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Important information for UFOA Medicare Eligible Retired Members

Many letters, rumors and a few articles have been published concerning possible changes in health care for Medicare eligible retirees and their dependents. Much of the information that the potentially affected members of the UFOA have received is either inaccurate or only partially true. We would like to briefly state the current status of the evaluation process to examine changes in the GHI Senior Care Plan which covers more than 80% of Medicare eligible retirees and their dependents.

The City and the municipal unions through the MLC (Municipal Labor Committee) are evaluating several proposals to determine if and how changes and improvements can be made to existing Medicare benefits. NO DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AS OF APRIL 27, 2021.

Both the unions and the City have determined that no changes would be made that would eliminate any of the current doctors, hospitals or other providers that currently participate in GHI Senior Care. Any change would include all providers who accept Medicare.

What is true is that the cost of medical coverage has far exceeded the overall cost of living for many years, and it has been a constant struggle to maintain a base medical/hospital plan for families without premiums for both active members and retirees. Without a substantial change soon, it will be impossible to continue family health coverage without a premium.

The goal is to make the changes to the GHI Senior Care plan that will maintain the same free choice of providers, including specialists, and to improve the plan, if possible. Providing quality health care has been a joint effort of both the City and its unions since the end of WW II. During that period, there has been many collaborations by the City and unions to keep pace with the ever-changing health care environment.

At this point, all proposals from various insurance carriers offer networks that include all the providers who participate in Medicare. The process for evaluating any change in the Medicare benefit has been ongoing for more than two years and has included input from representatives of all the parties including City retirees. No decision is final until all union leaders have been thoroughly informed and a vote to approve is taken. At this point, any change agreed upon could not be implemented before October 1, 2021 at the earliest.

There will be no interruption in any care currently in progress.

If there is a decision to make any change, there will be an extensive education effort to inform all participants about how to use the plan benefits well before any change is implemented.

This Evaluation Process is ongoing. The UFOA will continue to provide updates when more information becomes available.

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