

REGIONALINKS



January 2013



Benefits Connect Tip:

Communicate with the Board through New Benefits Connect Message Center

Active and retired members, surviving covered partners, and church treasurers and benefits administrators who have registered for Benefits Connect will now see a link to the Message Center in the left-hand navigation on the site. The easy-to-use Message Center enables you to securely communicate with the Board. You can even attach files that may be helpful in resolving an issue. And the Board's replies to your messages are also protected by Benefits Connect's multiple security controls.

Webinars Update Church Leaders on Medical Dues Recommendation; Replay Available

The Board of Pensions recently hosted live webinars for invited church leaders that discussed the [recommendation for a change](#) to the dues structure for the Traditional Program of the Medical Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Each one-hour webinar was co-hosted by a Regional Representative and the Board's Senior Vice President of Benefits.

The webinars hosted approximately 320 attendees, who listened to an informative discussion that addressed topics including

- an explanation of the recommended approach to medical dues;
- the reasons why the Healthcare Committee of the Board of Directors of the Board of Pensions recommended this approach;
- the key considerations the new medical dues model attempts to address.

The discussion was followed by a question-and-answer period. Attendees were given the opportunity to pre-submit questions to the Board or chat them live during the webinar. Questions that were addressed included

- Will the flat premium for covered partner plus children vary according to the number of children?
- Does this recommendation need to go to General Assembly for decision?
- How would this affect clergy couples?
- What will be the role of the presbytery if this new model is approved?

A comprehensive [summary of all questions posed and the answers provided](#) during the webinars is available on pensions.org. A [replay of the webinar](#) also is available on pensions.org.

The Board of Directors of the Board of Pensions is scheduled to vote on the medical dues recommendation at its March meeting. More information will be provided after the vote, if approved. The new model would then take effect January 1, 2014.

Board Partners with Presbyterian Churches To Assist New Jersey Residents Affected by Hurricane Sandy

Board of Pensions staff members partnered with Point Pleasant Presbyterian Church and Manasquan Presbyterian Church -- both located along the Central New Jersey coastline -- to assist residents affected by Hurricane Sandy. They dedicated a day of service to helping people whose homes had been devastated by the super storm with their recovery efforts.

Read the [pensions.org news article](#) to learn more about how the Board and the Presbyterian community along the Jersey Shore came together to help those in need.

Mark Your Calendar: Tax Tips Web Module Available Beginning January 24

The Tax Tips Web Module for active and retired teaching elders, as well as churches, will be available on pensions.org beginning January 24 -- just in time for tax season. The module is prerecorded, so you can access it 24/7 and as often as you like.

For more information on the Tax Tips Web Module, including some of the topics addressed, read the [pensions.org news article](#).

Board's New Web Series Can Help You Better Manage Your Personal Finances

Board University, the Board's education program, has added a series of personal finance Web modules to its offerings. These five- to 30-minute lessons focus on the fundamentals of managing your finances, such as setting financial goals, creating a budget, managing debt, and saving for college. Several also include useful tools such as worksheets and resource lists that you can use to start getting yourself on track.

The series introduction and the first lesson, "Taking the 30-Day Financial Challenge," [are now available through pensions.org](#). As the title of the first lesson suggests, it offers a 30-day challenge -- the first, and crucial, step in heading in the right financial direction. By tracking your finances for 30 days, you'll heighten your awareness of how and where you are spending. Once you've pinned these down, you can set goals and begin the financial planning process that will help you reach these goals.

While the series is not intended as financial, tax, or legal advice -- you should always consult a financial or tax adviser for advice about your specific circumstances -- watching these Web modules and accessing the tools may be just the launching pad you need to begin establishing a secure financial future.