



# PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES

State Association Office

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## President's Report for 2022

Happy New Year 2023 from all at the State Office. Vice President-Treasurer Paul Sebasovich, State Secretary Vickie Bailey, Administrative Assistant Judy Janis and Fiscal Assistant Jodi Boal join me in wishing all of you a safe new year.

Much has happened over the past year, and I want to review some of the most significant items/accomplishments.

1. Most of the chapters have returned to hosting meetings although the effects of Covid have caused challenges as familiar places closed, finding new venues is challenging and higher costs for meals. However, the members are happy to reconnect with old friends and it is our hope that normalcy will return to chapter meetings. Watch for announcements about meetings from your chapter and plan to attend a meeting.
2. The PARSE membership has continued to grow in most part due to the mailings that PISI/AMBA has done to potential members. At the end of 2022 PARSE is approaching 34,000 members.
3. The 50th annual Governing Board meeting was held in Gettysburg, we returned to the Wyndham Hotel. This year we added an extra day to the meeting to give delegates an opportunity to visit this historic site.
4. The Governing Board delegates voted to make 2 significant changes to the bylaws. The first is to have the State Office do the dues collection for all chapters and the second was a change to allow any PARSE member to serve as an officer at either the Chapter or State level.
5. Also, at the Governing Board meeting Paul Sebasovich was elected Vice President-Treasurer replacing Allen Hanse who stepped down after many years of service to PARSE. We wish Allan well in his second retirement and Paul in his new career.
6. Our contract with Davis Vision was coming to an end in 2022. We approached them and they were anxious to keep PARSE as a client and proposed a new 5-year contract with no rate increases for the life of the contract. The Benefits committee recommended this contract to the delegates who then formally approved the new contract which went into effect November 1, 2022.
7. Refinements were made to the online dues payment system and over 9,000 members used that secure process to pay their 2023 dues.
8. In July the State Office moved to new offices only a few miles from where we had been. All staff are very pleased with this new and well-maintained building.
9. Because of Covid the regional meetings were once again held via Zoom, but the plan is to return to live meetings in the Spring.
10. We learned that Lehigh Valley Hospital announced that they would no longer accept Aetna insurance. We contacted the Office of Administration and learned they were aware of this announcement and were working to retain the hospital in the Aetna network. I am pleased to report that the OA's efforts were successful, and the hospital will continue to accept Aetna.

11. Similarly, a large dental provider in Harrisburg advised their patients that they would no longer accept United Concordia insurance. PISI/AMBA was immediately contacted and after negotiations that provider remained with United Concordia. That negotiation resulted in a significant new benefit for our members as we are now part of the Elite Prime network. This has more providers and pays higher reimbursements to the provider. This change was made at no cost to the PARSE policy holders.
12. Our Government Relations group, NOVAK Strategic Advisors, has continued to represent PARSE in Harrisburg and arrange introductions for me. They also hosted our first 'Day on the Hill' event and several delegates and Regional Vice Presidents attended. NOVAK arranged meetings with elected officials representing the areas where the attendees lived, and all agreed it was a successful event. As you know there were numerous changes because of the election last November. NOVAK will begin to coordinate introductions for PARSE with the new leadership particularly related to appropriations.
13. The hearing benefit PARSE offers has for many years been provided by Hear In America. TruHearing, a much larger organization, has absorbed Hear In America. What this means for PARSE members is a larger network of providers, deeper discounts, an online hearing assessment tool and all the current benefits. As you know OTC (over the counter) devices have been approved by the FDA and as policies are developed, they will be available by TruHearing.
14. Your 2023 dues are now due and if you have not yet paid your dues, please do so ASAP. If you are unsure if you paid you can contact the State Office. Those who have not paid their dues by late February will receive a reminder invoice.
15. As for 2023, what follows are some plans for the year: In addition to the 35,000-member goal we also want to look at an online application process. Most new retirees today are comfortable with technology and are requesting an online system. We will continue to work with OA on our medical benefits, an extremely valuable benefit but one that is not guaranteed. Our goal is to keep those benefits for our members and all retirees. I have also submitted a RTK (Right to Know) request to the retirement system for retiree information. While, if granted, it will not have address or phone information, there will be other data that might help us identify potential members. We will also be looking at our phone system and changes to better support staff when remote work is needed because of weather or any other reason.
16. Finally, if you have issues like the ones mentioned above (#10 & 11) let your chapter or the state office know. We can't address a problem if we are unaware of an issue.

Sincerely,

*Thomas B Judge*

Tom Judge, President PARSE