



Welcome to the fourth quarter 2011 edition of *Benefit News*, brought to you by the DAS Benefits Team, providing you with the most up-to-date information about the State of Iowa’s employee benefits.

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RETIREMENT INVESTORS’ CLUB

The Retirement Investors’ Club (RIC) is a supplemental retirement savings program offered by the State of Iowa to help you save for your retirement. As a participant, you contribute through automatic payroll deduction to your 457 account and your employer makes match contributions to your 401a account. You are fully vested from day one.



457 Contribution Limits for 2012

The IRS annual 457 contribution limits for 2012 are on the chart to the right. The total of contributions for both pre-tax and post-tax (Roth) 457 plans must not exceed the IRS maximum limits in a tax year.

IRS Annual Maximum Contribution Limits		2011	2012
Regular	100% of compensation up to:	\$16,500	\$17,000
Age 50+	The regular limit + \$5,500:	\$22,000	\$22,500
3-Year Catch-up	Up to twice the regular limit	\$33,000	\$34,000

457 Roth Option for 2012



Beginning January 2012, participants in RIC will have the new option of saving for retirement on a post-tax (Roth) basis in their RIC 457 plan. The employer match (maximum of \$75/month) remains the same whether you choose to make pretax or post-tax contributions. You may make changes to your 457 account at any time to take advantage of this new contribution option. The 457 Roth option has no income limit requirements to participate.

Existing RIC Participants: There is no need to open a new account to make Roth contributions. The RIC Account Form has been revised to include the Roth option. If you wish to make Roth contributions, simply complete the RIC Account Form with your **total deduction per paycheck amount (both pre- and/or post-tax amount)**. The RIC Account Form may be found at <http://ric.iowa.gov/forms.html>. You may contribute to both the pre-tax and the Roth 457 at the same time, up to the annual limits mentioned above for your total 457 contributions.

Non-Participating Employees: To enroll in the RIC retirement savings program, you must open an account with an RIC investment provider. For provider information, go to <http://ric.iowa.gov/providers/active.html>.

Webcast Recording Available- Over 650 employees attended the 457 Roth webcasts in November and December to hear information about the new 457 Roth option. You may listen to a recorded version of this webcast at <https://iahrwebinar.ilinc.com/join/pycpwsj> (handouts at <http://ric.iowa.gov/education/index.html#recorded>). You may also view a summary of the 457 Roth Option at http://ric.iowa.gov/documents/457_Roth_QA.pdf.

If you have questions, please email robbie.stoecker@iowa.gov or call 515-242-6846.

GROUP INSURANCE

New Wellmark ID Cards

If you elected **Program 3 Plus** or **Deductible 3 Plus** for 2012, Wellmark will be mailing new ID cards to you. You will need to provide your new ID card to your provider/pharmacy for all services January 1, 2012, and after. The new ID cards will reflect a different prefix in front of your member number. The new prefix will be "UOA." Please destroy your old ID card when you receive the new one. Be sure that you are always showing your most recent Wellmark ID card to ensure that your claims are being paid according to your benefit plan.

2012 Edition of the "Your Benefits ... At A Glance"

The 2012 edition of "Your Benefits ... At A Glance" is available at the DAS Benefits website (<http://benefits.iowa.gov>). The document is an overview of the benefits available to AFSCME-covered, UE/IUP-covered and non-contract employees. Whether you are a new employee or a long-term veteran, after reviewing "Your Benefits ... At A Glance," you will have a greater appreciation of your benefits as a State of Iowa employee.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Wellmark Drug List

A Drug Formulary is a list of prescription drugs, both generic and brand name, that helps guide physicians and pharmacists in selecting the medications that provide the most appropriate treatment for the best price. To keep your prescription drug costs down, Wellmark regularly reviews the drugs on the Wellmark Drug List for effectiveness and value.

