

new dimensions



2023 COLA for UCRP benefits recipients

University of California Retirement Plan (UCRP) and UC-PERS Plus 5 Plan benefit recipients, including those receiving survivor and UCRP disability income, will receive a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) effective July 1, 2023. The increase will appear in checks paid on August 1.

Effective July 1, 2023, the COLA rate is 2.90% for those with a retirement date on or before July 1, 2022.

The COLA for UC-PERS Plus 5 benefit recipients is also 2.90% (set as the same as the COLA for UCRP benefit recipients with a retirement date of October 1, 1991).

UCRP benefit recipients are eligible to receive a COLA if they have been retired one full year by July 1. Therefore, those members whose retirement or disability date is after July 1, 2022, are not yet eligible to receive a COLA.

How the COLA is calculated

The 2023 COLA is based on the 5.20% average increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) measured from February 2022 to February 2023 for the Los Angeles and San Francisco metropolitan areas.

The UCRP COLA formula generally matches the annual increase in the CPI up to 2%, plus 75% of the CPI increase in excess of 4%, to a maximum COLA of 6%. This year, all benefit recipients will receive a COLA that is less than the 5.20% increase in the CPI. Therefore,

Tips on health issues as you prepare for travel abroad

With pandemic and travel restrictions eased, many retirees may be getting the bug to journey abroad, visit historical sites and experience various cultures.

If you are thinking of international travel, consider your health, wellness and the possibility of medical emergency as you plan ahead.

Here's some advice to avoid unpleasant surprises or pitfalls.

Insurance

Review your medical insurance to understand what it will and won't cover. (See article, "Medical and

dental coverage outside of the U.S.," on page 4). For example, UC plans do not cover medical care evacuation costs back to the U.S. Also, Medicare does not pay outside the U.S., so you will want to consider additional insurance.

COVID still a concern

Sue Barnes, a UCLA retiree and coordinator of the UC Retirees Travel program, says most of the questions she now gets from travelers are COVID-related.

"While travel, or any group experience, exposes people to COVID and other communicable diseases, travelers can mitigate

their risk by getting all applicable vaccines and boosters, wearing masks when physical distancing is not possible, and handwashing or using hand sanitizer regularly," said Barnes.

Still, she recommends that travelers purchase insurance that includes COVID coverage. "If going on a group tour, insurance can be purchased from the tour provider or another insurance provider of the traveler's choosing," said Barnes. "Some insurance providers offer an annual plan that is cost effective if the traveler is taking more than one trip per year."

continued on page 4

continued on page 2

Dedicated support
for survivors

Page 2

Yes UCAN! Join the UC
Advocacy Network

Page 3

Share your
stories

Page 5

UC Retirement Administration Service Center introduces dedicated support for survivors and beneficiaries

The UC Retirement Administration Service Center (RASC) has met a critical milestone in its strategic initiative to rebuild the center’s operations — the launch of a new team and phone line (888-825-6833) dedicated entirely to serving the survivors and beneficiaries of UC employees and retirees.

This specially trained team will offer a high-touch experience, delivering benefits as quickly and smoothly as possible.

“Our employees work hard for the benefits they leave their loved ones, and we have a responsibility to make sure survivors get the benefits and support they deserve,” said Cheryl Lloyd, Vice President of Systemwide Human Resources and Chief Human Resources Officer. “Our new survivor support team has been recruited and trained to focus solely on helping survivors, with professional, compassionate and efficient service.”

UC’s strategic initiative began with a comprehensive independent review process meant to ensure that the RASC lives up to its commitment to the people it serves. The initiative has grown to encompass a new operating model and leadership team for the center, with substantial additional resources dedicated to serving prospective retirees, retirees, survivors and beneficiaries.

UC Medicare Choice ‘Lunch and Learn’ webinars

United Healthcare will launch a new series of “Lunch and Learn” online presentations to provide UC Medicare Choice members the opportunity to learn about added-value benefits beyond Medicare and ask questions. Presentations will be offered the second Wednesday of each month at 12 p.m. (PST) through September. Members, spouses, family members and caregivers are welcome to attend.

Upcoming presentations are as follow:

Wednesday, May 10 – “**Get After Healthy – A Guide to Fitness and Well Being**” on how to sign up for a free Renew Active gym membership and learn more about Let’s Move, a newly launched well-being program.

Wednesday, June 14 – “**Home Wellness – A Guide to Successful**

Health at Home” on how to transition and recover at home and order your Personal Emergency Response System (PERS).

Wednesday, July 12 – “**Housecalls and You**” will provide information on how to schedule a visit and access the program benefits.

Wednesday, August 9 – “**Caring Connect – Resources for your Caregiver**” on benefits and services for caregivers.

Wednesday, September 13 – “**Emotion Care – Taking Care of your Mental Health**” on accessing behavioral health benefits and unique benefits with the UC Medicare Choice plan.

