

Town Hall call for Retirees - AT&T Should Bargain Retiree Health Care

Wed, 11/06/2013 - 9:11pm

Retiree Healthcare call November 6, 2013

Thousands of retirees were on tonight's town hall call and the following information was shared.

AT&T refused to bargain healthcare during bargaining. Increasing cost of healthcare impacts wages and pension. We have 185,000 retirees, with only 30,000 retiree chapter members.

The National discussed history on bargaining and provided background on why the healthcare cost have risen. The company capped how much they would pay per member per year to \$12,500, the defined dollar benefit, which is the most that they will contribute per retiree. They have refused to bargain with the union since 2006. The union continues to try to get the company to do the right thing and bargain retiree healthcare but to no avail. Retirees are a permissive subject of bargaining and the company is allowed to refuse us per the National Labor Relations Act. At this time AT&T only informs the union of the changes, and we receive the input and make our proposals, but they continue to implement as they see fit. AT&T has been steadfast in their determination to not pay more than the \$12,500 DDB but healthcare continues to rise. The Alternative Medical Option is a lower level of benefit with lower monthly payment, and this is just another attempt to drive down the cost.

Healthcare Policy Changes

AT&T recently announced that in 2015 they will begin providing Medicare retiree's healthcare through a private exchange carrier.

The announcement was made early in order to give retirees a heads up. AT&T has just begun researching, and have selected a vendor. Medicare will still be in place, what will change is the secondary coverage which will be exchange provided through another vendor who will handle enrollment and administration.

The plan will probably include a variety of insurances that will over a variety of plans, although we do not know very much about the new policy change. This is not the same as the healthcare exchanges under the Affordable Care Act (OBamaCare). It is expected that AT&T will make final decisions in sometime

mid-2014 and the union will continue to send out information as soon as we are informed.

Some questions answered:

Will the Affordable Care Act have an Impact on the retiree healthcare?

The ACA is not geared toward retirees, instead is designed for the 48 million Americans who do not have healthcare.

What does the Affordable Care Act do and does it affect my Medicare?

- There is no negative impact on Medicare.
- People can shop for coverage.
- Covers preventative at no charge.
- Closes Medicare Prescription donut hole over a period of years and by 2020 there will be no hole.

What does the Affordable Care Act do?

- Provides coverage for our kids till age 26.
- Insurance companies can no longer charge women more than men.
- Insurers cannot deny coverage because of pre-existing conditions.
- Requires that insurance companies to spend at least 80 percent of premiums on healthcare and quality improvement activities -- or issue a rebate to customers.

When do I have to enroll by?

Based on the recent retiree reaction there are many questions for AT&T so every enrollment period has been extended by two weeks.

Retiree Mobilization has begun:

President Dave Skotarczyk Local 4050 from Michigan a retiree from At&t long line has begun a campaign that he hopes will extend into help for retirees in 2015. They are asking that everyone send a letter and an email to CEO Randall Stephenson asking him to bargain for retirees. He is also asking all Retiree chapters nationwide to have a mobilization activity on this. This will be a nationwide effort. Let the public know that we are not happy with our retirement healthcare. This is an opportunity to capitalize on the 185,000 retirees nationwide to start a movement. Local 4050 /4090 Retirees have begun mobilizations efforts that began with a rally in Detroit [click here for video](#)

Retirees are invited to access the national website at CWA-union.org to sign up for CWA Newsletter. Join the retired members club [at this link](#), where there will be a recording of tonight's call in a couple of days.