When a generic medication becomes available, the brand-name medication moves to Tier 3 on the Wellmark Drug List. Generics are as safe and effective as their brand-name counterparts – they just cost a lot less. In fact, you'll save money when you choose a generic because generics have the lowest cost share. You pay the highest price for a medication on Wellmark's Tier 3. So, while you'll still have benefits for the drugs moving to Tier 3, your out-of-pocket costs may be higher. If you are enrolled in Iowa Select or Program 3 Plus and you choose to use the brand-name drug when a generic equivalent is available, you are responsible for the copay and any difference between the billed charge for the brand-name drug and the billed charge for the generic drug.

Beginning January 1, 2012, a number of brand-name medications are moving to Tier 3 on the Wellmark Drug List, because generic equivalents are available for most of the strengths and dosage forms. Wellmark notifies you in

writing when one of your recently filled prescriptions moves to Tier 3. To determine what tier your medications are on, you can look for your drug on the Wellmark Drug List on the Wellmark website (<http://www.wellmark.com>). Click on the link, "Wellmark Drug List," located on the right side of the website. You'll see what tier the drug is on and a list of possible lower-cost options. Also, your pharmacist or physician may be able to advise you of medications that can treat your condition at a lower cost.

Lipitor Update

Atorvastatin, the generic form of Lipitor, became available November 30, 2011. It will be a Tier 3 drug on the Wellmark Drug List. Unlike most generics, the cost of generic Lipitor is high, as there is only one manufacturer distributing the drug at this time. As additional manufacturers introduce generic Lipitor, the cost may go down and Wellmark will reevaluate its tier placement.

OTHER BENEFITS

Flexible Spending Accounts Funds Carry-Over Period

If you still have dollars left in your flexible spending accounts (FSA) at the end of 2011, remember that you can still incur eligible health or dependent care expenses through **March 15, 2012**, and be reimbursed with 2011 FSA dollars. You can download an FSA claim form at the DAS Flexible Spending Accounts website (<http://das.hre.iowa.gov/fsa/home.html>).

HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES

Get Smart about Antibiotics

Many common illnesses – including influenza, colds, sore throats (except strep throat), and even some ear infections – are caused by viruses and get better without antibiotics in seven days or less. Antibiotics, on the other hand, are designed to treat *bacterial* infections such as strep throat or some types of pneumonia.

Antibiotics are good drugs – *if* they are taken for the right reasons. Most of the time, you don't need antibiotics when you are sick. Colds and the flu are caused by viruses – germs that are not killed by antibiotics.

Antibiotics work for infections caused by bacteria.

As this chart shows, many common illnesses do not require an antibiotic.

Illness	Usual Cause		Antibiotic Needed
	Virus	Bacteria	
Cold	Yes	No	No
Flu	Yes	No	No
Chest Cold (in otherwise healthy children & adults)	Yes	No	No
Sore Throats (except strep)	Yes	No	No
Bronchitis (in otherwise healthy children & adults)	Yes	No	No
Runny Nose (with green or yellow mucus)	Yes	No	No
Fluid in the Middle Ear (otitis media in effusion)	Yes	No	No

Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Website, November 2010

This information is not intended to provide specific treatment or to substitute for the care of your health care provider. For individual health care needs, consult with your personal physician.

DAS-SPONSORED BENEFIT AND HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES EDUCATION

Benefit knowledge is power!

Employee benefits can be confusing. Benefit education is a service provided by DAS benefit staff. Learn to make the best use of your benefits by taking advantage of benefit education opportunities.

Upcoming Presentations

A listing of upcoming benefit education and healthy opportunities presentations can be found at the DAS Benefit Education website (http://benefits.iowa.gov/benefit_education). Once you are at the website, click on the "Upcoming Presentations" link.

All the presentations are webcasts, unless otherwise noted. You attend a real-time presentation online through a computer at your work site or your home. You are able to view slides, supporting documents, and websites, and you can ask questions and receive answers. There is no cost to participate.

Recordings of Presentations

Benefit Education and Healthy Opportunities webcasts are recorded and available for you to view. The recordings allow you to view the live presentations at work or at home. All you need is access to the Internet. Also, copies of the slides and any other materials used in the presentations are available at the DAS Benefit Education On-Demand website: http://benefits.iowa.gov/benefit_education/benefiteducation_on-demand.html.

Whether you were unable to attend the live presentations or just want to view them again, take advantage of this opportunity.
