



LOS ANGELES COUNTY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION • MARCH 2010 • VOL. 21, NO. 1

Why It's Important to Have a Special Durable Power of Attorney on File



Having a LACERA Special Durable Power of Attorney on file assures you that LACERA will be able to handle your retirement benefits without interruption and in accordance with your wishes, should you become unable to handle your own affairs.

Things to Know About Our Power of Attorney

The LACERA Special Durable Power of Attorney is a legal document, executed by a member, which **designates another person (called**

an Attorney-In-Fact) to act on the member's behalf with regard to retirement matters only. This can include such matters as address changes, making tax withholding elections, requesting information regarding benefit payments, filing applications, and endorsing checks.

It's important to understand that a Power of Attorney does not prevent a member from taking care of his or her own retirement affairs. However, in the event a member with a Special Durable

Power of Attorney on file becomes too ill to handle his or her affairs, the member's designated Attorney-In-Fact will be able to handle the member's retirement matters.

A member has the right to revoke or terminate a LACERA Power of Attorney at any time, as long as he or she is competent. If the member doesn't revoke the document, it terminates upon the member's death.

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Upcoming Holidays



LACERA will be closed on:

- Monday, May 31
in observance of
Memorial Day.

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Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association

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From the **Executive Desk**

Gregg Rademacher – CEO, LACERA



OUR CORNERSTONES

When I think about what we do here at LACERA and how we go about doing it, two things always come to mind: investments and customer service.

These two elements summarize our operation. The County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 promises Los Angeles County employees certain benefits and authorizes LACERA to pay them. To accomplish this, the law directs us to grow and administer the retirement fund.

Investments: As we all know, the Fund finances the benefits we provide. To promote the long-term growth and stability of the Fund, our Board of Investments has established an Investment Policy Statement which guides the management of the Fund's assets. This prudently planned and executed investment strategy is designed to maximize the continuing strength of the Fund. The Policy calls for a diversified portfolio, carefully balanced to minimize risk and maximize the Fund's long-term health and stability. Although LACERA is not immune to the impact of market volatility, we continue to employ solid investment and business strategies designed to serve the best interests of our current and future members and their beneficiaries. With that in mind, we can all remain confident about the ongoing soundness of the Fund.

Customer Service: Most of you are probably more familiar with our customer service programs than you are with our investment operations. As anyone who has been assisted by our Call Center or Public Counter, or through our workshops knows, attentive customer service is the other cornerstone of our business.

Our all-encompassing services begin the moment a new hire becomes a LACERA member and receives a New Member Guide and continue throughout the member's career to retirement... and beyond. After the member is gone, our service continues through benefits we provide to the member's eligible beneficiary. The services we offer take many forms, from printed materials to workshops, to services available by phone and on lacera.com.

Despite the current trend to transform call centers into automated response centers, where callers are forced to interact with machines in hopes of receiving assistance, **our Call Center is live... and will remain that way.** Callers to LACERA receive friendly, personalized assistance from Retirement Benefits Specialists, because that's the level of service our members deserve. Although technology plays an important role in the scope and format of service options we provide (we continually add online service enhancements), it is the men and women who comprise our highly trained staff who make the greatest impact on customer service.

Congratulations!

Robbins Appointed to Board of Retirement



We congratulate Les Robbins on his appointment to the Board of Retirement (BOR) by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Mr. Robbins will serve a three-year term as the BOR's Fifth Member. A retired Los Angeles County Sheriff with a distinguished

record of service, Mr. Robbins has been active in public affairs for many years. In addition to prior service on LACERA boards, he has served on the Long Beach City Council and numerous civic and professional committees. Experienced in matters affecting Los Angeles County employees, Mr. Robbins first served on the BOR in 1998. Since that

time he has represented the interests of County employees in a variety of BOR and Board of Investment positions, including a previous term as BOR chair. In its January meeting, the members of the BOR elected Mr. Robbins 2010 BOR Chair. Additional biographical information on Mr. Robbins is available in the Boards section of lacera.com.

For The Record Book

- 118 people visited LACERA's Public Counter on Monday, February 1, 2010. This is a single-day record.
- In December 2009, 1,185 people visited our Public Counter, setting a new record. The previous record for visits in one month was 1,158, set in December 2005.
- On March 6, 2006, the Call Center received 1,472 calls; this set a record for calls received in a single day.