For additional information visit: uhcvirtualretiree.com/uc/meetings or retiree.uhc.com/uc and scroll to “Virtual Education Center.”

Health Care Facilitators are a valuable resource for retirees

Health Care Facilitators (HCFs) representing each of the UC locations are available throughout the year to help employees, retirees/emeriti, survivors, and eligible family members to resolve health plan issues, optimize your UC coverage and answer your questions. HCFs can also assist with Medicare coordination for those turning 65 years old and transitioning to a UC Medicare plan.

The UC Office of the President now has a HCF, Sharon Adesokan, dedicated to UCOP retirees and employees.

Below is contact information for the Health Care Facilitators at each location who serve retirees:

Campus

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UCOP
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Correction

In the February issue of New Dimensions, we listed the mailing dates of direct deposit statements and checks and the direct deposit posting dates for UCRP monthly retirement, survivor and disability payments. We noted an incorrect deposit date for the June payment. The correct date is June 30, 2023.

Cost-of-living adjustments continued from page 1

retained purchasing power for all UCRP benefit recipients will decrease from last year.

Adjustment to HAPC for inactive UCRP members (“Inactive COLA”)

When inactive UCRP members retire or request a lump sum benefit payment, their benefit is calculated based on the Highest Average Plan Compensation (HAPC) as of their separation date. For inactive members who retire with 1976 Tier service credit or who were Safety or Tier Two Members, their HAPC is increased by the lesser of 2% or the actual increase in the CPI, compounded annually, from the separation date to the date the inactive UCRP member retires or requests a lump sum benefit payment.

Effective July 1, 2023, the Inactive COLA for these inactive members is 2.00% for those with a separation date on or before June 29, 2023.



Yes UCAN! Why you should join the UC Advocacy Network

UC's retirees and emeriti give back to UC long after they've left active employment. That's confirmed year after year in surveys of members of the Council of UC Retiree Associations and the Council of UC Emeriti Associations. Here's why Nicole Carlotto, director of communications and advocacy for the UC Office of Federal Governmental Relations, would love to harness that energy and commitment for the UC Advocacy Network (UCAN).

What is UCAN, and what have you accomplished?

The advocacy network is a grassroots group that speaks out on behalf of UC and its diverse communities at the state and federal level. Our network started out small, but we now represent more than 50,000 people from across the university, all working together to support UC and its people.

We're so proud of what we've been able to accomplish. In just the past year, UCAN advocates successfully pushed for a historic state budget that protects and advances UC's mission. At the federal level, we helped secure the largest increase in the maximum Pell Grant award in more than a decade, a great win for our low-income students. Our advocates also helped rally the UC community to get out and vote – young people had one of the highest voter turnouts in a midterm election in recent history!

UC's retirees and emeriti have a strong record of service. Why is it important for them to add UCAN to their list of priorities?

I'm so impressed by the work UC retirees and emeriti do as individuals — for their communities and for UC. UCAN is another way to make a real difference. The more people who get involved, the stronger our collective voice becomes.

UC is a powerhouse. When we talk, people listen. And that's especially true when we bring together all the people who are part of UC's mission: retirees and emeriti along with students, parents, alumni, faculty and staff. UCAN was developed to leverage that power for UC, for California and for the world.

How can retirees and emeriti make a difference through UCAN?

The first step is to join. It's quick and easy. Just go to ucal.us/ucan and provide your email to sign up. We'll send you a few emails a month with updates about the issues we're fighting for and how you can help. If you want to tell us about yourself and the issues that matter most to you, we'd really appreciate it.

With UCAN, you decide how you'd like to take part. It can be as simple as adding your name to a petition or sending an email to lawmakers

on an issue you feel strongly about. We provide sample messaging that you are free to use or adapt and our tools automate the process of reaching your elected representatives. You'll never be asked for money or pressured to do more than you're comfortable doing. You can opt out of our emails at any time, and of course we never share our lists of supporters with any other organizations.

What are your top priorities for 2023?

UCAN is nimble enough to respond to issues as they arise, allowing us to lend our voice when and where it's most urgently needed. But our primary goals never change: We want to ensure that UC can offer an affordable, high-quality college education to California students; we want to secure public investments in our life-changing research, protect access to world-class health care through our medical enterprise, and protect and support UC's most vulnerable students.

Any final thoughts?

Joining UCAN is easy — and it really makes a difference. Just visit ucal.us/pledge or text "UC PLEDGE" to 52886 to sign up for our periodic emails. Thank you so much!

Travel abroad continued from page 1

UC offers personal travel insurance for retirees, employees, students, alumni, and their traveling companions. Learn more at www.ucop.edu/risk-services-travel/personal.html.

