presenters defined quality and reviewed the role it plays in all areas of LACERA, from hiring and training for quality to having the right tools and procedures to nurture and sustain quality. The speakers underscored the high level of quality that exists throughout the organization.
- **LACERA Retirement Goals:** Our Executive team of Gregg Rademacher, Robert Hill, and Janice Golden outlined the association's goals for the next three years and highlighted LACERA's commitment to delivering first-class member service.
- **Retiree Health Care:** Agnes Strandberg of Kaiser Foundation Health Plan provided a briefing on Health Care Reform and its impact on Medicare Advantage plans.
- **Legislative Update:** Lobbyist Joe Ackler discussed the political climate in California as it relates to public retirement systems.

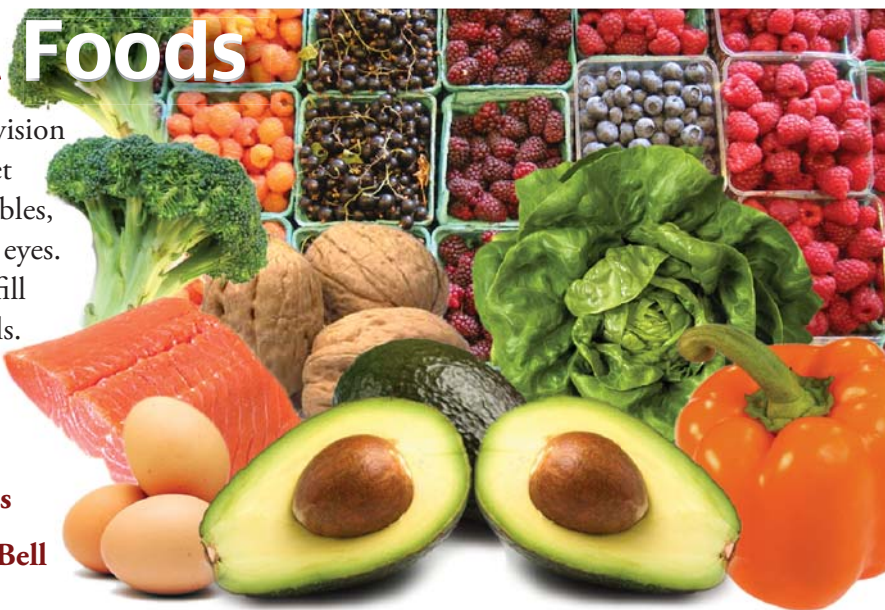
10 Vision-Smart Foods

Maintaining good health is a key to preventing vision problems and other disorders. Maintaining a diet rich in "Super Foods," such as leafy green vegetables, fish, and berries has been shown to protect your eyes. Super Foods contain disease-fighting nutrients, fill you up, and are easy to include in everyday meals.

These Super Foods contain antioxidants and nutrients linked to a lower risk of eye ailments.

- | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| • Spinach | • Broccoli | • Avocados |
| • Salmon | • Tea | • Orange Bell Peppers |
| • Walnuts | • Soy | |
| • Berries | • Eggs | |

Source: aarp.org



Need a LACERA brochure, application, or other form? Visit the **Brochures & Forms page** on lacera.com to view, download, print, and/or order hard copies of the latest versions of our print materials.

- Direct Deposit
- Address Change Form
- Annual Health Care Packet
- Name Change Form
- Power of Attorney Brochure and Form
- Survivor & Death Benefits Q&A Brochure and Information Card
- Medicare Part D Warning
- Summary of Creditable Coverage Notice
- Much more!

**"Man's mind,
stretched by
a new idea,
never goes back
to its original
dimensions."**

—Oliver Wendall Holmes

2011 Medicare Part B Reimbursements

Los Angeles County reimburses LACERA members for the full amount of their Medicare Part B premiums (standard rate) on a tax-free basis, provided they meet certain eligibility requirements. In December 2010, the Board of Supervisors approved the 2011 Medicare Part B Premium Reimbursement Program for LACERA-administered Medicare Plan enrollees.

For most Medicare enrollees, the \$96.40 and \$110.50 Part B reimbursement rates (standard rates) for 2011 remain unchanged from 2010.