Inside My LACERA

My LACERA continues to add content and interactive features.

If you haven't visited My LACERA lately, check it out!

View and/or print PDFs of your:

- Automated deposit receipts (ADR)
- 1099-Rs

LACERA retirees, survivors, and ex-spouses (as well as active employees) can register to use My LACERA.* **Look for My LACERA on the lacera.com homepage.**

Connect with your personal retirement network on My LACERA — register now!



**Ex-spouses must call 1-800-786-6464 to register.*

SCAN Health Plan Expands Coverage to Northern California

The LACERA-administered SCAN Health Plan now serves seniors with Medicare Parts A & B in Santa Clara, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties. Southern California coverage continues in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Kern, and Ventura counties. SCAN coverage is also available in Maricopa County in Arizona. To confirm a service area, call SCAN Health Plan at 1-877-212-7654.

From the Executive Desk cont'd from pg. 2

If you have experienced one-on-one counseling at our Public Counter, attended one of our regularly scheduled educational workshops, or placed one of the 120,000+ calls individually answered each year by our Call Center, you know service with a personal touch is never out of style at LACERA.

The personal touch is also in full force "behind the scenes." From paying new retirees within one payroll cycle of their retirement date, to making sure benefits are seamlessly processed and paid to

eligible new survivors, to assisting active members with Plan transfers and purchases of prior government service, our staff is dedicated to providing efficient, personalized customer service.

It is through the guidance of our boards and our adherence to a strategic investment policy and extensive program of personalized member services, that we diligently uphold the promise made to County employees in 1937.

STAYING HEALTHY TOGETHER

Vol. 4, Issue #1 • March 2010

Staying Healthy Together: Focus On Aging Gracefully

The focus of Staying Healthy Together in 2010 is on aging gracefully and the benefits it has to offer. The concept, which celebrates life and the process of aging, recognizes the importance of body harmony in overall health. Body harmony refers to the connection between physical, emotional, mental, social, and behavioral factors and overall health. Let's take a look at some of the factors — **body, mind, and soul** — that can affect an individual's health.

Eating

Food is our body's fuel; the better the fuel, the better your body will run. What you eat and don't eat can have a tremendous impact on your overall health. In fact, a healthy diet can help reduce your risk of developing certain health conditions, including stroke, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, as well as boost your energy level and mental acuity. Adding whole grains, fruits, vegetables, fiber, and fish to your diet, while reducing foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol are ways to improve the quality of your diet.

Portion control is an important facet of healthy eating. According to the National Institute of Health, most people in the United States eat more calories than they need. With the gigantic meals restaurants serve today, many of us may have forgotten what a normal portion looks like. To manage portion sizes when eating out, stick with small or medium portions for meals and

beverages. Resist the urge to supersize! If the main dish is too big, set aside half on your plate and ask for a "take home" box or split the meal with a friend.

Take your time eating and enjoy your food. Your body takes 15 to 20 minutes to let you know you're full, so eating your meal at a slower pace can help prevent overeating.

Start with small changes.

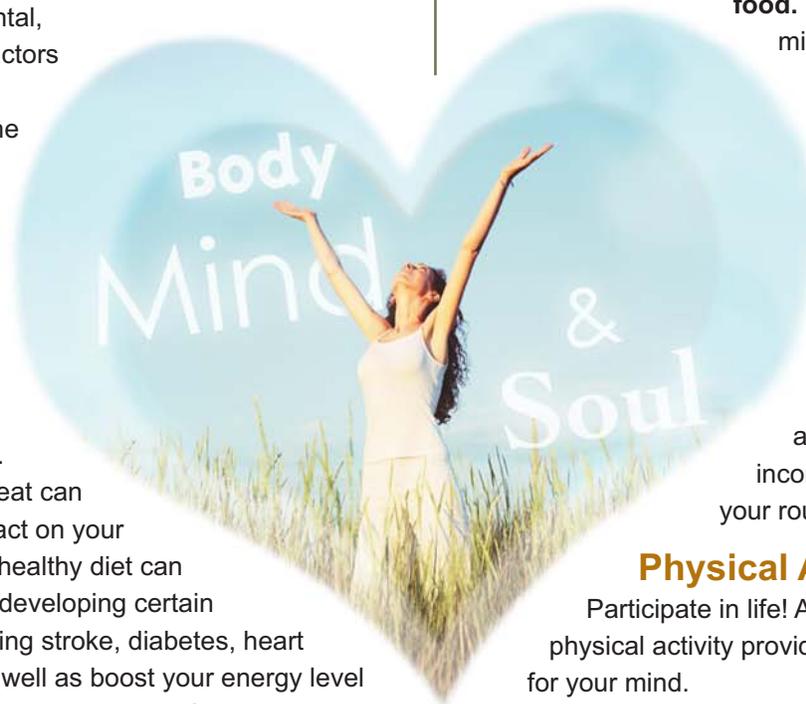
If overhauling your entire diet sounds overwhelming, you can start by making small adjustments and gradually incorporate the changes into your routine.

Physical Activity

Participate in life! Almost any kind of regular physical activity provides benefits for your body and for your mind.

Common benefits of exercise:

- Regulates blood pressure and good cholesterol
- Reduces the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, depression, and certain types of cancer
- Increases bone density, which helps prevent osteoporosis
- Improves balance and reflexes, which can reduce the risk of accidents and falls
- Increases energy and helps you feel better



Exercise can also help you lose weight. For some people, losing even five to 10 pounds can have a significant impact on their overall health.

You don't have to run a marathon every day to be physically active. Staying active can be as simple as taking the stairs instead of the elevator, going for a walk around your neighborhood, or even gardening. As long as you are on your feet and moving around, you're taking an important step toward improving and maintaining your physical fitness.

You are never too old to exercise! There are a variety of activities seniors can do on a regular basis to stay active and improve their physical fitness. Find a routine that you enjoy and get started — you will notice results soon.

Important: Remember to check with your doctor before starting any exercise program to make sure it's the right fit for you and your goals.

Mental Fitness

Your mind is just like a muscle — the more you use it, the longer it's likely to stay fit. While physical exercise and diet contribute to your overall mental health, the most important activity for improving your mental health is mental exercise. Just like strengthening your body with physical exercise, you can strengthen your brain by taking on mental challenges such as enrolling in a new class, reading a book, or solving a puzzle.

Stress

Stress can be defined as a physical, mental, or emotional response to events that causes physical or mental tension. In other words, **stress is any outside force or event that has an effect on our body or mind.** Too much stress can negatively impact a person's health in a number of ways. Common effects of stress include headaches, high blood pressure, hyperventilation (rapid breathing which can cause dizziness and other unpleasant symptoms), anxiety, and teeth clenching. Stress can also weaken your immune system and/or lead to depression, heart attack, or stroke. Stress can be caused by a variety of things including life cycle transitions, health problems, and difficulties with family or friends. **There are some causes of stress you can't change, but you can always control how you react to the stress.** Exercise is a great way to counteract stress; it actually changes the body's stress response. Meditation is

another effective stress-reduction tool. Research has shown that just a few minutes in meditation can restore calm and inner peace. You can also relieve stress by doing something you enjoy or by simply taking a break for a few minutes and focusing your mind on something else. Try a change of scenery — even a walk outdoors can give you a new outlook on a situation.

Soul

Having the love and support of friends and loved ones feeds the soul. **Spending time with friends, family, and community adds balance to our lives.** People who have a rich social network tend to stay emotionally and mentally balanced longer and age more gracefully — so get out there today, interact with new people and get involved.

Find an activity you're passionate about. Joining a group of people with interests similar to yours is a good way to get involved. Choose activities that get you out of the house and engaged with people. It's a great way to cultivate new relationships.

As you expand your social circle, take care to maintain the close relationships you have with the people most important in your life. Make time to enjoy intimate moments with your spouse or domestic partner. Maintaining intimacy also plays a role in aging gracefully. People who remain active and intimate tend to live longer and happier lives.

Start Today

Making healthy changes in your life provides results at any age and has a direct result on your physical and emotional health. You can start making healthy changes today.

