



RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
Surf City—Santa Cruz Chapter 009
August 2026



We are retired California public employees working together to maintain and improve the quality of the lives of our members by protecting and improving our retirement and medical benefits.

Surf City - Santa Cruz RPEA Chapter 009



LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday - September 1st

Doors Open at 11AM

Meeting at 11:30



Community Room- Resource Center for Nonviolence

612 Ocean St. Santa Cruz (across from the county bldg.)

Served Lunch

Bar-B-Qued Chicken
Green Salad & Pasta Salad
Baked Beans & Garlic Bread
Watermelon and Cookies for Dessert
Lemonade and Iced Tea will be served.
\$20 per person. Guests Welcome.

Luncheon Speaker

**We could have an Earthquake,
a Fire, a Tsunami, even a
Tornado. Are you ready?
Our speaker will be Teri
Lewis.**

**She is the Deputy Director of Emergency
Services for Salvation Army for NoCal
She has good information to share 😊**

Make your reservation by **August 25th**
Call Mary Doherty at 831-423-3610 Or email maryatscruz@aol.com

Discontinuing the Book Exchange—by Sue Pierce

Starting at the September 1, 2026 General Membership Meeting
& Luncheon, the Book

Exchange will be discontinued primarily because fewer members
are attending the luncheon

meetings and participating in the program. When the Book Ex-
change began many years ago,

more members attended the luncheon meetings, donated books,
and took books.

**Chapter 009 has 501
members!**



RPEA CHAPTER 9
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2026-2027

PRESIDENT

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Margie Riopel 801-8306

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Director vacancy

Term 2026-2027

Becky Taylor 421-9284

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Director vacancies

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

MEMBERSHIP: vacant **CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING!**

HISTORIAN: vacant **CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING!**

SUNSHINE: vacant **CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING!**

HEALTH/INSURANCE: Margie Riopel

LEGISLATION: Nancy Carr-Gordon

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: BeckyTaylor

PROGRAM: Mary Doherty

OUTREACH: Sue Pierce

AREA III ASST. DIR.: Bob Culbertson

RPEA Chapter 9 website:

www.rpeasantacruz.org

Webmistress: Becky Taylor 421-9284

beckytaylorlortutor@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report – Steve Redfield

Beginning Balance: 6-1-2026 \$12,023.16

Ending Balance: 8-1-2026 \$10,574.58

BALANCES

General Fund \$10,519.91

Investment Opportunities \$234.67

TOTAL 8-1-2026 \$10,574.58

Legislative Report—Nancy Carr-Gordon

As the California legislature resumes its work following the summer recess, RPEA continues to track the prioritized list of 23 bills. Most of these are now in various suspense files and are not necessarily expected to go forward for action this cycle. The deadline is August 14 for fiscal committee reports, August 21 to amend bills and August 31 the last day for each house to pass bills. September 30 is the last day for Governor Newsome to sign or veto bills passed by the legislature before September 1 and in his possession on or after September 1.

This 0year, our representatives have been responding to the federal actions impacting the state budget, particularly the safety nets for health and human services and environmental protections.

It is a challenge that will continue.



Retired Public Employees Bi-Annual General Assembly is Coming

By Mary Doherty

RPEA is governed by its members. Every other year the members send delegates to a General Assembly (GA) to vote for Officers and Directors and to act on changes to bylaws and policies. 2026 is such a year. This General Assembly will be held in San Jose, September 29th – October 1st at the downtown Hilton Hotel. Besides official business meetings, there will be training sessions and lots of meeting and greeting members from other chapters.

Our Chapter is allowed 2 voting Delegates whose attendance expenses will be paid for by the state organization. Our Chapter Delegates this year will be our Secretary Sue Pierce and our Vice-President Mary Doherty. In addition, President Bob Culbertson will attend as an Area III Assistant Director and Chapter Board member Margie Riopel will go as our Alternate Delegate.

Only Delegates can vote, but General Assembly is open to all RPEA members. The opening afternoon session on Wednesday Sept. 26th often includes talks from our lobbyist, State Representative, and/or CalPERS Board member. Last GA we heard from Luis Pacheco (Watsonville) who was on the CalPERS board. The workshops on Thursday can include presentations from AMBA and other topics of general interest.

Since this year's GA will be nearby, I hope some of our members will choose to attend part of the meeting. In next month's newsletter I will provide the schedule of speakers and workshops for you to consider.



You EARNED Your PENSION - PROTECT IT!
Retired Public Employees' Assn. Surf City - Santa Cruz Chapter 9
www.RPEASantaCruz.org



Dena Taylor March 22, 1941 -June 15, 2026 by Bob Culbertson

Dena Taylor, long time member of Chapter 9 RPEA, died June 15, 2026. Dena was on the Chapter 9 Board of Directors and was the Editor of our Chapter 9 Newsletter for over 10 years. Her public agency was Cabrillo College where she used her master's degree in social work from Rutgers University to be the Program Manager for "Fast Track to Work."

She published several books during her life and was a wonderful editor for our Chapter 9 Newsletter. Her friendly, caring personality encouraged members to write informative articles to share with other retirees. Dena would edit and organize the information into our newsletter without discouraging contributors. She was an active contributor to Board discussions and activities, and we will miss her positive attitude and literary skills.

She is survived by two daughters, Anna and Becky. Becky Taylor is also a member of RPEA and has now joined our Board. Becky is very knowledgeable about computers and has long overseen our chapter webpage and has edited this edition of our newsletter.

Our chapter has been fortunate to have Becky and Dena's service to our members, and we will all miss Dena's physical presence, but continue to be guided by many happy memories of our time together.

These common medications may increase your risk during heat waves by [Neha Pathak](#)

Some over-the-counter and prescription drugs may make it harder for your body to stay cool and hydrated – with potentially serious consequences.

Heat waves can be deadly. And experts worry that certain medications may make the danger even greater, especially for adults aged 65 and older.

Many common prescription and over-the-counter medicines, such as certain antidepressants, antipsychotics, antihistamines, and drugs used to treat diabetes and high blood pressure, may reduce the body's ability to maintain a safe temperature, according to [a 2021 review](#) in The Lancet, a peer-reviewed medical journal. New GLP-1 medications used to treat diabetes and obesity may also increase your risk of dehydration.

Why do medications make us vulnerable during heat waves?

Some medications can affect your perception of heat and your body's internal thermostat. And they can alter the body's ability to redirect blood flow to the skin, a key way that it cools itself.

In hot weather, those side effects could increase the chance of life-threatening consequences, like severe dehydration or heat stroke.

Why are older adults vulnerable?

Adults age 65 and older and those with chronic conditions are among the most vulnerable to extreme heat. Older people may be more sensitive to heat because as people age, their sense of thirst can decrease – and so can their ability to sweat. In addition, older adults often take multiple medications.

Which common medications may make heat more dangerous?

- Antidepressants like selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs, may increase sweating, increasing the risk of dehydration.
- Tricyclic antidepressants, or TCAs, may decrease sweating, making it harder to cool off.
- Antipsychotics may impair sweating and alter the body's internal thermostat.
- Anticholinergic drugs, a large category of medications commonly used to treat an array of conditions such as urinary incontinence, overactive bladder, allergies, and Parkinson's disease, may interfere with sweating and the body's internal thermostat. They may also reduce blood flow to the skin.
- ACE inhibitors can cause dehydration, affect kidney function, and limit the body's ability to redirect blood flow.
- GLP-1 drugs can increase the risk of dehydration.

For named examples of drugs that may affect your body's response to heat, [explore this CDC page](#).

How to protect yourself in hot weather

- Keep taking your medications and talk with a health care provider about any concerns.
- Make sure you have access to a cool place to rest during a heat wave. If your home doesn't have air conditioning, **can you stay with a friend or family member?**
- Keep your medications in a cool place – not in your car.
- Monitor yourself for the first signs of heat stress: dizziness, fatigue, or thirst. If you have those symptoms, rest and cool off immediately.
- Pay attention to symptoms like dizziness, fatigue, reduced urination, or worsening nausea. These symptoms could signal dehydration.
- Drink nonalcoholic fluids regularly, though follow your doctor's guidelines – drinking large amounts of plain water in a short amount of time can be dangerous because of the risk of electrolyte imbalance in some people. Seek care if you can't keep fluids down.
- Stay in frequent contact with family or other caregivers.

2027 Statewide Preliminary Health Premiums

Cal Pers released their 2027 Statewide Basic and Medicare Preliminary Health Premiums

Attached for your review, are the premium rates for Basic and Medicare Plans presented at the CalPERS Pension & Health Benefits Committee on June 16, 2026. The Annual Health Plan Changes can be reviewed in full on the CalPERS website at calpers.ca.gov.

Final premiums and changes will be formally voted and adopted by the CalPERS Board of Administration in mid July 2026. There's no action for you to take now. For a full list of available health plans, you should visit the CalPERS Plans & Rates page on the CalPERS website once they have been approved. Important changes to Health Plans include the removal of United HealthCare for Basic Plans due to high-rate increases. The addition of the Sutter Health for Basic Plans and the addition of a fertility benefit for all Basic Plans effective July 1, 2027. There will also be a Blue Shield EPO network that is expanding to all remaining California ZIP codes that lack standard HMO or EPO options. And a Kaiser Permanente HMO Expansion into northwestern Nevada: Carson City, Lyon, Storey and Washoe Counties. Regarding Medicare Plans, there is no change to the United Healthcare Group Medicare Advantage Plan. This plan will remain for Medicare.

CalPERS will hold 2026 Open Enrollment from September 14th through October 9th with all coverage changes taking effect on January 1, 2027. You should receive information from CalPERS regarding the Health Plan changes and Open Enrollment coming up in the next few months.

2027 Statewide Preliminary Basic Health Premiums Per Subscriber Per Month (PSPM) for Single Party State & California State University Members

	2026 Premium	2027 Premium	Percent Change from 2026	2026 Enrollment
Basic HMO & EPO Plan				
Anthem Blue Cross Select	\$1,090.98	\$1,215.09	11.38%	28,057
Anthem Blue Cross Traditional	\$1,372.93	\$1,475.65	7.48%	11,940
Blue Shield Access+ HMO	\$1,088.52	\$1,208.97	11.07%	131,636
Blue Shield Access+ EPO	\$1,088.52	\$1,208.97	11.07%	3,734
Blue Shield Trio	\$936.58	\$971.24	3.70%	51,537
Health Net Salud y Más	\$789.13	\$855.93	8.47%	12,577
Kaiser Permanente	\$1,097.94	\$1,125.15	2.48%	526,870
Kaiser Permanente Out-of-State	\$1,398.96	\$1,502.12	7.37%	949
Kaiser Permanente Nevada	N/A	\$1,347.87	N/A	N/A
Sharp Performance Plus	\$916.20	\$975.21	6.44%	15,582
Sutter Health	N/A	\$1,130.67	N/A	N/A
Western Health Advantage	\$969.58	\$1,030.80	6.31%	25,947
Basic HMO Weighted Average			4.52%	808,829
Basic PPO Plan				
PERS Gold PPO	\$1,043.37	\$1,119.94	7.34%	136,948
PERS Platinum PPO (Nationwide)	\$1,512.13	\$1,623.10	7.34%	86,862
Basic PPO Weighted Average			7.34%	223,810
Total Basic Weighted Average			5.80%	1,032,639
Total Overall Weighted Average			4.98%	1,379,744

2027 Statewide Preliminary Medicare Health Premiums Per Subscriber Per Month (PSPM) for Single Party State, Public Agency & School Members

	2026 Premium	2027 Premium	Percent Change from 2026	2026 Enrollment
Medicare Advantage Plan				
Anthem Medicare Preferred PPO	\$571.70	\$619.25	8.32%	7,586
Blue Shield Medicare PPO (Nationwide)	\$539.43	\$619.36	14.82%	12,782
Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage	\$356.83	\$333.93	-6.42%	108,380
Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage Out-of-State	\$350.16	\$324.40	-7.36%	2,614
Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage Summit	\$426.31	\$391.74	-8.11%	11,816
Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage Summit Out-of-State	\$419.67	\$382.24	-8.92%	402
Sharp Direct Advantage HMO	\$291.38	\$320.22	9.90%	791
UnitedHealthcare Group Medicare Advantage PPO (Nationwide)	\$481.29	\$534.00	10.95%	47,471
Medicare Advantage Weighted Average			1.18%	191,842
Medicare Supplement Plan				
PERS Gold	\$597.57	\$597.57	0.00%	6,685
PERS Platinum (Nationwide)	\$665.50	\$665.50	0.00%	148,578
Medicare Supplement Weighted Average			0.00%	155,263
Total Medicare Weighted Average			0.51%	347,105
Total Overall Weighted Average			4.98%	1,379,744

Are California salads safe to eat? A local look at the cyclospora outbreak

Sarit Laschinsky & Vicki Gonzalez CapRadio Sacramento July 29th

A major outbreak of gastrointestinal illness has been hitting multiple states over the past month. The culprit

is a parasite called cyclospora, which is often tied to fresh produce. The FDA said nearly 2,000 cases have been reported across nine states, with exposure linked to shredded iceberg lettuce sourced from Central Mexico.

California health officials say they are seeing some cases, but the number is within normal ranges. Earlier this month the state also said those illnesses are not part of the national outbreak. But over the past couple weeks, the illnesses have created confusion about what's safe to eat. Dr. Dean Blumberg is the Chief of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at UC Davis Health, and spoke about cyclospora with CapRadio Insight Host Vicki Gonzalez.

Interview highlights

How does illness from cyclospora work?

It's a little bit different from other gastrointestinal pathogens. Some of them cause secretory diarrhea, so they have toxins that actually cause the cells in our gut to secrete fluids. Cyclospora doesn't work that way. It actually infects the upper intestines, the small intestines, and kills the cells so that they can't absorb water. That means that large volumes of fluid are delivered to the colon — larger volumes in the colon can absorb. Also, some of the carbohydrates aren't absorbed and they ferment, and that causes the gasiness. That's what causes the rapid expulsion of the fluid as well as gasiness. That's why it's been described as explosive diarrhea.

Is this a common culprit of food poisoning?

We see this infection every year in many states, California has reported cases all the time. But usually it's only a handful of cases, and most of those cases are acquired abroad. What's different is that we're having this really large-scale reporting of disease now in the U.S. Normally in the US, we'll see about 4,000 or 5,000 cases, but it's estimated that there's at least 14,000 cases currently.

Is fresh produce typically linked to cyclospora?

It's commonly lettuce, fresh produce, snow peas have been implicated, parsley, cilantro. When it's cooked, then that usually kills the parasite.

It can take up to two weeks for symptoms to show up, so tracing a source must be pretty difficult.

That's exactly right. When these outbreaks occur, the investigators will interview people and say, "when did you get sick? What did you eat in the incubation period at the time before [you] became symptomatic?" In this case, I can't remember what I ate two weeks ago; you're trying to develop a food diary in retrospect, and that can be very difficult and inaccurate. Then it can be hard to really pinpoint what commonalities there are for sources.

Continued on next page



How long does this illness typically last?

It can last for several weeks, and people can get better and then have a relapse. Treatment is relatively straightforward. First, we need to make a diagnosis and that can be done from a stool lab test — that's a PCR test. And then the treatment is a commonly used antibiotic, which people may know by the brand name of Septra or Bactrim.

How dangerous can it be to someone's health?

People don't generally die from this. It's most dangerous to people at the extremes of age, young children less than five and the elderly, because they're more prone to getting dehydrated when something like this happens. For most patients, they won't end up in the hospital. It'll just be very uncomfortable for them. And if you're pregnant; any perturbation during pregnancy is going to be uncomfortable.

Are you seeing cyclospora cases?

I'm not aware of any local cases. California has been reporting cases this year, but the cases are what we'd expect in a normal year. In California, due to regional produce distribution networks, the salads are great. People should eat them. The value of having fresh produce definitely outweighs any risks. We're not one of the states that's been involved with this cyclospora outbreak.

CDPH said on July 14 that California is not seeing an increased number of cases. But if someone has food poisoning, they don't always go to the hospital. How concrete are the state's numbers if a lot of cases might fly under the radar?

I think if people are being tested in a routine manner compared to previous years, then if there was an increase we would see the numbers. We just haven't seen that. I'm confident that what we're seeing right now is the background rate that we normally see, and so we're safe in terms of fresh produce, salads, lettuce, etc.

It turns out there's probably about six different cyclospora outbreaks that are occurring across the U.S. The biggest one is the one that we've talked about the lettuce related to the Taylor Farms, but there's another outbreak involving parsley and cilantro in North Carolina, and there's other outbreaks that are being investigated.

So just to confirm one more time: you're saying it's fine to eat salads and produce here in Northern California?

It's fine to proceed locally. Go to a restaurant, have salad, make it yourself. The lettuce you buy at the grocery store, at the farmers' market, it's fine. We haven't seen any of the implicated brands distributed in California.

*2 anonymous
Chapter 009
members*

This month's
newsletter sponsored
in part by:

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PICKLES: By Brian Crane

