

Teacher Retirement System of Texas
Retirees Advisory Committee Meeting
Minutes for Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2022

The Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) Retirees Advisory Committee (RAC) met at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2022. TRS hosted the meeting at TRS Headquarters, East Building, 5th Floor boardroom, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, Texas. This meeting did not have a virtual option.

RAC Members	TRS Staff	Meeting Attendees
Grace Mueller, Chair Nancy Byler, Vice Chair Dr. H. John Fuller Dr. Sonya Haidusek-Niazy (absent) Sherry Miller Dr. Mary Widmier Anita Kay Young-Wolfe	Brian Guthrie, Executive Director Katrina Daniel, Chief Health Care Officer Meaghan Bludau, Chief of Staff, Health Division Monica Bernal, Senior Director of Operations, Health Division Cristina Juarez, Health Engagement Manager, Health Division Umme Salama Oan Ali, Sr. Health Engagement Specialist, Health Division Yimei Zhao, Senior Director of Finance, Health Division Carly Yansak, Communications Office Melanie Ingleby, Lead Health Care Actuary, Health Division Jean Gibson, Health Engagement Specialist, Health Division Addison Crank, Governmental Relations Sophia Garcia, Governmental Relations	Mary McKenzie, United Healthcare Steve Alexander, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) Denna Huggler, BCBSTX Karen Haywood, BCBSTX Dr. Robert Wolfe Elizabeth Stoddard, On the Record

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. Ms. Oan Ali called the roll for TRS staff and meeting attendees.

III. Introduction of New Retirees Advisory Committee Member

Chair Mueller introduced new RAC member Sherry Miller. Ms. Miller shared some information about herself.

IV. Approval of Proposed Minutes from March 29, 2022 RAC Meeting

The Committee approved the minutes from the March 29, 2022 RAC Meeting.

V. Public Comments

There was no public comment.

VI. Legislative and Executive Updates

Mr. Guthrie gave updates on:

- A. **TRS Return Assumption** — Based on expert projections, TRS recently lowered its return assumption. The agency will get an actuarial valuation that puts TRS in a position of going into the upcoming legislative session confirming that the pension fund is actuarially sound with a 26-year funding period. One legislative priority is a benefit enhancement such as a cost-of-living adjustment or a supplemental payment, or some combination of both. However, TRS will have to update its actuarial valuation — based on market performance — during the session, which could impact discussions about benefit enhancements.
- B. **Legislative Hearings** — TRS attended recent legislative hearings related to the health of the fund and benefit enhancements.
- C. **Senate Bill 13** — TRS is responding to Senate Bill 13, which requires the agency to divest its holdings in anti-oil and gas companies.
- D. **TRS Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR)** — Since TRS-Care is in a healthy position, the agency will not ask for supplemental funding for the program in its LAR. TRS will continue to hold TRS-Care premiums constant. However, TRS will ask for state match contributions for its pension fund, if needed. TRS will primarily focus attention on TRS-Care benefit enhancements and addressing funding issues for TRS-ActiveCare.
- E. **New TRS Headquarters** — TRS sold its two buildings on Red River Street for \$108 million. The new owner will allow TRS to stay rent free until the agency completes the move to its new Mueller headquarters in Fall 2024. The Alpha building at Mueller is nearly complete and the Bravo building is making good progress. TRS anticipates its first board meeting in the new building in December 2024.
- F. **El Paso Office Update** — The official opening of the TRS El Paso office is Nov. 14, 2022. TRS included a rider in its budget request that would give the agency authority to open other TRS regional offices if authorized. Due to work from home technology, TRS is now an all-Texas employer as opposed to an Austin-based employer.

Ms. Daniel gave updates on:

- A. **TRS IT Improvements** — TRS is working behind the scenes to modernize its health data analytics and develop technological interfaces for employees and retirees through self-service options.
- B. **COVID-19 Related Federal Funds** — The Texas Governor and legislature gave TRS \$83 million of these funds for TRS-Care, which at the direction of the legislature, the agency returned to members as a premium refund or rebate to lower the premium costs of care. Every retiree who participates in TRS-Care got a check for \$448.12. Additionally, TRS-Care and TRS-ActiveCare paid for COVID-related claims for members.
- C. **Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM)** — TRS recently got contract proposals for a new PBM and will ask for best and final offers soon. TRS will recommend a PBM to the TRS Board of Trustees at their February 2023 meeting. TRS anticipates significant savings from this new contract.
- D. **Health Engagement Events** — TRS continues to host in-person and online TRS-Care and TRS-ActiveCare engagement events throughout Texas in 2022.

VII. TRS-Care Updates

A. Operations Update

Ms. Bernal gave updates on:

- a. **TRS-Care Rates and Benefits** — The TRS-Care fund remains strong and healthy. TRS has no plans to increase rates or decrease benefits in 2023.
- b. **Member Servicing Levels** — TRS staff and vendors continue to exceed stringent service metrics.
- c. **Lower Medicare Part B Premium** — The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) lowered the Medicare Part B premium for 2023.
- d. **2023 TRS-Care Standard Benefit Enhancements** — TRS improved its benefits for insulin, colonoscopies, diagnostic breast imaging, and virtual visits.
- e. **2023 TRS-Care Medicare Advantage Benefit Enhancement** — TRS lowered the 2023 medical deductible from \$500 to \$400.
- f. **Medicare Secondary Payer** — If a TRS-Care retiree returns to work for more than ten hours a week at an TRS-ActiveCare school district, they can enroll in TRS-ActiveCare with no penalty from their TRS-Care plan.

Ms. McKenzie gave updates on:

- a. **2023 TRS-Care Medicare Advantage Benefit Enhancements** — TRS-Care Medicare Advantage improved its benefits for eye health, fitness, hearing, and more.
- b. **TRS-Care Medicare Advantage Quarterly Member Satisfaction Survey Report** — TRS-Care Medicare Advantage members continue to report high satisfaction levels with plan

administration, claims processing, customer service advocates, the website, and value-added services.

B. Engagement Update

Ms. Oan Ali gave updates on:

- a. **2023 TRS-Care Materials** — TRS recently updated its TRS-Care plan materials for the 2023 plan year and continues to mail materials to new and current TRS-Care members. English and Spanish versions are available.
- b. **TRS-Care Engagement and Outreach** — TRS continues to host TRS-Care health engagement and outreach events throughout the year, including online webinars and in-person health fairs.

VIII. Feedback on Topics for *The Pulse*

Ms. Oan Ali gave an update on topics for the TRS-Care edition of *The Pulse*. TRS continues to publish TRS-Care member news, covering topics to help members understand their plan, get the most out of their benefits and practice healthy living. TRS encourages RAC members to continue to provide feedback to TRS.

IX. Date of Next Meeting

Chair Mueller announced that the next RAC meeting is March 8, 2023, from 1- 3 p.m.

X. Adjourn

Chair Mueller adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m. on Nov. 1, 2022.