



# RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION Chico Chapter 77

## JANUARY 2018 NEWSLETTER

***Mission Statement:***

*We are active and retired California public employees working together to maintain and improve the quality of the lives of our members by protecting and improving our earned retirement, medical, and other benefits.  
RPEA represents the rank and file retired public employees.*

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### MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 2018 - 11:15 A. M.**  
Manzanita Place (Chico Elks Lodge)  
1705 Manzanita Avenue, Chico - (Lunch cost: \$15)

**SPEAKER: Suzie Saephan, MPH**  
Public Health Education Specialist  
Butte County Public Health



**TOPIC: “Are you prepared for the next disaster in Butte County?”**

Based off of the Butte County Public Health Department’s “72-hour plan” available here: <https://www.buttecounty.net/Portals/21/Safety/Preparedness/Programs/72HourPlan.pdf>, Suzie Saephan will discuss how you can be prepared for disasters in Butte County. That includes having a plan for evacuation, shelter-in-place, and communications. This presentation will include a video, and it is an important topic for all of us.

### HEALTH BENEFITS REPORT – By Al Raitt

During the December, 2017 Stakeholders meeting at CalPERS Headquarters, staff reported on Prescription Drugs Utilization and Cost Trends. They provided some interesting data. Data is updated every month, and analyses of claims data demonstrates costs for drugs covered under Pharmacy Benefits and Medical Benefits continue to rise. For example, the 2016 total drug costs (includes prescription and over-the-counter meds) paid under Pharmacy Benefits for all California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS) plan were \$2.153 billion including \$857.46 million for Medicare. Specialty drugs (used for special conditions such as cancer, cystic fibrosis, HIV, Psoriasis, Crohn’s disease, and others) often require special “handling” such as refrigeration and given by injection or intravenous infusion. They are not carried in a typical pharmacy and have to be ordered from a “specialty pharmacy” and usually expensive. A percentage of the total prescription drug cost was 28.05% (\$240.53 million) for Medicare even though specialty drug prescriptions represented only one percent of all prescriptions. Specialty prescription drug cost trends from 2012 to 2016 demonstrated a sharp increase from \$185.76 million to \$408.43 million. The top ten specialty drugs accounted for \$218.02 million spending or 53.40% of the total specialty drug cost. CalPERS staff continues to explore options for controlling expenditures on prescription drugs covered under Pharmacy and Medical Benefits while maintaining healthcare quality, choice and affordability.

A point made several time by staff is that CalPERS has tried over the years to keep copay costs as low as possible. However, reading between the lines, it’s quite possible that copay costs, as one of the “explored options,” will be vulnerable to increases over the next few years. It’s probably prudent for us to begin holding on to our collective wallets as we monitor what our copays are over the next few years!

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT – By Margaret Ballinger

As we start another New Year, many people make resolutions and many do not. I try not to; just remember and continue doing the ones I have for years. Always try to be happy and think only good things about people. For me, this works. Oh, yes, always do the best I can!

Have you given much thought to who is eligible to be a member of the Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA) and where they live? There are many districts, schools, universities, etc. who are members. In reviewing my file, there are 28 organizations on a list obtained several years ago from our Area Director, and there may be more added by now. Listed below are a few:

California State University, Butte County Association of Governments, Butte County Schools, Butte-Glenn Community College District, Chico Area Recreation and Park District, Cities of Biggs, Chico, Gridley, and Oroville, Durham Mosquito Abatement District, Housing Authority of Butte County, Paradise Recreation and Park District, Town of Paradise, and others that couldn't be fitted in.

If you're not sure of a name or district, please ask me, and I will let you know. Also, they do not need to live in Chico. We do have members who live all over the United States, and all receive our monthly newsletter and also the bi-monthly magazine from the RPEA. Hopefully this keeps everyone informed on the local as well as state-wide news.

This list is very important! We must ask people to join; or give me or one of the Board Members a name, and we will contact them. Why not invite them to lunch so they can look us over. Remember, their first lunch at a meeting as a member is free. Our smorgasbord lunches are always fresh and plentiful. Also, it was recently approved that if there is food left, a lunch can be purchased for \$10. Just ask the waitress! If you think about it, we only have 8 luncheon meetings we pay for since June (our BBQ) and December (Christmas) are free, and we don't meet in July and August.

Hopefully you had the best of the holidays, and here's to next year and more new members. We do have three new members this month. We must keep growing; and by working together to ask people to join, that is the way to start!

