



303 Mulberry Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050-3179
Phone: 717-766-7441
Website: www.susumc.org

After extensive discernment and prayer by the leadership of the annual conference, the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits shares two changes regarding HRA (Health Reimbursement Account) stipends that will affect retired clergy. Because of emerging financial realities through the budget process and a result of disaffiliation, difficult yet necessary changes have been made.

The first change is a proposed 25% reduction in the yearly HRA stipend for currently participating retired clergy and their spouses. We recognize this reduction may place a financial burden on retired United Methodist clergy and/or their spouses. Our top priority is to care for our faithful United Methodist retirees, so we encourage those who this decision affects in unmanageable ways to make use of other available funding sources beyond HRA stipends. The Bishop's office should be contacted in such situations.

The second is a policy change from the Board of Pension and Health Benefits pertaining to retirees who are already receiving an HRA stipend but are surrendering their credentials as a clergy person in the United Methodist Church. As a reminder, per The Book of Discipline, the HRA plan and its contributions are not vested, which means that they are not guaranteed to continue as there is no contractual right to receive HRA contributions or stipends.

Already retired clergy who are receiving HRA stipends but choose to surrender their credentials from the United Methodist Church will also relinquish eligibility for future HRA stipends for themselves and their spouse. Effective December 31, 2023, Via benefits and HRA participation will be terminated. Retired clergy who have surrendered credentials by this date will have a period of six months to submit claims incurred prior to the date of the conclusion of HRA qualification. All unused HRA monies, including those which have been carried over from previous years, will be ineligible for use after the six month claims submission period. Questions on a claim should be directed to [Via Benefits](#) and Via will follow up accordingly as needed.

Any additional questions about these changes should be directed to the Conference benefits administrator, Jason Mackey.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Michelle R. Bodle
Chair, Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits