

Chapter 13

PAID BENEFITS FOR RETIRED EMPLOYEES

C. Bridge Program

- a. Qualified confidential employees employed after July 1, 1997 are eligible for a health benefits bridge program to cover the period of time between retirement and eligibility for Medicare coverage. So long as the eligible Medicare recipient has fulfilled the requirements of this section, the bridge shall remain in effect during the period of any delay in initial receipt of Medicare benefits which is not the fault of the recipient.
- b. A qualified confidential employee under this program is one:
 - i. who is age 55 or older, who has retired from the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) or the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) (or who has applied for and is eligible to receive a service retirement from either of said retirement systems), and who has rendered service to the District at least half-time as a contract or regular employee for fifteen (15) or more years immediately preceding his or her retirement. No absence from the service of the District under a leave of absence and no period of approved reduced service shall be deemed as a break in the continuity of service required by this program. Time spent on any Staff Development Leave shall be deemed to be full-time service for the purpose of the program; and
 - ii. who has provided evidence that he/she has Medicare coverage.
- c. A qualified spouse or bona fide domestic partner is one:
 - i. who is at the time the qualified confidential employee retired under this program and thereafter the spouse or bona fide domestic partner of the employee; or
 - ii. who was the spouse or bona fide domestic partner of the qualified employee on the date of the employee's retirement and is at the time of death of the retiree and thereafter, the surviving unmarried spouse or bona fide domestic partner of the retiree; or
 - iii. who was the spouse or bona fide domestic partner of an employee who at the time of his or her death was at least 55 years of age and rendered sufficient service as defined in this chapter to qualify for paid benefits upon retirement and is an unremarried surviving spouse or qualified domestic partner while receiving benefits.
- d. Each retired confidential employee who qualifies under the terms of this chapter and his or her eligible spouse or bona fide domestic partner as defined

shall be eligible for District health and hospital benefits, prescription drug benefits, vision care benefits and dental care benefits as provided in this chapter and described in Chapter 6.

- e. To be able to provide confidential employees a bridge program that is comparable to that offered to other employees, the District's contribution shall be based on the SEIU salary schedule. After retirement, under this program the District shall contribute monthly towards the payment of the retiree's benefits as defined herein:
 - i. During each month of eligibility under the program the monthly contribution shall be one twelfth of the annual sum of 2.8% of Range 70, Step 6 of the SEIU salary schedule, unless a lower percentage is allowed under 5.d below.
 - ii. If the confidential employee has a spouse or qualified domestic partner on the date of retirement, and the spouse or domestic partner has no medical benefits coverage as a primary insured, the District will contribute up to 5.6% of Range 70, Step 6 of the SEIU Salary Schedule for the premiums for the retiree and the spouse/domestic partner. The monetary equivalent of the applicable percentage shall be applied to payments for these benefits of the covered retired employee, spouse, surviving spouse or domestic partner.
 - iii. Should the actual cost of the benefits selected cost more than the above, the covered individual(s) shall pay the difference to the District each month.
 - iv. Should the actual cost of the benefits selected by a covered individual amount to less than the allowed percentage then the actual percentage shall be that which reflects the actual cost of the selected benefits.
- f. The benefits provided to eligible confidential employees and spouses and bona fide domestic partners under this program shall cease when the employee, unmarried surviving spouse or bona fide domestic partner as the case may be qualifies for and begins receiving Medicare coverage consistent with C.1 above.
- g. If confidential employees are given any options regarding health benefit plans (for example, the choice between Kaiser and the District's self-insured plan) during the bridge period, the covered employee (and/or qualified spouse or domestic partner) shall receive benefits in accordance with the plan or plans under which the retired confidential employee was receiving benefits at the time of retirement and he or she shall not be allowed to change after retirement except during open enrollment periods.
- h. If a spouse or bona fide domestic partner of a retired confidential employee receives benefits under any other health benefits plan as a primary insured, the

benefits provided under the other plan shall be primary for that spouse or bona fide domestic partner and those benefits shall not be provided under this program.

- i. To obtain the benefits provided under this chapter, every confidential employee and eligible surviving unremarried spouse or domestic partner shall file an application for the benefits with the Office of Human Resources and shall complete all necessary enrollment forms before the last date of his or her employment with the District. The spouse or domestic partner will sign a statement verifying that he/she does not have medical benefits insurance in his/her own right as a primary insured. The employee is required to provide information to Medicare to verify Medicare eligibility and to update that information as appropriate.
- j. The benefits provided under this program are subject to change or termination by mutual agreement between the confidential employees group and the Board.