Sources: AARP Magazine, The Mayo Clinic, webmd.com, nih.gov, Natural Solutions Magazine



AGING GRACEFULLY: ACTIVITY CHART, LINKS TO MORE RESOURCES

Visit lacera.com, Health Care, Staying Healthy Together

Have Fun, Practice What You Learned, Mingle with Fellow Retirees —

Attend a Staying Healthy Together Workshop

Your invitation is coming soon! Plan to attend one of our free Staying Healthy Together Workshops in April:

• Monday, April 19: Diamond Bar Center, Diamond Bar

• Tuesday, April 20: Pickwick Gardens, Burbank

This year, our semiannual Staying Healthy Together workshops will give you an opportunity to put things you learn about Aging Gracefully into action. **The spring and fall workshops will feature educational presentations, along with fun activities that incorporate healthy habits and concepts associated with aging gracefully.** Representatives

of LACERA-administered health care plans will lead the workshop activities, present valuable educational information, host interactive booths, and answer any questions you may have.

Get started now, so you'll be ready to participate in the interactive portion of the April workshops.

The workshop invitation coming in the mail includes an Activity Log. Use it to keep track of your body, mind, and soul activities. You'll be able to use that information at the workshop to learn effective ways, personalized to your lifestyle, to age gracefully. Bring your completed log to the April workshop to get an extra raffle ticket for great prizes.

REMINDER

2010 IRS Additional Withholding for Pensions

You pay more withholding tax in 2010 and have fewer surprises on **April 15, 2011**

Read more in the Retired Member section of lacera.com or call **1-800-786-6464**

Did You Know

Defined Benefit (DB) Plans

LACERA's COLA (cost-of-living) programs provide inflation protection.

- Whenever there is an increase in the Consumer Price Index over the prior year, retirees and survivors receive an annual COLA benefit.

Defined Contribution (DC) Plans

No cost-of-living program included.

- No protection against inflation.

Frequently Asked Questions | FAQs |

FAQs: Medicare Part B Reimbursement

1. My Social Security Statement shows my Part B Premium for 2010 is \$96.50. Do I qualify to receive the \$110.50 reimbursement?

A: No. You qualify for the standard reimbursement rate of \$96.40.

2. Will a copy of my 2009 SSA-1099 from Social Security suffice as proof for Part B reimbursement?

A: No. An SSA-1099 shows the **total** Social Security benefits you received in the previous year; it is not valid proof of your **monthly** 2010 Part B premium payment amount. You must submit a copy of your 2010 Social Security Statement to verify your Part B premium.

3. My Medicare Part B premium amount is \$96.40 and I'm currently receiving a reimbursement of \$96.40. What must I do to continue receiving my reimbursement?

A: No action on your part is required. You will continue to receive the reimbursement of \$96.40.

2.0 Percent COLA Approved for 2010

At its February 11th meeting, the Board of Retirement (BOR) approved a **+2.0 percent 2010 COLA adjustment** for retirees and eligible survivors, effective April 1, 2010. The increase is based on the change in the cost of living from December 2008 to December 2009, as reflected in the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all Urban Consumers in the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County area.

Plan B, C, D, and E retirees and eligible survivors will receive a 2.0 percent increase, which is the maximum allowed by their Plans.*

Plan A retirees and eligible survivors with retirement dates prior to April 1, 2005, will draw 1.0 percent from their COLA Accumulations to supplement the increase to receive the maximum 3.0 percent allowed by their Plan. Plan A retirees and survivors with retirement dates of April 1, 2005, and later will receive a 2.0 percent increase because they have no accrued COLA Accumulations from which to draw.**

Retirees and eligible survivors in all Plans will see an increase in their allowances beginning with their April 30, 2010 checks.

COLA Accumulation

According to the law, the Board must accumulate the difference between any CPI percentage change and the maximum percentage allowable in each Plan, **and use it to fund or supplement a future COLA benefit (as is the case this year for Plan A retirees)**. The accumulated