However, according to Medicare law, **new Medicare enrollees in 2011 and those who meet certain higher income levels** are subject to an additional income-related premium amount. These individuals **are eligible for a \$115.40 premium reimbursement.***

The following standard rate reimbursements are in effect for 2011 coverage:

2011 PART B STANDARD RATE REIMBURSEMENTS	
Part B Premium Determining Factors	2011 Monthly County Reimbursement Amount
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You had \$96.40 deducted from your monthly Social Security check in 2010, <i>and</i> • You are not required to pay a higher Part B premium, based on your income level (often referred to as "means-testing") 	<p>\$96.40 (standard rate)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You reached age 65 and became Medicare-eligible in 2010, <i>or</i> • Part B Medicare premium is not deducted from your monthly Social Security retirement benefit, <i>or</i> • You are required to pay a \$110.50 monthly Part B premium, based on income level (often referred to as "means-testing") 	<p>\$110.50 (standard rate)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You reach age 65 and become Medicare-eligible in 2011, <i>or</i> • Part B Medicare premium is not deducted from your monthly Social Security retirement benefit, <i>or</i> • You are required to pay a \$115.40 monthly Part B premium, based on income level (often referred to as "means-testing") 	<p>\$115.40 (standard rate) Attention: You must submit your 2011 Social Security notice to LACERA verifying your \$115.40 Part B premium</p>

*Medicare enrollees who filed an individual (or married and filing separately) 2009 tax return showing a modified adjusted gross income greater than \$85,000 (or \$170,000 for a joint tax return) are subject to the income-related monthly adjustment amount.

COLA Approved for 2011 cont'd from pg. 1

is accumulated to supplement future COLA benefits. The accumulated percentage carryover is known as the **COLA Accumulation**. The longer you have been retired (or receiving a survivor's allowance), the more COLA carryover you have accumulated.

LACERA uses the COLA Accumulation to fund the maximum increase allowable under each Plan.

Qualified retirees and eligible survivors with COLA Accumulations will draw from them to supplement this year's 1.5 percent adjustment. Those with sufficient Accumulations will draw the amount needed to receive the maximum percentage increase allowed under their respective Plans.

**Retirement date also applies to survivors of LACERA retirees who died during that period.*

***Plan E COLA (Automatic COLA) increases apply only to service credit earned after June 4, 2002. Plan E members who retired after June 4, 2002 will receive up to a 2 percent COLA increase. The portion of the 2 percent COLA is based upon a ratio defined as the months of service earned after June 4, 2002, divided by the total months of service. COLA adjustments also apply to pre-June 4, 2002 Plan E service credit for which Elective COLA was purchased.*

2011 COLA Accumulation Chart

The chart below reflects the COLA Accumulation percentages for all retiree groups as of April 2011.

Retirement Dates*	Plan	Maximum Cost of Living	CPI Change	COLA ACCUMULATION		
				As of April '10	April '11 Withdrawals	As of April '11
Prior to 4/1/81	A	3.0%	1.5%	16.0%	1.5%	14.5%
4/1/81 – 3/31/82	A	3.0%	1.5%	9.7%	1.5%	8.2%
4/1/82 – 3/31/83	A	3.0%	1.5%	5.6%	1.5%	4.1%
4/1/83 – 3/31/84	A	3.0%	1.5%	5.5%	1.5%	4.0%
4/1/84 – 3/31/85	A	3.0%	1.5%	4.2%	1.5%	2.7%
4/1/85 – 3/31/86	A	3.0%	1.5%	2.7%	1.5%	1.2%
4/1/86 – 3/31/87	A	3.0%	1.5%	1.9%	1.5%	0.4%
4/1/87 – 3/31/88	A	3.0%	1.5%	1.8%	1.5%	0.3%
4/1/88 – 3/31/05	A	3.0%	1.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%
4/1/05 – 3/31/11	A	3.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4/1/77 – 3/31/90	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	18.0%	0.5%	17.5%
4/1/90 – 3/31/91	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	15.4%	0.5%	14.9%
4/1/91 – 3/31/92	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	10.8%	0.5%	10.3%
4/1/92 – 3/31/00	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	10.2%	0.5%	9.7%
4/1/00 – 3/31/01	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	9.9%	0.5%	9.4%
4/1/01 – 3/31/02	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	8.2%	0.5%	7.7%
4/1/02 – 3/31/03	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	8.1%	0.5%	7.6%
4/1/03 – 3/31/05	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	6.4%	0.5%	5.9%
4/1/05 – 3/31/06	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	4.0%	0.5%	3.5%
4/1/06 – 3/31/07	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	1.5%	0.5%	1.0%
4/1/07 – 3/31/08	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
4/1/08 – 3/31/11	B, C, D	2.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6/4/02 – 3/31/03	E**	2.0%	1.5%	8.1%	0.5%	7.6%
4/1/03 – 3/31/05	E	2.0%	1.5%	6.4%	0.5%	5.9%
4/1/05 – 3/31/06	E	2.0%	1.5%	4.0%	0.5%	3.5%
4/1/06 – 3/31/07	E	2.0%	1.5%	1.5%	0.5%	1.0%
4/1/07 – 3/31/08	E	2.0%	1.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
4/1/08 – 3/31/11	E	2.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

