

Q: What would the health benefits bill do?

It seeks sweeping changes for **new** and **current** active members in districts that participate in the School Employees' Health Benefits Program (SEHBP), as well as **future retirees who are not already enrolled in PERS or TPAF** and who will receive post-retirement medical benefits through the SEHBP. Among the changes are:

- mandatory premium sharing (1.5% of salary) for all current active members in the SEHBP;
- mandatory premium sharing (1.5% of pension) for new members of the pension system who retire after a minimum of 25 years of service;
- 25-hour minimum work week for new members to participate in SEHBP;
- changes to SHBP would automatically apply to SEHBP;
- limits on health insurance waivers;
- no opportunity for duplicate coverage or coordination of benefits within state health insurance plans.

Q: How would mandatory premium sharing affect current members enrolled in the SEHBP?

The legislation mandates that all employees enrolled in the SEHBP pay 1.5% of **base salary** toward their health insurance premium. It would apply only at the end of a current collective bargaining agreement. It would **NOT** be subject to collective bargaining, but would simply be imposed. It would be **in addition** to any other premium sharing the parties negotiated.

Q: How would mandatory premium sharing in the SEHBP affect future retirees?

Current NJEA retirees in the SEHBP do not pay any portion of their health insurance premium. Active employees have also been promised a premium-free medical benefit in retirement. This legislation would end that promise for new employees. They would be required to pay 1.5% of their pension toward the cost of their medical insurance.

Q: How would the minimum work-week requirement affect new employees?

Currently, active employees must work at least 20 hours per week to qualify for coverage under the SEHBP. That number can be negotiated higher in collective bargaining. This bill would set that number at a minimum of 25 hours for new employees to be eligible for health benefits.

Q: How would changes in the SHBP affect the SEHBP?

Under the legislation, changes to the SHBP (such as deductibles, coverage or plan offerings) negotiated by state workers would be automatically applied to all participants in all state health plans, including SEHBP. That would result in most changes to the SEHBP being controlled by negotiations with state workers, in which NJEA members have no voice.