

President's Report for 2021

Happy New Year 2022 from all at the State Office. Vice President-Treasurer Allan Hansen, State Secretary Vickie Bailey, Administrative Assistant Judy Janis and Fiscal Assistant Jodi Boal join me in wishing all of you a safe new year. The Covid-19 challenges continue to impact all our lives, but we have been able to keep the office running and PARSE growing.

I also know that sadly we have lost PARSE members to Covid and no doubt some of you have also lost family members and friends to this insidious disease. We extend our deepest sympathies to all who have had any losses.

I would like to review some PARSE highlights of 2021 and some things to accomplish in 2022:

1. The most important note is that PARSE has continued to grow. As of the end of 2021 we have over 32,000 members. I recall not too many years ago I was celebrating when we reached the 20,000-member threshold.
2. PISI/AMBA has done multiple mailings to potential members, and these have been very successful and in fact account for most of the membership growth.
3. Many chapters have still not been able to hold meetings. The regional meetings for 2021 were not in-person but a combination of Zoom and conference calls.
4. We were able to have the annual meeting in September. The venue was at the Wyndham Hotel in Historic Gettysburg. The attendees were all very happy with this location and we will be using that venue for the next 2 years. At the meeting the delegates affirmed the change to have a Vice-President/Treasurer position.
5. 2022 will mark the 50th year for PARSE and I hope that we can find some ways to make this a special year celebrating that milestone.
6. We made changes to the online payment to make it easier for members to use. The response has been positive with over 7,000 members paying dues online. We will continue to refine that system to simplify use for members using their smart phones and tablets.
7. As I reported previously, we issued an RFP (Request for Proposal) for dental services. In the end United Concordia had the lowest offer and we signed a new contract with them. The contract is for 5 years and there is no rate increase for the first 3 years.
8. We are in the final year of a contract with Davis Vision and will be doing a similar process to ensure that we get the best program and rates for our members. In future letters/newsletters we will keep you updated on that process (the contract with Davis Vision runs thru October 2022).
9. Our new Government Relations group, NOVAK Strategic Advisors, has been a positive for PARSE. They have arranged numerous meetings for me, both live and using Zoom, with Senators and

Representatives in Harrisburg. My message is consistent with everyone I meet – make sure the required funding for the pension system is made each year, also as important is the funding for our medical benefits. NOVAK also watches for any legislation that could be of benefit for retirees but more importantly any legislation that could be detrimental to retirees.

10. We added a new staff member to the State Office when Judy Janis was hired initially as a receptionist but was subsequently moved to the position of Administrative Assistant.
11. We had a contact from a member who was concerned that the Medical Transportation benefit available to retirees thru Aetna was not working as promised. We discussed this with the Office of Administration (OA), and they reported that neither they nor PEBTF were aware of any issues. The advice I received from OA was to have members contact Aetna as this is a contracted service they provide for medical transportation. The Aetna number is 1-888-272-5651.
12. Please note: PISI is our insurance agent and part of their job is to represent you when you have issues or problems with dental or vision insurance. We highly recommend that if you have a concern call PISI not United Concordia or Davis Vision. PISI's number is 1-800-382-1352.
13. We also want to bring to your attention a problem one member reported with the Hear in America program. When the member went for the appointment, she was asked for her insurance information and paid co-pays. Hear in America did address this problem and the member was reimbursed. The point you all need to understand is that the program we have offers a free hearing evaluation and there are no costs or obligation to our members. If the test indicates that some type of hearing device is needed it will be offered to you at a discount.
14. The 2022 PARSE dues are now due, if you have not yet paid, please do so ASAP.
15. PISI/AMBA has a team of benefit advisors who may contact you about insurance you already have or other programs available to PARSE members. I want to be very clear to all members that you are under no obligation to purchase any of these products.
16. As with everyone we had hoped that the worst of the Corona Virus was behind us and that chapters would be able to resume meetings. This most recent variation, Omicron, may have changed some plans. Vaccination is a personal choice as is the booster but for your own safety and that of family and friends I encourage all members to take advantage of these measures.
17. Also, a word of caution on some of the promotions you see on TV about Medicare Advantage plans with dental, vision included for no or little cost. Before you drop your Commonwealth AETNA insurance for any replacement plan compare the coverage details.
18. The following are some of our goals for 2022:
 - Retain current members and grow the membership to 35,000.
 - Continue to enhance the online payment system.
 - Have the regional meetings but again they will Zoom/conference calls.
 - Continue to add functions to the PARSE membership system.
 - Celebrate the 50th annual meeting in grand style.

Sincerely,

Tom Judge, President PARSE