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Email the LookOut Staff

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ORS leader in new call center technology

On December 7, ORS will deploy Virtual Hold Technology (VHT). This best-in-class call center solution will provide better service to our phone customers by allowing them to choose between waiting on hold or having us call them back once the line is free.



Here's how the process will work. After navigating our phone prompts like usual, ORS customers in high-volume queues, like insurance, will be given an estimated wait time and then prompted to choose between waiting on hold or hanging up and receiving a return call when it's their turn. If customers choose a return call, VHT will call them back, ask them to verify their identity, ask if they'd like to proceed with the call, and then patch them through to an appropriate person. The process should be transparent to all ORS call agents.

Laurie Mitchell, VHT project manager said, "Although this will not reduce wait times, this is one way we can show our customers that we're tuned into their needs and respectful of their time."

This is also a prime example of DTMB's shared solutions initiative. Because ORS is the first state agency to implement technology like this, we're paving the way for other agencies with call centers to do the same. The Michigan Enterprise Call Center (miEcc) and Accenture (our call center service provider) are watching this project very carefully and taking the lessons learned for implementations at both the Michigan Department of State and the Unemployment Insurance Agency.

This project combines efforts from ORS, AST, miECC, Accenture, and Genesys (our call center software provider). Thanks to everyone involved, including **Joe Brown, Jeanne Fox, Marla Milton, Laurie Mitchell, Angie Parkhurst, Nate Parrish, Elaine Scott, Tim Simpson, and Ben Southwell** from CS, and **Alan Becker** from AST.

Calendar

November

Daylight Saving Time ends	6
Election Day	8

Updates to drug plan save ORS millions

Each year, BPD and vendor partners review the ORS Strategic Health Care Plan for the upcoming year. They review quality improvement and cost control measures to make sure we provide a top tier health care plan that is affordable for retirees and school systems.



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Thanksgiving	24

The retirement board has approved BPD's plan for 2012 which will reduce costs by **\$48.1 million!** The plan is good news for members because it keeps premium costs and updates reasonable.

Here's what our public school retirees will see starting January 1, 2012.

Monthly premiums for members will stay nearly the same as in 2011, and the basics of their health care benefits will stay the same. However, members will pay \$100 more for both deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums.

- On the Horizon**
- State employees board meeting - December 1
 - EPC Brown Bag lunch - December 7
 - Public school board meeting - December 8

Medicare eligible members will return to a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (PDP). Catalyst Rx will continue to be the retirement system's pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) and will administer non-Medicare contracts. Medco will administer the Medicare PDP with Catalyst Rx oversight.

Medicare eligible members will be automatically enrolled in the PDP. Medco will mail pre- and post-enrollment materials to members letting them know about plan changes at the end of November.

Prescription drug plan ID cards will be separate from health insurance cards. Medicare members will get theirs in early December, and non-Medicare members will get theirs in the spring of 2012.

Members should receive information about these updates in a few weeks. Until December 1, customers should contact Catalyst Rx with questions. After December 1, customers should use the contact numbers below:

- Non-Medicare members: Catalyst Rx at (866) 288-5209
- Medicare members: Medco at (866) 544-2916

- Quick Links**
- [ORS Member Website](#)
 - [ORS Employer Website](#)

Formulary updates take effect January 1, 2012. Several drugs that are now available in full-strength over the counter were removed from the formulary, and certain lifestyle drugs like Viagra were removed, but members can use Catalyst's negotiated discount to get those drugs at reduced cost.

Commonly Used Acronyms

AST	Application Support Team
BLA	Business Leadership Assembly (EPC, BPOs, and BPLs)
BPD	Benefit Plan Design
BPL	Business Process Leader
BPO	Business Process Owner
CE	Customer Education
CS	Customer Service
DB	Defined Benefit
DC	Defined Contribution
DTMB	Department of Technology, Management and Budget
EPC	Executive Process Council (Phil, Laurie H, Laurie M, and Anthony)
EPO	Executive Process Owner
ER	Employer Reporting
ORS	Office of Retirement

The Strategic Health Care Initiative is one of many ways that BPD ensures quality plans at affordable prices. Look for more news on BPD's efforts in the next issue of the *LookOut*.

Usability team tests miAccount and website

For the past several months, PS and CE have worked with DTMB's User Experience Team (UXT) to prepare for an overhaul of miAccount and the ORS member websites. Last week, the team conducted a usability test of both miAccount and the member websites at MDOT's usability testing lab.

Kim LaClear, Laurie Hill, and Robin Stremlow, along with several UXT members, observed the testers go through several scenarios ranging from updating their address and applying for retirement to researching the website to find preretirement information. All testers were active state employees in the DB plan but had a range of computer skills and knowledge of their retirement plan.

The testers encountered many of the same issues that we've known about and are attempting to fix, but the observers did notice a few new problems. For example,



Last Friday, ORS and UXT met to organize the usability test's findings and discuss next steps.