Certain credit cards offer some level of travel insurance if the card is used to pay for the trip, so check for coverage you may get from them, Barnes advises.

Vaccinations

There are different vaccinations required for each country. Some countries require visitors to carry an International Certificate of Vaccination, called a “yellow card,” as proof of inoculations. Research online for country-specific updates and information and contact the foreign embassy of the country you’re visiting or transiting through for their requirements. For more information, visit the CDC’s Traveler’s Health site at: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/before-travel.

Medications

Keep several days of medications close at hand. It’s critical for air travel because access to checked bags is impossible and flight delays create a time crunch if you need to medicate multiple times a day. Also, bags can be lost compounding the problem. If you take a liquid medication, get documentation from your doctor stating your need to carry that medication. You should also carry a letter from your physician describing your condition and listing your medications. Leave prescriptions in their original containers. Pharmacists overseas are often unfamiliar with American brand names, so know the generic names.

Know how to find care

If you’re traveling on your own, learn simple steps that can help, like knowing how to dial the “911 equivalent” in each country you visit. If you need medical help, contact the U.S. embassy or consulate of the country you’re visiting for help locating medical services.



They’ll be able to direct you to medical facilities where English is spoken, and help you transfer funds from the U.S., if necessary.

Design a health kit

Prepare a travel health kit, which should include your medications and first-aid items. A well-packed travel health kit is one that can be carried with you at all times and is ready to aid any potential problems. You’ll need a small, portable kit with the essentials and slightly larger kit left in your suitcases or hotel room to “re-supply” your smaller, portable kit.

When designing a travel health kit, look at several factors: What are your pre-existing medical needs? How long are you going to be

travelling for? Where are you going? What are you going to be doing?

Other packing essentials

In addition to health and wellness tips, Sue Barnes of the UC Retirees Travel program suggests packing these items: copies of your passport, debit and credit cards in case originals are lost or stolen; undergarment neck wallet or money belt; sewing kit; translator app on your smart phone; device chargers and small power strip; correct power adapters and converters; zip ties, small roll of duct tape, rubber bands; collapsible walking stick; and depending on weather forecasts, raincoat, rain pants, waterproof shoes and gloves, sun hat or visor.

Medical and dental coverage outside US

If you’re planning to travel or live abroad, it’s important to check with your health plan to find out about your coverage and costs outside the U.S. All of UC’s medical and dental plans cover emergency/urgent care and prescription drugs wherever you are but plans differ in their coverage of follow-up and continued care.

A few things are important to note regardless of your medical plan:

- You should expect to pay your costs out-of-pocket and file for reimbursement.
- UC’s pharmacy plans cover the same prescription drugs outside the U.S. Since prescription drugs have different brand names outside the U.S., though, it’s crucial that the prescriber specifies the active ingredient(s) on the prescription.

- Evacuation costs back to the U.S. for medical care are not covered by UC’s medical plans. Consider purchasing a travel insurance plan that includes coverage for medical evacuation.

HMO plans

When you’re traveling, medical and dental HMO plans only cover emergency/urgent care. (For medical HMOs, coverage extends only to trips that are less than three months duration.) Medical HMO plans do not cover elective procedures, services or medications while outside the U.S. You’ll need to return to network providers in the US for follow-up and continued medical and/or dental treatment. HMO members must live in a covered region within California. If you plan to remain outside the U.S. for more than three months, it is consid-

ered a “life event” that allows you to switch to a PPO plan outside Open Enrollment.

PPO plans

Whether you’re traveling or living outside the U.S., PPO plans will pay for emergency/urgent care (any services provided as part of treatment for the specific emergency or urgent care visit).

Medicare plans

Medicare does not cover care received outside the US, so your coverage outside the U.S. comes only from your UC health plan. This means that if you have a Medicare PPO plan you may be responsible for the portion of the costs that would normally be covered by Medicare. You should check the international benefits of your plan since UC plans differ in coverage outside the U.S.

Cartoons more than just doodling



Gary Handman
Librarian
UC Berkeley

I retired as a librarian from Berkeley in 2012. In the years following, I have amused myself by cartooning — obsessively, my dear wife would say.

I’ve cartooned for many years as a side-hustle for magazines, books and other publications. But the pandemic shifted my doodling into a desperate new realm. Throughout 2020 and 2021, I kept a daily

cartoon, “Journal of the Plague Year,” which I foisted on friends and the public at large via Facebook and Instagram.

It seemed to give succor and a bit of badly needed levity to those who cared to tune in. The project also helped me keep my own existential crises somewhat at bay. Although I didn’t get any takers as far as print publication goes, the *Los Angeles Times* gave me a nice bit of press. I’ll take whichever 15 minutes of fame I can get.

