



Keep your Member Services contact information up to date to receive the latest news, announcements or deadlines by email, letter or call.

## Your benefit statement

*Enclosed with this Solon is your current retiree/survivor benefit statement. This statement contains detailed information about your GARS benefits.*

*You may change your beneficiaries at any time by completing and filing Form 7101 (Beneficiary Nomination) with GARS.*

*Remember, your group life insurance beneficiaries are separate from your GARS beneficiaries. The Minnesota Life Insurance Company, a Securian brand, maintains your life insurance beneficiary information. To update your life insurance beneficiaries, contact Minnesota Life at 888-202-5525. Their office hours are Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.*

*If you have questions about your statement, call us at 217-782-8500.*

*Due to the recent implementation of a new insurance system by the Department of Central Management Services (CMS), we are unable to provide the same level of detail regarding your insurance coverage and premiums as was provided in previous annual statements. The staff of GARS continues to work with CMS and their vendor to improve the functionality and accuracy of the new system.*



## Announcing our annuitant trustee

Representative Daniel Pierce will continue to serve as the annuitant trustee on the Board of Trustees of the General Assembly Retirement System. No election was necessary, as Representative Pierce was the only annuitant who filed the necessary paperwork. Representative Pierce will continue to serve the four-year term through January 31, 2021.

The Honorable Daniel M. Pierce is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School and remains a practicing attorney. He served 20 years in the House of Representatives where he was Minority Whip, Chairman of the House Revenue & Environment Committees and the Economic & Fiscal Commission.

After returning from the General Assembly, he served as Mayor of Highland Park for 12 years and President of the North Shore Sanitary District, the second largest water reclamation district in the state. A veteran of the Korean conflict, Dan also attended the University of Chicago, Graduate School of Business. He resides in Highland Park with his wife Rhoda. They have five adult sons and six grandchildren. *Congratulations, Representative Pierce!*

## Tax Information

### 1099-R

In January, the Office of the Comptroller mailed IRS Form 1099-R for 2016 GARS benefit payments to all annuitants and survivors. These payments must be reported on IRS Form 1040 under the Income section (Pensions and annuities).

### Federal income tax withholding

You may have noticed a slight change in the amount of federal tax deducted from your GARS benefit payment due to revised federal withholding tables that went into effect on January 1, 2017.

If you need to change the amount of your federal tax withholding, you must submit a new W-4P to GARS. The W-4P is available at [srs.illinois.gov](http://srs.illinois.gov), under the Forms link. The new W-4P may be submitted at any time throughout the year.

If you need to have additional tax withheld for other income, such as interest, dividends, capital gains, rents, alimony, taxable Social Security benefits, etc., you can submit a new W-4P to GARS at any time.

You should contact a qualified tax advisor or an IRS representative at 800-829-1040 with questions about your taxes, including withholdings.

Check out our Member Services website  
[memberservices.srs.illinois.gov](http://memberservices.srs.illinois.gov)



## Pharmacies miss half of dangerous drug combinations

The Tribune reporter walked into an Evanston CVS pharmacy carrying two prescriptions: one for a common antibiotic, the other for a popular anti-cholesterol drug.

Taken alone, these two drugs, clarithromycin and simvastatin, are relatively safe. But taken together they can cause a severe breakdown in muscle tissue and lead to kidney failure and death.

When the reporter tried to fill the prescriptions, the pharmacist should have warned him of the dangers. But that's not what happened. The two medications were packaged, labeled and sold within minutes, without a word of caution.

The same thing happened when a reporter presented prescriptions for a different potentially deadly drug pair at a Walgreens on the Magnificent Mile.

And at a Wal-Mart in Evergreen Park, a Jewel-Osco in River Forest and a Kmart in Springfield.

In the largest and most comprehensive study of its kind, the Tribune tested 255 pharmacies to see how often stores would dispense dangerous drug pairs without warning patients. Fifty-two percent of the pharmacies sold the medications without mentioning the potential interaction, striking evidence of an industrywide failure that places millions of consumers at risk.

To read the entire article, visit [chicagotribune.com/news/watchdog/druginteractions/ct-drug-interactions-pharmacy-met-20161214-story.html](http://chicagotribune.com/news/watchdog/druginteractions/ct-drug-interactions-pharmacy-met-20161214-story.html).



## Paying too much for prescriptions?

Downloading the app **GoodRx** can save you up to 80% on your prescription drugs. It's available for Apple and Android devices, and the app is made to locate and compare drug prices, coupons, discounts and savings tips. You can even have a discount savings card sent to you to take to your pharmacy visits.

## Minnesota Life is now Securian

Minnesota Life has adopted its parent company's brand, Securian Financial Group, Inc. (Securian). The website's statement regarding the branding update reads, "You will not see any changes to your life insurance coverage amount or premium rates as a result of this change, but you will see the new identity reflected in correspondence and materials you receive from the company."

Contact Securian with questions regarding your group life insurance policies.

### GARS Member Snapshot

June 30, 2016

#### Retired Members

Average age	72.9
Average monthly retirement benefit	\$5,009
Average years of service credit at retirement	13.5

#### Total Membership

Active	141
Retired	299

## Moved recently? Update your address.

Updating your address is easy. Fill out Member Change of Address/ Member Information Form 7501 and mail it to us or email it to [gars@srs.illinois.gov](mailto:gars@srs.illinois.gov).

You can find Form 7501 on our website under the Forms link.

# Did you know?

**8 GARS members  
retired during FY2016**

