



2101 S. Veterans Parkway
P. O. Box 19255
Springfield, IL 62794-9255
217-782-8500

The Solon

The newsletter for members of the General Assembly Retirement System of Illinois

 [srs.illinois.gov](https://www.srs.illinois.gov)



JANUARY 2020



Update your Member Services contact information to receive the latest news, announcements or deadlines.

Your benefit statement

Enclosed with this Solon is your current benefit statement. This statement contains detailed information about your GARS benefits.

You may change your beneficiaries at any time by completing and filing Form 7101 (Death Benefit Beneficiary Designation) with GARS.

Remember, your group life insurance beneficiaries are separate from your GARS beneficiaries. The Minnesota Life Insurance Company, a Securian brand, maintains your life insurance beneficiary information. To update your life insurance beneficiaries, contact Minnesota Life at 888-202-5525. Their office hours are Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

If you have questions about your statement, call us at 217-782-8500.



Tax Information

1099-R

In January, the Office of the Comptroller mailed IRS Form 1099-R for 2019 GARS benefit payments to all annuitants and survivors. These payments must be reported on IRS Form 1040 under the Income section (Pensions and annuities).

W2GI+

If you carry non-IRS dependent(s) on your state health/dental insurance, you should receive a Form W2GI+ from the Comptroller's office. Under federal tax law, the premium paid by the state must be added to your annual gross income if a covered dependent does not qualify as your tax dependent because it is subject to federal income tax.

The Form W2GI+ is also issued for all annuitants who carry a group term life insurance policy of \$50,000 or more through the state.

Form W2GI+ information is reported on IRS Form 1040 under the Other Taxes section (Health care: individual responsibility).

Federal income tax withholding

You may have noticed a slight change in the amount of federal tax deducted from your GARS benefit payment due to revised federal withholding tables that went into effect on January 1, 2020.

If you need to change the amount of your federal tax withholding, you must submit a new W-4P to GARS. The W-4P is available at [srs.illinois.gov](https://www.srs.illinois.gov), under the Forms link. The new W-4P may be submitted at any time throughout the year.

If you need to have additional tax withheld for other income, such as interest, dividends, capital gains, rents, alimony, taxable Social Security benefits, etc., you can submit a new W-4P to GARS at any time.

You should contact a qualified tax advisor or an IRS representative at 800-829-1040 with questions about your taxes, including withholdings.

MyBenefits Website address change

If you access your insurance information on the MyBenefits website, you no longer need to include the www before MyBenefits.illinois.gov. While you may still be able to access the site with the www prefix with some search engines, you may want to clear out your computer cache history and save the new web address as MyBenefits.illinois.gov.



You can now opt out of paper statements

Did you know that mail theft is one of the most common ways identity theft or fraud can happen to you? On the Member Services website, you can opt out of receiving your GARS annual benefit statement in the mail. You can access your current and prior years' statements through the secure website and continue to receive other GARS correspondence in the mail. Opting out of paper statements



CMS to Conduct Dependent Eligibility Verification Audit (DEVA)

We have been notified by the Group Insurance Division of CMS that a third-party vendor, HMS Employer Solutions, has been hired to conduct an audit to confirm dependents currently enrolled on your health insurance are still eligible. This audit is a federal and state requirement to ensure member compliance with adding eligible dependents. This will not include natural child dependents who were previously verified during the 2015 audit.

The DEVA audit will be divided into three phases:

Phase 1: Retirees and survivors not covered by Medicare (Jan. 27 – Mar. 20; failure to recertify terminations effective 4/1/20)

Phase 2: Active employees (Mar. 3 – Apr. 25; failure to recertify terminations effective 5/1/20)

Phase 3: Retirees and survivors covered by a Medicare Advantage Plan (Jul. 28 – Sept. 24; failure to recertify terminations effective 10/1/20)

If you are contacted by HMS Employer Solutions, you will be required to comply in order to keep your eligible dependents from being terminated. Questions regarding the audit must be directed to HMS Employer Solutions at 855-424-0849.

decreases the risk of your personal information falling into the wrong hands. Paperless statements help the retirement system to reduce its carbon footprint and save money in printing and postage costs, which can be better used to pay your retirement benefits!

Visit srs.illinois.gov to create a Member Services online account and opt out of paper statements. By registering and using the SRS Member Services website, you can access benefit information, download forms, and view publications. If you need technical support in accessing your account, please call the SRS Help Desk at (217) 782-4202.

GARS Member Snapshot

June 30, 2019

Retired Members

Average current age	72.9
Average age at retirement	60.5
Average monthly retirement benefit	\$5,480
Average years of service credit at retirement	13.7

Total Membership

Active	126
Tier 1	52
Tier 2	74
Retired	323
Survivors	106
Inactive	54
QILDRO	12

Approaching Medicare Age and TRAIL Medicare Advantage

Medicare Advantage plans are a part of Medicare that combine all the benefits of Medicare Part A (hospital coverage) and Medicare Part B (doctor and outpatient care) into one convenient plan. The State's Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plan (MAPD), Total Retiree Advantage Illinois (TRAIL), is designed for State of Illinois retirees and survivors who are Medicare primary. You will be required to participate in the TRAIL plan once you and your insured dependents are Medicare primary to retain your medical, prescription and vision coverage through the State.

The Fall open enrollment period for the State's TRAIL Medicare Advantage plans is generally October 15th – November 15th. If you meet eligibility criteria, you will receive information in late September from the MyBenefits Service Center and/or the Group Insurance Division of CMS. If you have questions regarding your eligibility for TRAIL or want to learn more about the available options, please call the MyBenefits Service Center at 844-251-1777. You can also access insurance benefit information through their website by logging into mybenefits.illinois.gov.

Moved recently? Update your address.

Updating your address is easy. Fill out the Change of Information Form 7501 and mail it to **2101 S. Veterans Parkway, Springfield, Illinois 62704**, email it to gars@srs.illinois.gov, or fax it to **(217) 524-9039**.

You can find Form 7501 on our website under the Forms link.