Since then, I’ve been churning out a daily “On This Day” ‘toon panel highlighting various historical events, personages, heroes and hellions that tickle my often arcane and perverted fancy. Both the plague journal and the historical panels are viewable on my Instagram account: *@ghandman*

From writing history to penning novels



Lauro Martines
Professor Emeritus
UCLA Department of History

At the age of 94, (I’m now 95) I published a second novel, *Chronicle of a Good-Looking Family* (Cogito, 2022). This is not, however, as startling as it may seem *prima facie*, for I was married to a distinguished Irish novelist for 63 years, Julia O’Faolain (d. 2020).

After retiring from UCLA’s History Department in 1992, I moved with Julia to our house in London, where I continued to write history, my last

venture into it being *Furies: War in Europe, 1450-1700*. But along the way I also published a first novel, *Loredana: A Venetian Tale* in 2004.

After the publication of *Furies*, losing the intellectual tenacity to go on writing history and doing research, I turned to writing fiction again, and the result was my new novel, *Chronicle of a Good-Looking Family*. It ranges over three generations of a family (circa 1950-2015), and moves back and forth between Florence and Chicago, where I was born, although I know Florence more intimately as an adult, because four of my books are based on six years of research in the state archives of Florence.

Chronicle is a story about love, treachery, passion, and murder. But being — if I may say — a literary novel, it unfolds without sensationalism. I wrote it with zest and pleasure because I began with two characters, not with a plot, and let their doings and emerging personalities wind into a tale. Writing the book turned into a process of discovery for me.

Share Your Stories

Doing something interesting in your retirement or at your UC Retirement Center? Tell your story in New Dimensions. Email us at *NewDimensions-L@ucop.edu*.

UC’s retiree and emeriti associations and UC Retirement Centers use online communications to interact with retirees and emeriti about services and programs. Go to *ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/retirees/associations.html* for a list of emeriti and retiree associations and Retirement Center contacts. If you have moved away from your home campus, you are welcome to affiliate with the association or center near where you live.

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RASC:
800-888-8267,
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., PT

UCRAYS:
retirementatyourservice.ucop.edu

UCnet:
ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/retirees

Want to go green?

Consider signing up for the electronic version of *New Dimensions*. Go to *retirementatyourservice.ucop.edu*, select “Edit Profile,” click “Communication Preferences,” under “Communication Type,” go to “Newsletters and other General Information” and select “Email.”

Explore the world with UC Retirees Travel

UC retirees have been traveling the world on group tours with UC Retirees Travel, discovering iconic sites and exploring off-the-beaten path destinations.

Already this year — with UC Retirees Travel — nearly 100 retirees and their guests have explored Egypt, South Africa, Spain/Portugal, Japan, and Ireland.

As of press time, limited space remains for 2023 tours to Greece, Cuba and a music cities holiday tour of New Orleans, Memphis and Nashville. Trips for 2024 are filling up, so early registration is advised for tours of Costa Rica, Tunisia, Australia/New Zealand, Japan, Sicily, Morocco, England and France (memorials of

WWII to recognize the 80th anniversary of D-Day), Scotland, Croatia (a yacht cruise), and more.

By participating in UC Retirees Travel, you help to support to the Council of UC Retirees Associations (CUCRA). CUCRA is comprised of volunteer retirees from each of the UC retiree associations, who meet with UC Office of the President representatives twice per year and advocate for retiree benefits and services.



Traveling UC retirees at a Japan home visit: Left to right, Reba Yu, UCLA ; Sandra Norberg, UCSF; Martha Kegeles, sister of Susan Kegeles, UCSF; Rita Lambert, UC Davis; sitting, Susan Kegeles

For more information, visit the UC Retirees Travel website at cucra.ucsd.edu/travel or email UCRetireesTravel@gmail.com.



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News from the UC Retirement Savings Program

Through Deferred Lifetime Income, UC Retirement Savings Program (DC, 403(b) and 457(b)) participants between ages 62 and 69 can convert a portion of their retirement savings into fixed monthly payments that will begin at age 78.

The dates that you may do so are Sept. 1 to 26.

You will receive more information on Deferred Lifetime Income in the coming months. Visit myUCretirement.com/income to learn to learn how Deferred Lifetime Income works, review the Decision Guide, and access resources to help you decide whether it's right for you.

Webinar series successful

In March, UC launched the first webinar of the UC Confident Retiree webinars series.

More than 770 retirees and family member attended the “Five Steps To A More Financially Secure Retirement” session, which was held on March 21.

Actionable steps to make the most of retirement income and savings were discussed in this webinar, with a focus on how to address key challenges such as inflation and market volatility. Visit myUCretirement.com and select "In Retirement" to view the recording of the webinar. You can also go to this site to keep an eye out for upcoming webinars in this series.

If you have ideas for future retiree webinar topics, please send them to UCRSwebinars@ucop.edu.

Get more UC news for you.

Visit UCnet at:
ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu