

# BENEFITS RETIREE E-NEWSLETTER



In March 2021, the affiliate agreement between Highmark, Inc. and HealthNow New York Inc. was completed.

As such, in October 2021, the organization began updating and mailing members new health insurance cards with the updated name and logo.

We have received notification from our account representative that during January 13 – February 4, Buffalo Public Schools enrollees will receive new health insurance cards in the mail.

The purpose of this is to update the cards to reflect the updated name **Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York.**

All of the benefits associated with your insurance and prescription plans remain the same.

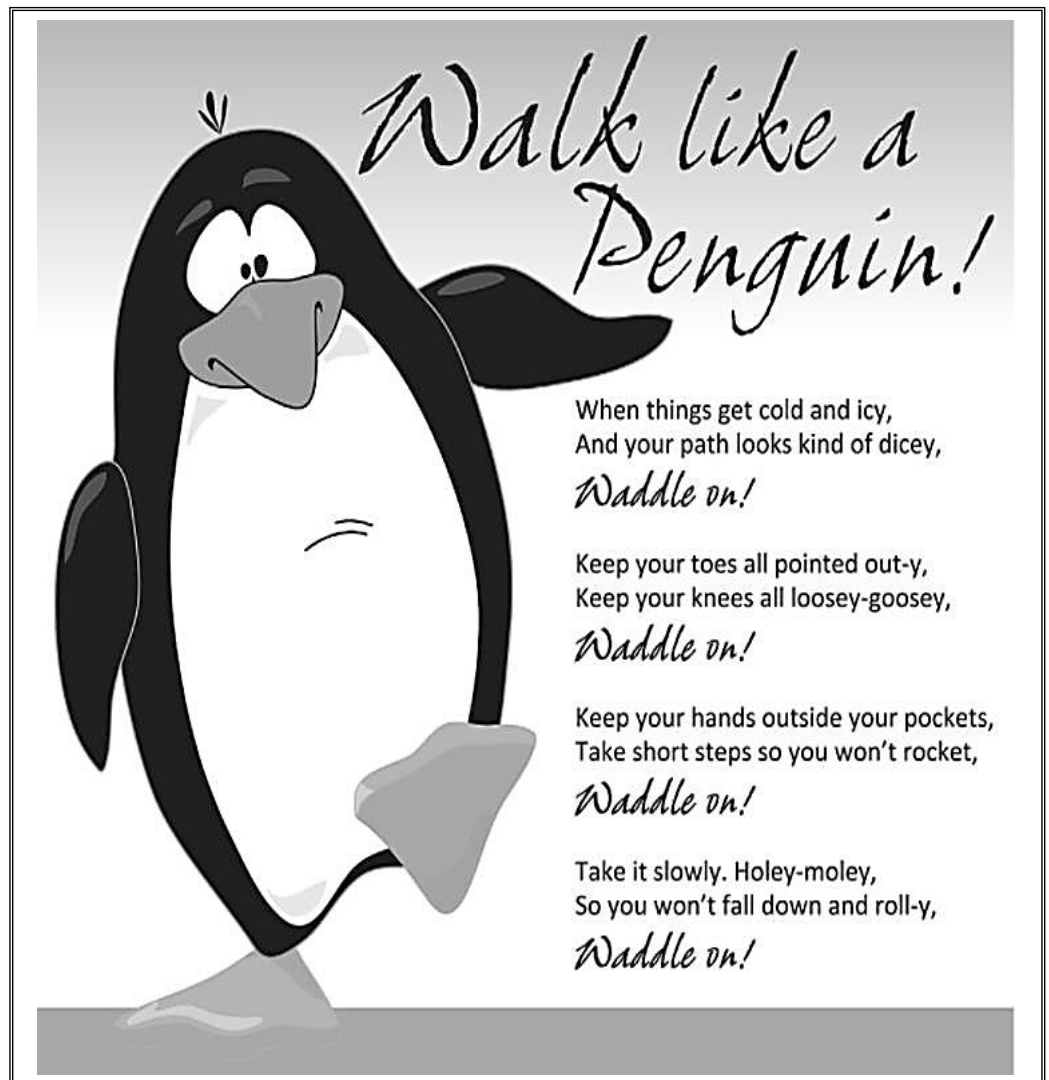
Please call customer service at 1-888-299-2263 after February 4, 2022, if you do not receive a new card.



Although Buffalo City Hall has reopened to the public, retirees are discouraged from coming to City Hall due to the on-going health crisis. Retiree health insurance payments are NOT ACCEPTED at City Hall.

Payments are to be mailed directly to: City of Buffalo – BPS  
P.O. Box 10695  
Albany, NY 12201-5695

Remaining payments are due the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, July, and October. We currently do not have the capacity to accept over the phone payments.



## TURNING 65....?

Upon Medicare eligibility (age 65 or earlier if on Social Security Disability for 24+ months or have received a diagnosis of ESRD or ALS) you (and/or your spouse) **contractually must** enroll in Medicare Parts A and B.

**Medicare Part A** (hospital insurance) helps pay for inpatient care in a hospital or limited time at a skilled nursing facility (following a hospital stay). Part A also pays for some home health care and hospice care\*

**Medicare Part B** (medical insurance) helps pay for services from doctors and other health care providers, outpatient care, home health care, durable medical equipment, and some preventative services\*

<https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/>

If you're eligible at age 65, your initial enrollment period begins three months before your 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. To find out more about Medicare enrollment, please visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or [www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/).

Depending upon the date of retirement, BCSA, PCTEA and #264 Medicare eligible retirees will be transferred to Forever Blue, a Medicare Advantage Plan with Highmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield of WNY. The Passport Plan, through Independent Health, is a Medicare Advantage Plan available to all other retirees upon Medicare eligibility. Please visit [buffaloschools.org/benefits](http://buffaloschools.org/benefits) to view this plan information or we can mail a marketing packet to you to explore!

Medicare Advantage Plans are offered by Medicare-approved private companies that must follow rules set by Medicare; Medicare benefits are administered by these private companies.

You will typically receive a letter from the Benefits office 60-90 days prior to your 65<sup>th</sup> birthday with general information. It is your responsibility to notify the office if you become eligible for Medicare at an earlier age. Failure to do so may jeopardize your insurance coverage.

## Remember

**BCSA RETIREES (only):** The deadline for submitting your 2021 Social Security Statement (SSA 1099) to the Benefits Office is February 18, 2022.

Forms can be faxed to (716) 851-3587 or emailed to [benefits@buffaloschools.org](mailto:benefits@buffaloschools.org).

## DID YOU KNOW...

answers to many of your questions can be found by visiting [www.buffaloschools.org/benefits](http://www.buffaloschools.org/benefits) and your questions can be emailed to [benefits@buffaloschools.org](mailto:benefits@buffaloschools.org)

