

From our Board of Pensions representative, the Rev. Dr. Doug Portz:

Hi! I hope you are doing well amid the current “shelter in place” situation. As you know, I am the Church Consultant from the Board of Pensions for your presbytery and region, I want to reach out to you to let you know of the resources that can be helpful to you, your staff and congregation at this critical time. Please know that those of us at the Board of Pensions continue to pray for pastors and congregations across the region!

Here’s an overview of the resources we can offer you in the immediate circumstances:

- Real-time updated information about benefits, support and information about the Coronavirus impact on churches and benefits coverages can be found on www.pensions.org.
- The Board is providing 100% coverage of Coronavirus testing costs for members of all Board medical plans.
- The Board is waiving Teledoc copays for all medical plan members through June 30, 2020. Access [Teladoc 24/7 online](#), or by calling **800-835-2362**.
- One-time Emergency Assistance Grants are available for emergency or unexpected needs for plan members (not churches). Contact your Presbytery to start an application process.
- Churches experiencing financial hardship should contact Employer Services.
 - Staff members’ benefits will continue!
 - Employer Services can be reached at **800-773-7752**; 8:30 am – 5:00 pm, M-F.
 - Watch for future information from the Board of Pensions about dues relief. ** (After April 3rd more news to come)
- **Note:** If a church furlough’s a staff person, and the person falls below the 20 hours/week eligibility threshold for medical coverage, if the church continues to pay for coverage, the Board of Pensions will waive the 20 hour/wk. threshold to continue to cover the employee.
- Be sure to check out the articles on www.pcusa.org regarding the CARES Act passed by congress that offers non-profits loans and grants, etc.
- Make use of the **Employee Assistance Program** that offers counseling services to all medical plan members and *all residents of their households!*
 - Call Cigna Behavioral Health at **866-640-2772**. You’ll speak to an EAP advocate and that person can give you an authorization number to access other services (no ID card needed). mycigna.com Use “pcusa” for Employee’s Employer ID
 - Free 24-hour support line. In addition to EAP services for active Medical Plan members, Cigna is offering a separate 24-hour toll-free help line to support resiliency during this time of high stress and anxiety. Employees who are not eligible for the EAP and retired members can call **866-912-1687** to connect with qualified clinicians, including licensed social workers, professional counselors, and psychologists, who can provide support and guidance.

I hope this information is helpful to you and your congregation.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Member Services at 800-773-7752 or you may contact me at my work cell 267-788-4962 or at dportz@pensions.org. There are a few more changes coming to the plan for 2021 which I know you will want to know about.