	Services
PRIM	Preretirement Information Meeting (<i>public school employees</i>)
PRO	Preretirement Orientation (<i>state employees</i>)
PS	Process Support
SME	Subject Matter Expert
UAT	User Acceptance Testing

the naming conventions on the website aren't as self-explanatory as we thought, users often didn't realize what the equated plan was, and many wished for a confirmation page in the Apply for Retirement section before having to submit their retirement application.

But although there were some trouble spots, testers found many of the transactions simple and the information very helpful. For example, everyone breezed through the banking section of the retirement application, and were able to update their addresses easily. They also liked the website's Countdown to Retirement page.

UXT will now observe users actually applying for retirement to note similarities and differences between the usability testing and the real-life process. They will also conduct in-depth interviews with many members, including retirees, to understand their overall thoughts of both products.

The miAccount and website redesign project will continue through much of 2012, so stay tuned for progress updates as we proceed through the usability and design stages.

ORS Strategic Goals



- **Innovate and Improve Customer Service**
- **Best In Class Business Practices**
- **Instill Confidence in Staff Through Quality Communication**
- **Engage Top Talent to Realize Potential**
- **Continuously Renewed Business-Driven Technology**
- **Build Business Capacity Through Education and Development**
- **Proactive Policy Development and Legislative Strategy**

ORS refreshes Balanced Scorecard

ORS, along with the rest of state government, is refining the measurements used in the Balanced Scorecard. The Balanced Scorecard is a strategic measuring tool that allows managers to monitor the key set of activities that drive success and determine how the organization is performing.

The Balanced Scorecard is considered balanced when it focuses not just on financial dimensions but also other important areas such as customers, internal processes, and employee learning and growth.

ORS has been collecting measurements for the Balanced Scorecard for years, but we're now taking a fresh look at the items collected to ensure the right activities are being measured and that we've set appropriate targets.

Andy Kolp is meeting with BPOs and representatives from Michigan's Office of Enterprise Development to facilitate the scorecard's redesign.

"Under the direction of ORS leadership, the BPOs are building their own process scorecards," said Andy. "I'm asking key questions about what they need to measure to determine process performance. We then decide which of those measurements should roll up to the full ORS Balanced Scorecard."

The redesigned ORS Balanced Scorecard is expected to be available near the end of this month.



Possible six-month wait for insurance takes effect

Effective October 1, 2011, public school members who do not submit the required insurance documents by the last day of their retirement effective date month will have to wait six months before their insurances take effect. This typically affects dependent insurances for our public school applicants. The ORS website will be updated shortly, and our publications and other communications will be updated as soon as possible.

New fees for Pension Plus members

Last week, administrative fees were deducted from Pension Plus



members' ING investment accounts. The amount assessed was based on the member's account balance at the end of each quarter since October 1, 2010. Going forward, a \$51 per year administrative fee will be deducted on a quarterly basis (\$12.75 per quarter), and will be reflected on statements from ING. Members will be notified about the new fees in an upcoming newsletter and in their January statements; members should contact ING with any questions.

Retiree medical, drug information meetings

Now through November 14, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) and Catalyst Rx are conducting annual information meetings across the state for our public school retirees. All BCBSM and Catalyst Rx members received an invitation to attend these sessions and get their questions answered about medical or prescription drug coverage. Similar meetings will also be held in Florida and Arizona shortly after the first of the year.

Phil quoted in *Detroit Free Press*

The *Detroit Free Press* quoted ORS Director **Phil Stoddard** in a column on the benefits of using professional investment advice when managing retirement monies. The article noted that 34 percent of ORS members use professional advice, ranging from online features to a Financial Engines professional account manager. [Click here to read the article.](#)



ER speaks at MSBO/MDE workshop

On Wednesday, **Steve Crippen** and **John Donovan** spoke at an East Lansing workshop hosted by Michigan School Board Officials (MSBO) and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The pair discussed the new pension tax law, ORS's next steps for the Pension Plus plan, and P.A. 54 of 2011, which prohibits the payments of retroactive wages for labor contracts that have expired.

Efforts like this are part of ER's Outreach program which provides us an opportunity to have face-to-face contact with our customers. It also provides our customers an opportunity to hear what's going on at ORS and to ask questions. ER participates in several of these events each year.

CS team celebrates staff with weekly kudos

The people at ORS do great work, and four times a year the *LookOut* dedicates an issue to kudos to recognize staff for their efforts, and CS regularly publishes kudos in the KL. But one team in CS has developed an additional way to acknowledge staff on a regular basis with just an ounce of extra effort.

Lisa Braun asked her teammates to email her kudos as they happen. At their team meetings, she passes out the complete list and everyone takes turns reading them aloud. The kudos are all-inclusive: the team can thank whomever for whatever they want, from helping find some last-minute information to just being a great team player.

It only takes a few minutes to submit the kudos and a few minutes to read them at the meeting, but it's made a significant impact. "It's a great team building activity, and a great way to get that extra appreciation that many staff crave," raved **Angie Parkhurst**.



