

AGENDA ITEM DETAILS

- Subject:** Agency Update
- Legislative Interim Activities
 - ERS Strategic Plan Update for FY 2021-2025
 - Customer Benefit Updates
 - Major Publications
 - Survey of Employee Engagement
 - 2020 Get Fit Texas State Challenge

Legislative Interim Activities

1. February 6, 2020 ERS provided a 2019 Actuarial Valuation briefing to legislative staff
2. February 25, 2020 Porter testified at the Senate Finance Committee hearing related to the investment of state funds.

ERS Strategic Plan Update for Fiscal Years 2021-2025 - Every even numbered year, ERS updates its five-year strategic plan. The next Strategic Plan will cover Fiscal Years 2021-2025. The ERS Fiscal Years 2019 – 2023 Goals include:

1. Support Our Members' Retirement Income Security
2. Sustain Competitive Group Benefits Programs
3. Engage Stakeholders for Informed Decision Making
4. Enhance Agency Performance and Accountability

We are currently in the process of reviewing and updating objectives and steps to reach these goals both in the short-term and long-term. This is an interactive process, which will include participants throughout the agency. Additionally, the Strategic Plan includes any impediments in achieving these goals, the Agency Workforce Plan, updated performance measures, and the Historically Underutilized Business Plan. Strategic Plan instructions are typically issued in March with a June submittal date. This plan is then used to develop the agency's Legislative Appropriation Request as well as tactical planning to ensure proposed projects and initiatives align with the strategic plan.

Customer Service Update – The Customer Service department within Customer Benefits is the voice a member hears when they call ERS and the face that they see when they come to visit ERS. The benefit counselors at ERS serve over 500,000 State of Texas employees, retirees, beneficiaries and dependents; as well as State of Texas higher education employees, retirees and dependents. ERS contracts with an external call center, ACT, to answer general customer service questions and calls related to annual enrollment activity throughout the year. Even with this additional external support, call volume to ERS is high and our members are experiencing longer wait times leading to frustration. This is not the level of service that ERS has traditionally provided and ERS is focused on improving call wait times. To provide better service, ERS has extended the times when the call back feature is offered to callers. The feature allows a caller to leave a number and hold their place in line. When it is their turn, an ERS benefits counselor will call them. This allows them to get service without having to wait on hold. Part of the challenge is attracting and retaining benefits counselors within the contact center in today's job market. To address those personnel issues, ERS is working on a number of initiatives including compensation and recruitment strategies. Short-term solutions include assistance from intra-department and division

staff as well as authorizing staff overtime. Long-term solutions include additional call support from the outsourced call center vendor (currently out for bid) and a better user interface for self-service functionality, which is a part of the current pension/benefits system project.

Major Publications

1. Consumer Directed HealthSelect Report: In December 2019, ERS staff published a report on the progress of implementing the Consumer Directed HealthSelect of Texas plan, as required by House Bill 966 (84th Legislative Session, 2015). This plan offers GBP participants the choice of a high-deductible health plan with an associated health savings account. The report summarized rates of health care and pharmaceutical use compared to the larger population of HealthSelect of Texas participants and analyzed the status of the risk pool and actuarial impacts to GBP finances. Staff posted the report to the ERS public website on December 20, 2019 in advance of the January 1, 2020 legislative deadline. The report is attached as Exhibit A.
2. Group Benefits Program Annual Report, FY19: Texas Insurance Code 1551 requires ERS to annually report on the status, demographics, finances, and performance of the Group Benefits Program health and voluntary insurance plans. This year's report highlighted recent staff efforts to promote wellness opportunities and continued last year's focus on educating participants on effectively engaging the benefit structure to lower their out-of-pocket costs. Staff posted the report to the ERS public website on January 31, 2020 to meet the February 1 statutory deadline. This highly technical report is a collaboration of staff representing five agency divisions and includes significant contributions from the agency's internal and external health care actuaries. The report is attached as Exhibit B.

2020 Survey of Employee Engagement – Every two years, state employees have an opportunity to comment on their workplace and jobs through the Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE), created by the Institute for Organizational Excellence at the University of Texas at Austin. The ERS survey launched on Monday, February 3. Participation was highly encouraged.

Traditionally, ERS has had a high level of participation and high engagement scores. [This year](#) our goal was to match or exceed the participation rate of the last survey, 92%. ERS' final survey results will be shared with the Board once the data is compiled and analyzed.

2020 Get Fit Texas State Challenge - The *2020 Get Fit Texas Challenge* kicked off on January 20, 2020 and runs through March 29, 2020. The challenge offers the chance for state employees to get active in an agency-to-agency competition to see which agency can claim the title of being the "Fittest State Agency." State employees will strive to be physically active for 150 minutes per week for at least six of the 10 weeks of the challenge. In 2016, 2018 & 2019 ERS earned #1 Fittest State Agency in the mid-size category (agencies with 201-500 FTEs). As administrators of the state's health plan we are aware of the positive effect of regular exercise on health and well-being and we intend to defend our title again this year.

ERS employees who successfully complete six weeks of the 10 week challenge will earn four hours of wellness leave, employees who complete eight of the 10 weeks will earn six hours of wellness leave and employees who complete all 10 weeks will earn eight hours of wellness leave. Francesca Dooley in Human Resources serves as ERS' coordinator for this year's challenge.

This agenda item is provided for informational purposes only. No action is required.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit A - Consumer Directed HealthSelect Report
2. Exhibit B - Group Benefits Program Annual Report, FY19