

MEA-Retired Tribune

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Snyder Wants Quick Right-To-Work Ruling

Governor Snyder is asking the Michigan Supreme Court to rule quickly on the constitutionality of a right-to-work law that takes effect on March 27, 2013. The Governor said he wants to resolve the uncertainty over the law's impact on state employees because new contract talks will begin this summer.

If the high court grants Snyder's request for an advisory opinion, it could thwart opponents' plans to file lawsuits. Snyder is hoping for a ruling before the court's term ends in July. He said protracted litigation would be "very divisive" and not serve the interest of "judicial economy."

Unions are considering all legal options to challenge and block the law that prohibits forcing workers to pay union dues or fees as a condition of employment. (from WOODTV.COM)

TRANSITION FILL (Medicare Watch)

Keep in mind that if Medicare Advantage or Part D plan does not cover your drug, your plan should provide you with a 30-day transition fill at some time during the first 90 days of the year (until March 31st). A [transition fill](#) (also known as a transition refill) is a one-time, 30-day supply of a Medicare-covered drug that Medicare prescription drug plans must cover when you have a new drug plan in 2013 or when the plan that you had in 2012 changes its coverage for 2013.

If your plan does not cover your drug, you should also ask your doctor for help in sending a [formal exception request](#) to your plan to cover the drug. You can also talk to your doctor about switching to a drug that is covered by your plan.

Did You Know

- The Social Security Administration announced that beneficiaries will see a 1.7% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) beginning in their January 2013 checks. Social Security benefits are automatically adjusted to keep up with the cost of living.
- Social Security lifted 21.4 million people out of poverty in 2011 (including 1.1 million children), up from 20.2 million (including 1.1 million children) in 2010.
- If you have Blue Cross Blue Shield Medicare Advantage, flu shots are covered at no cost. So be sure to get your flu shot soon if you haven't already done so.
- Changes continue!!! In August you received a notification that Medco Medicare Prescription Plan (PDP) was changing to Express Scripts Medicare (PDP). This change will take place January 1, 2013. You do not need to do anything and the name change does not change your current enrollment. Continue to use the same ID card you currently have.
- Michigan income tax changed from 4.35% to 4.25% on October 1, 2012. The personal exemption changed from \$3,700 to \$3,950.
- The Michigan Legislature passed 282 bills during the final weeks of 2012.
- Michigan will become a "Right-to-Work" state on March 27, 2013.
- Rep. Pete Lund (R) is considering proposing legislation to change the process for counting votes for Presidential elections. Under his plan (advocated by ALEC) electoral votes will be counted from each congressional district which were gerrymandered by the present legislature. Under his plan Romney would have received all of Michigan's electoral votes. Under the new proposal being pushed by Rep. Pete Lund – a member of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) – Mitt Romney would've won more electoral votes in Michigan than President Obama.

Lawsuit Filed Against RTW

Several members of the coalition filed a lawsuit in the Circuit Court of Ingham County on January 31, 2013. The suit cites the Open Meetings Act as the reason for the suit. On December 6, 2012, the Legislature voted the right-to-work legislation. During the discussing and voting, the doors to the Capitol were locked for four hours.

Attorneys for American Civil Liberties Union Fund of Michigan, MEA, AFL-CIO, Change to Win, and Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council filed the suit.

Medicare Helps Pay for Inpatient Mental Health (Medicare Watch)

Medicare helps pay for inpatient mental health services in psychiatric hospitals or general hospitals.

If you receive care in a psychiatric hospital, Medicare helps pay up to 190 days of inpatient care in your lifetime. After you have reached that limit, Medicare may help pay for mental health care at a general hospital. Your out-of-pocket costs are the same in a psychiatric hospital as they are in any hospital.

If you enter a psychiatric hospital within 60 days of being an inpatient at a different hospita, you are in the same benefit period and do not have to pay the deductible again. A benefit period begins the day you start getting inpatient care and ends when you've been out of the hospital or skilled nursing facility for 60 days in a row.

READ ACROSS AMERICA (MEA website)

More than 45 million children and adults across the country on Friday, March 1, will dust off their red and white stovepipe reading hats, march to schools, libraries, and community centers, and celebrate the joy of reading as part of the National Education Association's Read Across America Day.

The "Cat-a-Van," featuring Dr. Seuss' "Cat in the Hat," will make stops in Warren and Lansing on March 1. Check back soon for details.

NEA's Read Across America is smiling about the recent addition of Delta Dental of Michigan — a dental benefits administrator — to Read Across America's lineup of sponsors.

Delta Dental is partnering with the NEA to produce the Read Across America calendar and other materials, support the Read Across America reading tour, and provide other resources throughout the year, including oral health tips and classroom resources for educators.

Why the focus on oral health and literacy? Consider these facts:

Students who don't read at grade level by fourth grade are four times more likely to drop out than those who do. Annually, oral health problems cause students across the nation to miss 51 million school hours.

Students who have experienced recent oral health pain are four times more likely to have lower grade point averages than their counterparts who have not. Students who are absent miss critical instruction time, especially in early grades where reading skills are a focus.

Delta Dental is asking children and their parents to brush for two minutes, two times per day and read for 20 minutes each day. That's a daily total of 24 minutes focusing on developing good oral health and good reading skills!

For more information, go to www.nea.org/readacross.

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