CS's Lisa Braun helped improve morale by introducing weekly kudos to her team's meetings. Great thinking, Lisa!

Big thanks to Lisa Braun for proposing the idea and kickstarting the process.

If your team is doing something that's helped make a difference, [let us know](#).



ORS welcomed **Pat Langs** as the new BPL of BPD on October 31. Pat has 30 years of experience as a healthcare professional and is happy to help BPD become a high-functioning team. She and her husband live in Ann Arbor and have two children ages 26 and 29.

Goings

Congrats to **Amanda Pluff** for accepting a position with Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support. Her last day with ORS was October 28.

AST bid farewell to **Gopi Varadarajulu** on November 3.

BPD's **Brittany Fausey** will be the new Constituent Services Specialist for Representative Bruce Rendon. Her last day with ORS is November 4. Congrats, Brittany!

After 15 years of service to ORS customers, **Lisa Schmidt** will accept new challenges with DTMB's State Surplus Store. Her last day here is November 10. Best wishes, Lisa!

Congratulations to **Zach Harrison** who accepted an analyst position with Licensing and Regulatory Affairs effective November 14. He will be working in the Worker's Compensation area on the GOB's first floor as a compliance analyst.

Congratulations to **Kyle Seymour** who will leave ORS for a Senior Business Analyst position with Tegrit Group, a software company that handles benefit administration software for public entities. His last day is November 16.

We wish the best to **Jim Rademacher** who accepted a senior data specialist position with the Medical Center of Excellence unit of the Accident Fund. Jim will analyze data, fulfill ad hoc data requests, and build reports. His last day at ORS is expected to be November 18.

PoP: Facilitator applications due today

Power of Perspectives II: Forging Breakthroughs, which will launch in January, gives us the tools necessary to apply the "What if?" principles we learned to work situations. It will consist of two parts: 1) an online, self-paced learning and simulation course, and 2) facilitated group discussions on applying key concepts in the workplace.



Last month, a call went out for volunteer facilitators to introduce the Forging Breakthroughs online course material at staff meetings and to lead follow-up small group discussions. (See the [Forging Breakthroughs Facilitator Summary](#) for more details.) The facilitator's most vital responsibility, however, is to be a model and embrace our vision to become a more diverse and inclusive organization. Those selected for this assignment will receive advance training, have opportunity to practice, and receive coaching from Anthony and Tim. Any ORS or AST employee who has participated in the Power of Perspectives training can volunteer to be a facilitator.

If interested, send a letter of application (400 words or less) to ORS-PowerofPerspectives@michigan.gov. Answer the following questions in your letter: Why do you want to be a facilitator for Forging Breakthroughs? and, Why should we select you for this role?

The deadline for volunteer applications is today, November 4. Questions? Contact ORS-PowerofPerspectives@michigan.gov

Send your article ideas to the *LookOut*

The *LookOut* is always on, well, the lookout for story ideas. It's our mission to provide current news and information from across the business and explain how it fits in with the big picture. If you know of something going on that should be shared, let us know. Topics can be anything from policy changes or big vendor meetings to a coworker with a great hobby.



Email [Robin StremLow](mailto:Robin.StremLow@ors.org) or use [Ask Betty](#) to provide tips on story ideas that we may not be aware of.

Harvest Gathering a huge success

Thank you to those who participated in the 2011 Harvest Gathering. Your daily donations and support at the EPC breakfast fundraiser helped raise over \$1,600 dollars, in addition to the 17 boxes of food and personal items you filled. Great job!



Boo Day a blast at ORS!

Many of us in ORS and AST put on our favorite costumes and decorated our cubes last Friday to celebrate Boo Day, ORS's annual Halloween celebration. In the afternoon, staff brought in their children and grandchildren to trick-or-treat on ORS's Boo Day path.

Congratulations to **Brittany Fausey** for winning the costume contest with her Church Lady costume (a tribute to Dana Carvey's Saturday Night Live character).

[Click here to see a full gallery of the day's festivities.](#)



ORS Purpose:
 We are an innovative retirement organization driven to empower our customers for a successful today and a secure tomorrow.

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Thanks for reading!!

Veterans Day history and celebrations

While everyone seems to have their own way of celebrating holidays, many of us don't take the time to understand what a holiday means. Because next Friday is Veterans Day, let's refresh our minds what this national holiday is all about.

Veterans Day is intended to be a day for thanking all military personnel. In many places, the American flag flies at half-mast.

Veterans Day was first observed on November 11, 1919, one year after the signing of the armistice between Germany and the Allied nations; remember that it was signed on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918.

If you're looking for a local celebration, Lansing will host the 2011 Capital Area Veterans Day Tribute on Saturday, November 5, between 9:30 and noon at Pattengill Middle School. Click here to [connect with veterans and to find local veteran events](#); click here to view a [parade directory](#).





And from ORS to all veterans, thank you for your service to and protection of this great country.

Note: Because some of the links in this newsletter point to network resources, some of the links may not work if you are reading this outside of the organization.