A L E R T

HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS FOR SOME MTA MEMBERS HAVE BEEN CHANGED BY THE STATE'S GROUP INSURANCE COMMISSION

The Romney appointed majority on the state's Group Insurance Commission (GIC) has recently voted to implement substantive health care plan design changes (effective July 1, 2004) for those active and retired public employees insured through the GIC's health insurance plans.

Those changes will affect all active and retired state employees including 11,500 MTA members who are employed in public higher education and 10,000 retired K-12 teachers enrolled in the GIC's Retired Municipal Teachers (RMT) health insurance plans. (NOTE: Cities, towns and school districts participating in the RMT program are listed at the end of this "alert".)

The changes being made are serious and enrollees are encouraged to carefully examine the modifications being made before choosing one's health care option. State employees and affected K-12 retirees will be able to obtain information about these design changes during the open enrollment "health fair" information sessions about to be conducted by the GIC and being held at various locations from April 12 – May 14, 2004. K-12 teacher retirees insured through the GIC RMT plan and state retirees are also receiving information by mail from the GIC.

Selections for coverage must be made by everyone affected by May 14, 2004 otherwise the GIC will assign a health care plan for them. Further information (including "health fair" locations and dates) is best obtained from the GIC web page at *www.state.ma.us/gic/*. The GIC's phone number is (617) 727-2310. (NOTE: The GIC web page is somewhat difficult to follow so be sure to read it carefully and click on the appropriate links to obtain the information you need.)

The MTA is very disturbed by the changes being instituted by the GIC in which employees have no meaningful participation as far as final decisions are concerned. Only three of the Commission's eleven members represent employees and they are continually outvoted by the Romney appointed majority. The three labor representatives opposed the changes being made but were outvoted 6-to-4.

In an effort to bring a semblance of balance to the GIC, the MTA has filed legislation to change the membership on the GIC by adding additional labor representatives including MTA. That bill, SB904 (filed by State Senator Charles Shannon, D-Winchester) received a favorable report from the Legislature's Committee on Insurance on March 18, 2004 and is currently before Senate Ways and Means. Calls or e-mails now to your legislators asking them to support SB904 would be very helpful. As more information is developed it will be shared with MTA leaders and affected members.

See Next Page for Listing of RMT Communities

MUNICIPAL PARTICIPANTS IN THE GIC's RMT PLAN

The following 75 cities, towns and regional school districts participate in the GIC's Retired Municipal Teacher (RMT) benefit program: Amesbury, Andover, Amherst, Amherst-Pelham Regional SD, Barnstable, Berkshire Hills Regional SD, Berlin-Boylston Regional School District, Billerica, Blackstone Valley Regional SD, Blue Hills Regional SD, Braintree, Bridgewater, Bourne, Cohasset, Dedham, Dennis, Eastham, Everett, Franklin, Gill-Montague Regional SD, Gloucester, Granby, Greater Lawrence Regional SD, Narragansett Regional SD, Harvard, Hampden-Wilbraham Regional SD, Hingham, Holbrook, Holyoke, Hudson, Lawrence, Martha's Vineyard Regional SD, Medford, Millis, Milton, Monson, Montague, Newbury, North Adams, North Andover , North Attleboro, N. Middlesex Regional SD, Norwell, Orange, Pelham, Pioneer Valley Regional SD, Plainville, Quabbin Regional SD, Randolph, Rehoboth, Revere, Rockland, Rockport, Rutland, Salisbury, Salem, Saugus, Shawsheen Valley Regional SD, Spencer, Spencer-E. Brookfield Regional SD, Stoneham, Stoughton, Upper Cape Cod Regional SD, Ware, Wareham, Watertown, Westfield, West Bridgewater, West Springfield, Weymouth, Whitman-Hanson SD, Winthrop, Wilbraham, Paxton, Woburn.