

ASK The Welfare Fund – September 2008

The New York City Office of Labor Relations mailed the reimbursements for 2007 Medicare Part-B reimbursements in August. If you not received a check, and think that you should have received a reimbursement, please call the welfare fund at 718-624-2600 or email me at dhathaway@csawf.org and we will follow up with the city for you. This reimbursement of what you pay for Medicare Part-B is not sent because the city feels generous, but is just one part of the comprehensive salary and benefit package that has been negotiated for you through years of collective bargaining, and negotiations.

Question: I am an active principal, and I set up a medical spending account this year to shelter some of my income from taxes. I just bought contact lenses, but the spending plan wouldn't reimburse me for them until the CSA Welfare Fund paid. I thought I could select the place that would pay the best and submit the bill to that source. Can you help me?

Answer: Sure. Medical spending accounts, also sometimes called flexible spending accounts, allow an employee to set aside a portion of salary to pay for excess medical costs. The money is put in the account before taxes, thus reducing your taxable income. While this sounds like a great deal, you have discovered one of the many "gotchas" that come with these plans. The funds you put in this type of account may only be used for medical expenses, only after your other benefits have paid their maximum, and can only be used to cover expenses for you or a dependent covered by your city-provided basic health plan. In addition, any funds set aside but not used cannot be returned at year end and are lost. We applied our optical benefit to your contact lens purchase, and gave you a letter for the medical spending account indicating that you had used our maximum benefit for the year. Additional information on these accounts may be found at: xxxxx).

Question: I am a retired EA, and just had several implants. The SIDS payment helped, but I still have a large amount of unreimbursed costs. A few years ago I had a crown placed, and received a check from something called "Fund B". Does Fund B still exist, and can I submit my costs for reimbursement?

Answer: Yes, Fund B still exists, but you need not submit anything. Since you joined the old RSSA when you retired, you are eligible to be a part of Fund B. Fund B checks, both for medical and dental expenses, are generated automatically twice a year. We are putting the finishing touches on the reimbursements for the charges incurred between February

1 2008 and July 31, 2008, and you should receive your Fund B check by the end of September.