



## Terrifying or reasonable? Texas state employees would pay more for health insurance under budgets for Employees Retirement System

Monday, Apr 04, 2011, 11:01AM CST | [0 comments](#) | [Add comment](#)

By Mark Lisher



A nearly \$600 million shortfall in the Employees Retirement System budget will almost certainly mean higher premiums or the establishment of a deductible for state employees and retirees.

The *Austin American-Statesman* does the kind of math for current and former state employees that private-sector employees have been doing in their dens on their solar-powered calculators for some time now.

To make up for a \$591 million or 19 percent reduction in the \$3 billion system budget proposed by the House and Senate, state employees and retirees would pay \$186 a month more in premiums for their family coverage or \$95 a month more for themselves.

That translates to state workers picking up 20 percent of their health insurance costs for themselves and 60 percent for family members. The state currently offers full coverage for employees and half coverage for family members.

The alternative is a \$3,400 deductible for full coverage or a \$2,400 deductible for 80 percent coverage, according to the Statesman. Right now, state employees have no deductible, and their representatives used words like "scary" and "terrifying" to describe the prospect of their paying more.

Placed very high in the story is a statement that these cuts will be painful for state workers and retirees from their spokesman, Andy Homer, director of government relations for the Texas Public Employees Association.

"The point is, this will make health care unaffordable for a significant portion of employees," Homer said.

Placed much lower in the story as if to suggest his statement is much less important, is Talmadge Heflin, director of the conservative Texas Public Policy Foundation's Center for Fiscal Policy. State employees ought not to be fully insulated from hard economic times, he says.

"In times when there's a shortage of funds or less revenue and the state has to cut back on the funding, just like in a lot of private industry, the employees are called on many times to pick up a greater share of higher deductible or co-pay," Heflin told the Statesman. "It's reasonable for the employees to share with the taxpayers the cost."

\*\*\*

Contact Mark Lisher at 512-299-2318 or [mark@texaswatchdog.org](mailto:mark@texaswatchdog.org).

Keep up with all the latest news from Texas Watchdog. [Fan our page on Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Scribd](#), and fan us on [YouTube](#). Join our network on [de.licio.us](#), and put our RSS feeds in your newsreader. We're also on [MySpace](#), [Digg](#), [FriendFeed](#), [NewsVine](#) and [tumblr](#).

Photo of Texas state Capitol rotunda by flickr user coffee is for closers, used via a Creative Commons license.

### Comments

[Post a comment](#)

Be the first to post a comment.

### Previously

Today's featured video: Texas state Rep. Senfronia Thompson on her gambling bill

Texas Watchdog contributor to investigation that won Peabody Award

Land purchased by Metro for \$15 million appraised by Harris County at \$2.4 million to \$5.6 million

Today's featured video: Qaddafi's son toured Port of Houston, ABC-13 reports

Study: \$329 million wasted by Medicaid on brand-name drugs when cheaper generics available; Texas waste at \$8 per enrollee

Public pension details in Texas kept confidential, not subject to public records requests

### Connect with Texas Watchdog

- RSS feed
- StumbleUpon
- Twitter
- Newsvine
- Facebook
- Digg
- De.licio.us
- YouTube

### Related Blogs and Media

**Political Equation for Physician Hospitals of America: 'Money = Access'** "In politics money = access," a donation solicitation from the Physician Hospitals of America obtained by OpenSecrets Blog states as one of...  
[New Post](#) [Open Secrets](#)

**Bill would ban older football helmets** Football helmets used in Texas public schools would be banned after their 15th year under legislation tentatively approved by the Texas...  
[Update:25 min 17 sec](#) [San Antonio Express-News](#)

**The changing face of medicine** his NY Times article from over this past weekend is among the most important that I have read recently on the dynamics that are materially...  
[Update:29 min 46 sec](#) [Houston's Clear Thinkers](#)

**Barton v Smith** » Politico: Lamar Smith, Joe Barton in Texas map dust-up Smith, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee and the point man on...  
[Update:46 min 38 sec](#) [Greg's Opinion](#)

### Tweets

- Matt Glazer** | 1 min 33 sec  
Do what @PhillipMartin says. Follow @AustinTogether and learn how to stop Republican restricting efforts to break Travis County apart.
- Virtual Capitol** | 1 min 53 sec  
Lance Armstrong addresses Texas House on cancer <http://bit.ly/fdsnoz>
- mySA Politics** | 1 min 56 sec  
NEW: US soldier dies in Iraq <http://bit.ly/fV8WTW>



**U.S. House Floor** | 2 min 9 sec  
UNFINISHED BUSINESS - on adoption of the Speaker's approval of the Journal which had been postponed <http://bit.ly/HFloor>



**News 4 WDAI** | 2 min 10 sec  
Best of the Web: Jesus Pizza, Crying Yankees Fan, Live Fish Keychains: Is it a mozzarella miracle or a half-bake... <http://bit.ly/fKKpBd>



**News 4 WDAI** | 2 min 10 sec  
Spurs RoundTable: Tiago vs Rasho: Now that the losing streak is finally over, Spurs fans can come back out of th... <http://bit.ly/e1hWHA>

© 2011 TEXAS WATCHDOG and USELABS. All Rights Reserved. Terms of Use and Privacy Statement

## Recent Stories

Parents want answers as Houston ISD weighs closing four elementary...  
Houston ISD says City of Houston owes big bucks for crossing guards;...  
Tougher penalties for mail-in ballot fraud up for debate Monday in...  
Ousted state windstorm chief to get year's salary, pension; TWIA head...  
Houston inspector general probing Councilman Stephen Costello's...  
Beaumont prison where prisoner used cellphone to escape has top...

## Recent Posts

- Today's featured video: Of the people, by the people, for the people...
- Texas Gov. Rick Perry's stance against state-run health insurance...
- Despite what you may have heard, Yates High property is not being...
- UT's Francisco Cigarroa and William Powers Jr. among nation's...
- Texas students rejected as out-of-state enrollment grows at state...
- Terrifying or reasonable? Texas state employees would pay more for...

## Recent Blogs

- Political Equation for Physician Hospitals of America: 'Money =...
- Bill would ban older football helmets
- The changing face of medicine
- Barton v Smith
- Texas Senate Q1 FEC Fundraising Expectations
- Redistricting Legislation

## About

- Why now?
- Why Texas?
- Who is funding the work?
- Who is involved?
- Board members
- Training