

Teacher Retirement System of Texas
Retirees Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

The Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) Retirees Advisory Committee (RAC) met at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 29, 2022. TRS hosted the meeting at TRS Headquarters, East Building, 5th Floor Boardroom, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, Texas. TRS provided a Zoom link for meeting guests.

RAC Members	TRS Staff	Vendors
Grace Mueller, Chair	Brian Guthrie, Executive Director	Mary McKenzie, United Healthcare
Nancy Byler, Vice Chair	Katrina Daniel, Chief Health Care Officer	Dr. Linda May, United Healthcare
Dr. John H. Fuller	Monica Bernal, HIB	Amanda Denis, United Healthcare
Dr. Sonya Haidusek-Niazy	Yimei Zhao, HIB	Karen Haywood, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas
Dr. Mary Widmier	Kristin Hamlett, HIB	Steve Alexander, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas
Anita Kay Young-Wolfe	Denise Jimenez, HIB	Amanda Davila, United Healthcare
	Frank Washington, HIB	Michael Heck, SilverScript
	Teonka Bedford, HIB	
	Leslie Chandler, HIB	
	Richard Vasquez, HIB	
	Leo Flores, HIB	
	Cristina Juarez, HIB	
	Carly Yansak, HIB	
	Umme Salama Oan Ali, HIB	
	Jean Babin-Gibson, HIB	
	Addison Reagan, Governmental Relations	
	Cyrena Costilla, HIB	
	Hali Jarell, HIB	
	Liliana Hernandez, HIB	
	Dianna Jarvis, HIB	

I. Call to Order

Grace Mueller, RAC Chair, welcomed the group and called the meeting to order.

II. Roll Call of Retirees Advisory Committee Members

Chair Mueller called the roll for RAC members and Ms. Oan Ali called the roll for TRS staff and meeting attendees.

III. Introduction of New Retirees Advisory Committee Members

Chair Mueller introduced new RAC members.

IV. Approval of Proposed Minutes from the October 18, 2021 RAC Meeting

The Committee approved the minutes from the October 18, 2021 RAC Meeting.

V. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VI. Legislative Updates

Katrina Daniel, Chief Health Care Officer, provided legislative updates affecting TRS health plans. This included an update on House Bill (HB) 2022, Senate Bill 8 and Senate Bill 1444, passed by the 87th Texas Legislature.

A. One-Time Payment from TRS-Care — In the third special session, the 87th Texas Legislature appropriated \$286 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to reimburse TRS for COVID-19 related expenses. In March 2022, TRS sent \$83 million in one-time payments to about 182,000 retirees who participate in TRS-Care.

B. One-Time Re-enrollment Opportunity — The 87th Texas Legislature passed HB 2022, which allows former TRS-Care retirees to re-enroll in the program. TRS identified about 30,000 former participants who are eligible to re-enroll. Of those, over 300 members successfully re-enrolled as of March 2022. TRS will continue to work on engagement efforts to create awareness about this one-time re-enrollment opportunity.

C. TRS-ActiveCare Moves to Regional Rating — To remain competitive in the health care market, TRS will begin regionally rating TRS-ActiveCare plans starting in the 2022-23 plan year. Previously, once a district entered TRS-ActiveCare, they couldn't leave. As a result of SB 1444, districts can now enter and leave TRS-ActiveCare. Regional rating gives employers the benefit of premiums reflecting their regional cost of health care. And while pricing will be more localized, the safety net and stability will still be Texas-sized.

VII. Executive Updates

Brian Guthrie, Executive Director, provided updates on the new TRS headquarters, regional office and return to office plans for staff.

A. New TRS Headquarters — TRS is constructing two TRS headquarter buildings, Alpha and Bravo, at the Mueller District in Austin. All TRS headquarters staff will move to the new buildings by 2024.

TRS is shopping its current two buildings to potential buyers. By moving to Mueller, TRS is saving money on leasing and on all the deferred maintenance costs for the existing buildings. Overall, TRS will save the Fund long-term by this move and create a generational solution, with enough space for the next 30 to 40 years.

B. El Paso Office Update — The Texas legislature authorized TRS to open its first regional office. TRS selected El Paso due to the distance from its current headquarters in Austin. TRS leased space with the El Paso Education Service Center (Region 19) and intends to occupy the building by late summer 2022. Staff should be actively servicing members in that area by September 2022. TRS will talk to the legislature next session about expanding to other parts of the state, including the Valley, East Texas and possibly the Panhandle.

C. Shifting Employment Model — In the next year or two, TRS will be an all-Texas employer as opposed to an Austin-based employer. This is due to advances TRS made in the past two years from the pandemic and the use of technology.

D. Top Workplace — Once again, TRS was named a Top Workplace USA winner in 2022. This nationwide recognition is a testament to TRS culture.

Return to Office — April 11, 2022 is the target start date for TRS staff to return to the office.

VIII. TRS-Care

A. Operations Update

Monica Bernal, Director of Operations, provided an update on member servicing levels. Health and Insurance Benefits staff and vendors consistently exceeded stringent service metrics. They handled up to 100,000 calls per month in 2021 to help TRS members navigate their health benefits. The TRS staff goal is to answer 80 percent of calls in three minutes. In 2021, TRS staff exceeded this goal month after month, with several months in the high 90s. The TRS health insurance carrier staff goal is to answer 90 percent of calls in one minute, a more stringent metric.

B. Engagement Update

Umme Salama Oan Ali provided an update on engagement and outreach efforts. In 2021, TRS reported 2.3 million touch points across its messaging channels. With about 220,000 participants in the TRS-Care program, that's an average of eleven touch points per participant. TRS reached participants through a combination of direct mail, email, meetings, phone calls and website visits. This is an increase from about 4 to 5 touch points per participant in 2019 and 2020. As a result of HB 2022, TRS engagement efforts included extensive outreach to participants eligible to re-enroll in the TRS-Care Program. TRS will continue to conduct outreach until December 2023, when this re-enrollment opportunity ends.

ARPA funding allowed TRS to provide a one-time payment of \$448.12 to TRS-Care policyholders. TRS informed participants via in-home mailings, the TRS website and social media posts. Ms. Oan Ali also provided a brief overview of TRS-Care benefit enhancements for the 2022 plan year. Mary McKenzie from UnitedHealthcare provided a brief overview on the TRS-Care Medicare Advantage Plan benefit enhancements for the 2022 plan year, including hearing aid benefits, updated smartphone app and the Healthy at Home program. Ms. Oan Ali shared the new RAC webpage, which includes bios of the RAC members, upcoming meeting agendas and past meeting minutes.

IX. Feedback on Topics for *The Pulse*

Ms. Oan Ali provided a brief overview of *The Pulse*, the monthly health newsletter, and shared topics for the upcoming editions of the newsletter. Ms. Daniel encouraged RAC members to continue to provide feedback to TRS.

X. Date of Next Meeting

Due to scheduling conflicts, the Committee delayed their decision on the next RAC meeting date. Ms. Oan Ali will coordinate with the Committee to decide the next meeting date.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:27 p.m.