How the 2011 COLA Affects You

As the charts to the right indicate, certain groups of retirees and survivors in each Plan have no COLA Accumulations from which to draw; others have only enough to partially supplement this year's 1.5 percent increase.



FOR MORE ABOUT COLA
Visit lacera.com,
Benefits, Retired Member

PLAN A					
Retirement Date	2011 COLA Adjustment		Withdrawal from COLA Accumulation		Total 2011 COLA Increase
Prior to April 1, 1988	1.5%	+	1.5%	=	3.0%
4/1/88 – 3/31/05	1.5%	+	0.4%	=	1.9%
4/1/05 – 3/31/11	1.5%	+	0.0%	=	1.5%
PLAN B, C, D					
4/1/77 – 3/31/07	1.5%	+	0.5%	=	2.0%
4/1/07 – 3/31/08	1.5%	+	0.2%	=	1.7%
4/1/08 – 3/31/11	1.5%	+	0.0%	=	1.5%
PLAN E					
6/4/02 – 3/31/07	1.5%	+	0.5%	=	2.0%
4/1/07 – 3/31/08	1.5%	+	0.2%	=	1.7%
4/1/08 – 3/31/11	1.5%	+	0.0%	=	1.5%

STAYING HEALTHY TOGETHER

Vol. 5, Issue #1 • March 2011

Staying Healthy Together: Active Living — Connected for Wellness

Staying Healthy Together, our retiree wellness program provides information, tips, and resources you can use to maintain and improve your health and the quality of your life. Since we introduced the program in 2007, large numbers of you have shown your continued interest and support by reading the *Spotlight*, visiting the Staying Healthy Together section of lacera.com, attending our biannual workshops, and incorporating some or all of what you've learned into your daily lives.

LACERA retirees continue to contribute to the success of Staying Healthy Together by taking control of their lives and making healthier choices. In fact, the workshops held this past fall were some of the most successful workshops we've ever had! LACERA is excited to continue this popular program in 2011 with the new theme of Active Living. This theme will inspire us to take an active role in our lives to stay both mentally and physically healthy, together!

This spring, our campaign will focus on how to be Connected for Wellness — you'll learn about using common technology and resources to make and support healthy lifestyle choices. **We invite you to attend one of the Spring 2011 Half-Day Workshops on April 12th in Burbank and April 13th in Diamond Bar.** Both workshops will feature engaging presentations and activities on how technology can help you take an active role in managing your health. More information about the topics, locations, and schedules for the upcoming workshops will be mailed to your home soon.

Checklist: Make Sure You're Connected for Wellness

- ☐ **Attend a free Staying Healthy Together half-day workshop in April.** Spend some time with your fellow LACERA members, participate in interactive and entertaining activities that explore ways to use technology to get active online and offline, and be entered to win fun and healthy raffle prizes! Watch your mail for the invitation or visit lacera.com for more information.
- ☐ **Take the quiz in this section!** The brief quiz will test your knowledge on the topics that will be featured at the spring Staying Healthy Together workshops.
- ☐ **Visit the Staying Healthy Together section of lacera.com** to discover important wellness information and links to other health websites.



FOR MORE ONLINE HEALTH RESOURCES

Visit lacera.com, Health Care, Staying Healthy Together

Mark your calendar to attend a Staying Healthy Together: Connected for Wellness workshop!

April 12: Burbank

April 13: Diamond Bar

Learn how technology can assist you in managing your health. These free, half-day workshops will feature informative presentations, fun activities, and raffle prizes. Details on the topics, locations, and workshop agendas will be mailed to you soon. Stay tuned!

