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Special:

Circular Letter

TO: BOARD MEMBERS, SYSTEM STAFF ALL EMPLOYEES, STATE AGENCIES, AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS, PUBLIC AGENCIES, STATE COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES, COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS, INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

SUBJECT: CALPERS' ONLINE MEMBER AND EMPLOYER TRANSACTION SYSTEM (COMET) IMPLEMENTATION

During the month of February, CalPERS will be implementing the fourth phase of the CalPERS' Online Member and Employer Transaction System also known as COMET.

COMET phase four includes two new systems:

1. Participant Registration

The Participant Registration System is a significant enhancement to our current corporate registration system and will enable CalPERS' staff to register and enroll participants into CalPERS' benefit programs, such as retirement and health. It will provide information on refunds, redeposits, retirement, reinstatements, reciprocity, and service credit elections, as well as historical information for community property, state tier elections, holds, and liens.

2. Employer Contracts

The Employer Contracts System will maintain data for all employer organizations that contract with CalPERS, including reciprocal agencies. It provides the capability to facilitate mass database updates for such transactions as address changes.

Please be advised that during the implementation period (2/7/2002 through 2/19/2002), some of the CalPERS systems will not be available and others will be available in read only mode or will allow for only minimal updates.

While CalPERS systems are being upgraded, the Health Benefit Services Division and the Actuarial and Employer Services Division will strive to assist employers with any problems that may occur.

Telephone representatives will be available; however, they will have "Read Only" capability of many systems. Update capability will not be available until February 19. Therefore, staff's assistance will be limited.

To assist with the implementation and help avoid disruptions, we ask that you follow the guidelines stated below. Your immediate action will expedite the update of your employee's health and membership transactions.

Non-ACES Employers

Complete and mail in ALL "Member Action Request" forms (AESD-1) and "Health Benefits Division-12" (HBD-12), as soon as possible. This will allow time for system processing before February 8.

DO NOT hold AESD-1 or HBD-12 forms during the system downtime; continue to mail in all transactions. All documents received for processing February 8-18 will be held at CalPERS until the upgraded retirement and health systems are back on line, February 19. Documents will be processed in the order received.

All health transactions processed on or after February 19 will miss the premium payment cutoffs. The premiums for these enrollments will be processed the following month.

Transactions processed after February 19 may cause a delay in the processing of health plan ID cards.

ACES Employers

The ACES system will be shut down Thursday, February 7 at 4:00 p.m. Update capability and view access will not be restored until Thursday, February 21.

ALL ACES transactions should be input and batches submitted before 3:00 p.m. for health and membership and 4:00 p.m. for payroll on Thursday, February 7. All batches submitted will be processed that night for system update on Friday.

You will not be able to input any transactions or submit any batches after these times on Thursday, February 7, as ACES will be offline.

DO NOT mail in AESD-1 and/or HBD-12 forms to CalPERS. Employers are requested to HOLD all transactions from February 8-20. On February 21, the upgraded ACES system will be available for employers to input all transactions received during the downtime.

Please feel free to contact the ACES Employer Assistance Center at

1-888-225-7377; however, CalPERS staff will have "read only" capability of the health and membership systems and will not be able to update health and membership enrollments and changes.

ACES system will be available for normal business, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., on Thursday, February 21.

ACES Payroll File Transfer Users

The ACES system will be shut down Thursday, February 7 at 4:00 p.m. The ability to transfer payroll files will not be restored until Thursday, February 21. Employers with payroll due between February 8-20 should still submit payment and summary reports in a timely manner. Any payroll data due during the shutdown period should be held and submitted between Thursday, February 21 and Friday, March 1. ACES employers submitting data during those times will not be assessed delinquency charges for payroll due during the shutdown period. For any payroll questions, please contact CalPERS at **888 CalPERS** (or 888-225-7377).

Public Agency Billing

The ACES and COMET systems shut down WILL NOT AFFECT the Public Agency Billing system for our Health system. Health Benefit Services Division staff will continue with normal business processes. However, staff WILL NOT have enrollment update capability within CalPERS enrollment systems.

CalPERS Health Plans

Health Plans WILL NOT have access to the ACES system from 4:00 p.m., Thursday, February 7 until 6:00 a.m. Thursday, February 21.

Health Pay Entities

While the activities listed in this letter may not affect you directly, we wish to keep you appraised of the upcoming events.



Kenneth W. Marzion, Chief
Actuarial and Employer Services Division