

# MEA-Retired Tribune

November 2014

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## Fitness Discounts with the Blues

The Blue's have fitness discounts available to members (including Blue Care Network and Blue Care Network Advantage members) through two programs.

**Healthy Blue Extra's** includes member discounts from Michigan retailers and **Blue 365** includes national discounts. Examples include:

**Food and nutrition:** Take advantage of great savings on Weight Watchers®, home meal delivery service and fresh produce at stores like Plum Market and Westborn Market.

**Health and fitness:** Enjoy a massage at 20 percent off, and save on fitness club memberships, classes and consultations.

**Home and garden:** Get discounts on plants, flowers and other products for your home.

**Travel:** Pay less at Michigan's top resorts and destinations for budget-friendly vacations and getaways.

**General:** Shopping for a home? Looking for a home security system? Healthy Blue Xtras has savings for you.

**Recreation:** Save on family activities and outings like golf and kayaking, the Detroit Zoo and Michigan's Adventure.

To get a fitness discount, members need to access

1. [www.bcbsm.com](http://www.bcbsm.com)
2. Click on Healthy Living, then Discounts for members from the drop down menu
3. Click on the blue apple for Healthy Blue Extra's (for outside MI, click on Blue 365)
4. For Healthy Blue Extra's, you need to select the region of MI you want and the discounts will come up.

For Blue 365 you can generally just show your Blue Cross card at the retailer. For Blue 365, to access the website (you leave the BCBSM website), you have to register to locate the discounts available and then you can put in your zip code for discounts in your area.



## WHY ALL THE HEALTH CARE COMPANY STUFF?

You have probably been receiving phone calls, mail, e-mails and people appearing on your doorstep advertising health insurance. October 15 through December 7 is open enrollment time for changing insurance. If you are happy with the plan, you do nothing. If you join a plan outside of the option the Office of Retirement services offers, you will be dropped by ORS and have NO health insurance benefit. That means you would pay the entire insurance premium. So.....if you are happy with what you have DO NOTHING.

## SOCIAL SECURITY 1.7% BENEFIT INCREASE FOR 2015

Monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security for nearly 64 million Americans will increase 1.7% in 2015, the Social Security Administration announced October 22.

Some other changes that take effect in January of each year are based on increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount earnings subject to Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$118,500 from \$117,000. of the estimated 168 million workers who will pay Social Security taxes in 2015, about 10 million will pay higher taxes because the increase in the taxable maximum. More information is available at [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov)

## Did You Know There Are Programs To Help People Pay For Their Drugs?

**Extra Help From Medicare.** You may be able to get Extra Help to pay for your prescription drug premiums and costs. This program is called the “low-income subsidy” or LIS. People whose yearly income and resources are below certain limits can qualify for this help. To see if you qualify for getting Extra Help, see Section 3 of your *Medicare & You* handbook or call 1-800-633-4227. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. You can call these numbers for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also call the Social Security Office at 1-800-722-1213 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.

## Here's what a friend of public education looks like

You can recognize them--not by their looks--but by what they hold important. And a commitment to doing what's right defines their candidacy in this election.

Friends of public education support full funding for education because they've seen enough of the struggles public schools and public school employees are facing. They believe in employee rights and collective bargaining so school employees can do their job and support a family. Friends of public education want financial security and respect for the middle class instead of having them lose out to tax breaks for big corporations. They want seniors to enjoy the retirement they were promised and not have to worry about additional tax burdens. Common sense tells them that a quality education will lead to the creation of good jobs and financial success for Michigan.

To see who these friends of public education are, go to [MEA's new online voter guide](#) which provides a list of MEA's recommended candidates in your area. You can also [download the entire statewide list](#) and get other political information on [MEA.org's Members Only Political Action page](#).

## Dates to Remember:

### **NOVEMBER 4, 2014 VOTE**

November 12 – MEA-Retired Board Meeting

November 13, 2014 – President’s Conclave

December 15, 2014 – Deadline for nominations and bios for Region Directors, MEA, NEA, and NEA-Retired delegates.

February 16-27, 2015 – MEA-Retired On-Line Voting

March 16-27, 2015 – Reading of MEA Scholarships

March 24-26, 2015 - NEA-Retired Organizing Conference

April 7, 2015 – MEA-Retired Annual Meeting

## DID YOU KNOW?

- MEA-Retired received a grant from NEA-Retired for \$4,700. This is a communications grant.
- How Medicare covers vaccines depends on the type of vaccine and the reason it is prescribed. Medicare Part B (either through Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan) covers vaccines after you are exposed to a dangerous virus or disease. For example, it will cover tetanus shots after you step on a rusty nail. It also covers three vaccines under the preventive care benefit – flu, pneumonia, and hepatitis B. All other vaccines should be covered by your Part D prescription drug plan. Every Part D plan must have all commercially available vaccines on its list of covered drugs (formulary), but costs may differ.



**VOTE**