Quiz: Active Living — Connected for Wellness

Here's a chance to test your knowledge on topics that will be covered in our upcoming Connected for Wellness workshops. See if you're Connected for Wellness.

1. Technology and Exercise

Q: What is the reason to wear a heart monitor during exercise?

2. Nutrition Online

Q: Name a reliable web site you can visit for accurate information about nutrition.

3. Trusting Online Resources

Q: True or False: You can always trust information you read on a ".com" website.

4. Sharp Minds

Q: Name a game or activity that would exercise your brain.

5. Senior Health

Q: True or False: There is reliable online health information specifically for seniors.

ANSWERS:

1. A Heart Rate Monitor will display your pulse rate, which will help you stay under your maximum heart rate. Typically calculated as 220 minus your age, your maximum heart rate is the upper limit of what your cardiovascular system can handle during physical activity. Experts say you gain the most benefit with the least risks when you exercise within your **target heart rate zone**. Generally, an individual's target zone is 60 to 80 percent of his or her maximum heart rate; however, your physician may adjust your target heart rate zone, depending on your condition. Using a heart monitor to track your pulse during exercise can help you stay within your target heart rate zone.

2. For a wealth of reliable information regarding nutrition, visit **mypyramid.gov**. The site, which is operated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), presents an abundance of information regarding nutrition and interactive tools in a consumer-friendly format. If you do a careful search of the web, you'll find a number of other web sites that also provide credible information on nutrition.

3. False. "Dot com" at the end of a web address has little bearing on its reliability. A dot com address often means that address is used for commercial purposes, but not always. Many trustworthy, non-commercial organizations, such as LACERA, maintain web sites with dot com addresses. It's important to use caution when you're online; only rely on web content from sources or groups you trust.

4. Puzzles such as crossword, word search, Sudoku, and jigsaw are examples of fun activities that can be done on a daily basis to stimulate your brain. A variety of free puzzles and games are available online at **games.aarp.org**, **zone.msn.com**, and **jigzone.com**. Also, some newspaper web sites, such as **latimes.com** include online crossword puzzles and Sudoku games. To find more resources for online games and puzzles, search for "free online puzzles" or "free online games" (or similar terms) on **google.com**.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE ONLINE

Visit **lacera.com**, Health Care, Staying Healthy Together

5. True. Many respected health web sites include sections dedicated to senior citizen health issues. The National Institutes of Health web site features a section on senior health at **nihseniorhealth.gov**. The Mayo Clinic site includes a great deal of content on Healthy Retirement and Healthy Aging (enter the category in the search box). With thorough research, you'll discover many more valuable online resources. such as **healthfinder.gov**, which is operated by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

Sources: *mayoclinic.com*, *clevelandclinic.org*

NOTE: Always check with your physician before starting any exercise program. Check with him or her to find an exercise program and target heart rate zone that matches your needs, goals, and physical condition.



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Antebi and Bernstein Appointed to Board of Retirement

We congratulate Sadonya Antebi and Alan Bernstein on their appointments to the Board of Retirement (BOR).

Ms. Antebi brings a great deal of experience and knowledge to her position, having served four previous terms. Most recently, she served from 2007 to 2009.

Prior to retirement, Ms. Antebi served as Chief of Disaster Planning and Operations for the Los Angeles County Department of Health Sciences and as an instructor at the Los Angeles County School

of Nursing. She holds a bachelor's degree from Brooklyn College and a master's degree from California State University, Los Angeles.

Mr. Bernstein is president of Harper Management, a residential property management company. He also serves as a planning commissioner for the City of West Hollywood and sits on the city's Design Review Subcommittee and Bicycle Task

Force. An advocate for civil rights, Mr. Bernstein serves as co-vice-chair of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force. Possessing a wealth of public and private sector experience, he brings a wide range of expertise to his position. Mr. Bernstein holds a bachelor's degree in Public Policy from Duke University, where he graduated Summa Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa.

Editor's Note: *Spotlight on Retirement* is created by the staff of LACERA. Signed articles represent the opinion of the writers and not necessarily the opinion of LACERA Management, Board of Retirement, or Board of Investments. Consult with professional advisors regarding legal, tax, and/or medical matters: LACERA does not offer legal, tax, or medical advice.

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