Retirement Dates	Plan	Maximum Cost of Living	CPI Change	COLA ACCUMULATION			
				As of April '09	April '10 Additions	April '10 Withdrawals	As of April '10
Prior to 4/1/81	A	3.0%	2.0%	17.0%	0.0%	1.0%	16.0%
4/1/81 – 3/31/82	A	3.0%	2.0%	10.7%	0.0%	1.0%	9.7%
4/1/82 – 3/31/83	A	3.0%	2.0%	6.6%	0.0%	1.0%	5.6%
4/1/83 – 3/31/84	A	3.0%	2.0%	6.5%	0.0%	1.0%	5.5%
4/1/84 – 3/31/85	A	3.0%	2.0%	5.2%	0.0%	1.0%	4.2%
4/1/85 – 3/31/86	A	3.0%	2.0%	3.7%	0.0%	1.0%	2.7%
4/1/86 – 3/31/87	A	3.0%	2.0%	2.9%	0.0%	1.0%	1.9%
4/1/87 – 3/31/88	A	3.0%	2.0%	2.8%	0.0%	1.0%	1.8%
4/1/88 – 3/31/05	A	3.0%	2.0%	1.4%	0.0%	1.0%	0.4%
4/1/05 – 3/31/09	A	3.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4/1/09 – 3/31/10	A	3.0%	2.0%	-----	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4/1/77 – 3/31/90	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	18.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.0%
4/1/90 – 3/31/91	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	15.4%	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%
4/1/91 – 3/31/92	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	10.8%	0.0%	0.0%	10.8%
4/1/92 – 3/31/00	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	10.2%	0.0%	0.0%	10.2%
4/1/00 – 3/31/01	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	9.9%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%
4/1/01 – 3/31/02	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	8.2%	0.0%	0.0%	8.2%
4/1/02 – 3/31/03	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	8.1%	0.0%	0.0%	8.1%
4/1/03 – 3/31/05	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	6.4%	0.0%	0.0%	6.4%
4/1/05 – 3/31/06	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%
4/1/06 – 3/31/07	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%
4/1/07 – 3/31/08	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
4/1/08 – 3/31/09	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4/1/09 – 3/31/10	B, C, D	2.0%	2.0%	-----	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6/4/02 – 3/31/03	E	2.0%	2.0%	8.1%	0.0%	0.0%	8.1%
4/1/03 – 3/31/05	E	2.0%	2.0%	6.4%	0.0%	0.0%	6.4%
4/1/05 – 3/31/06	E	2.0%	2.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%
4/1/06 – 3/31/07	E	2.0%	2.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%
4/1/07 – 3/31/08	E	2.0%	2.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
4/1/08 – 3/31/09	E	2.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4/1/09 – 3/31/10	E	2.0%	2.0%	-----	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

percentage carryover is known as the COLA Accumulation. Because the +2.0 percent 2010 COLA does not exceed the maximum percentage change allowable in any Plan, no deposits will be made to the COLA Accumulation in 2010.

COLA Accumulations for Plans B, C, D, and E remain unchanged from 2009. For additional information on COLA and COLA Accumulations, visit the Retired Member section of lacera.com.

**Plan E COLA increases apply only to service credit earned after June 4, 2002. Plan E members who retired after June 4, 2002 will receive up to a 2.0 percent COLA increase. The portion of the 2.0 percent COLA is based upon a ratio defined as the months of service earned after June 4, 2002, divided by the total months of service.*

***Retirement date also applies to survivors of LACERA retirees who died during that period.*



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Power of Attorney
 cont'd from pg. 1

What Durable Means

Durable means the Power of Attorney remains in effect even if the member becomes mentally incapacitated, whereas a general Power of Attorney terminates upon the member becoming mentally incapacitated. Both instruments terminate upon the member's death.

Why Our Power of Attorney is "Special"

LACERA's Special Durable Power of Attorney is "special" because it applies

only to LACERA retirement matters. It provides no authority over a member's other real or personal property, nor can it be used for health care matters.

Who Can Be an Attorney-In-Fact

You may designate anyone over the age of 18 to act as your Attorney-In-Fact. However, the actions LACERA permits your Attorney-In-Fact to take on your behalf vary according to your designee's relationship to you. Some actions depend on whether your designee is

your spouse or domestic partner, a blood relative, or a neutral party not related by blood, marriage, or domestic partnership.

For Additional Information

Read our Power of Attorney brochure for details on Attorney-In-Fact relationships.

Consult an attorney before executing any Power of Attorney. LACERA does not provide legal advice.



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Spotlight_{on retirement}
FEATURED ARTICLE:
COLA Approved for 2010

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