



## Disability Income Plan of North Carolina (DIPNC) Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: When will my file be reviewed by the medical board?**

Upon receipt of a complete package, we will determine eligibility and schedule the file for Medical Board review within 4 – 6 weeks.

### **Q: When can I expect my benefits to begin?**

You can expect to begin receiving benefits within 4 – 6 weeks of medical board approval, provided all required forms have been returned.

- Forms required for Long-Term Disability Benefits:
  - ✓ Form 705 – *Agreeing to Accept Long-Term Benefits through DIPNC*
  - ✓ Form 706 – *Confirming an Employee's Resignation*
  - ✓ Form 715 – *Authorizing Social Security to Release Benefit Information*
  - ✓ Social Security, Veteran's Administration, and/or Worker's Compensation
- Forms required for Disability Retirement Benefits:
  - ✓ Form 7E – *Choosing a Disability Retirement Payment Option*

### **Q: Who can I contact to get the status of my application?**

- You may contact the Retirement Systems Division:
  - By phone at (877) 627-3287 (toll free) or (919) 807-3050 (Raleigh-area only)
  - By mail at 325 North Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC 27603-1385

### **Q: How much will my monthly benefit be?**

- DIPNC Short-term, Preliminary Long-term and Extended Short-term equal 1/12 of 50% of annual base salary
- DIPNC Long-Term = 1/12 of 65% of annual base salary
- Disability Retirement for LGERS = AFC x .0185 (Accrual Rate) x Years of service and projected service divided by 12
- Disability Retirement for TSERS = AFC x .0182 (Accrual Rate) x Years of service and projected service divided by 12

Note: Neither early retirement nor Retirement Option 4 are available for disability retirements

### **Q: What will happen if I receive Veteran's Administration Benefits (VA), (Workers' Compensation (WC) or Social Security Disability/Retirement (SS) Age 62 benefits?**

Your benefit will be offset if you are receiving VA, WC or SS benefits.

**Q: How will my benefit be offset by VA, WC or SS?**

- VA will be offset dollar for dollar (if for the same disability)
- WC will be offset dollar for dollar
- SS Disability or Age 62 offset will be dollar for dollar

**Q: What will happen when I get a SS increase?**

Social Security increases are normally granted in December and are payable in January. We calculate the increased social security for the month of December and offset the December disability benefit.

**Q: When will my re-exam be due?**

You can be re-examined once per year for the first five years of disability and then once every three years. The frequency of your re-exams will be determined by the Medical Board.

**Q: What happens if I miss my re-exam?**

You will receive re-exam forms and notification 90 days prior to your re-exam date, after 60 days have passed, you will be sent a final notice which will inform you of the date that your benefits will be suspended. Upon suspension, your benefit will not be reinstated until you have been re-approved by the medical board.

**Q: Can I work while on disability? How much can I earn?**

You may work while receiving disability benefits, but not in the same job capacity or same type of work that you were found disabled to perform.

- For Extended Short-Term, you can earn up to 50% of your base rate of pay monthly.
- For Long-Term, you can earn up to 35% of your base rate of pay monthly.
- The income for Disability Retirement is based on an earnable allowance, which is adjusted every January.
  - As provided under retirement law, the retirement benefit will be suspended for the remainder of 2009 if such beneficiary's earnings during the 12-month period immediately following the effective date of retirement or during the calendar year 2009 exceed the greater of (i) 50% of the beneficiary's compensation during the 12 months of service before retirement, excluding any termination payments, as increased by 0.1% or (ii) \$28,080.00.

We also remind you that coverage provided to beneficiaries of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System under the retiree group of the State Health Plan will be suspended at the same time a retirement benefit is suspended.

**Q: What happens if I exceed these earnings?**

If you exceed the allowable earnings allowance (monthly or annual, whichever is applicable to your benefit type) we will notify you that we have overpaid you and inform you of your repayment options to reimburse the Retirement Systems Division.

**Q: Why do I have to turn in a Statement of Income every year?**

Each disability benefit recipient will have an earnable allowance they are able to earn without their disability benefit being offset. Under a requirement of the disability statutes, you are required to report earnings received while on disability benefits.

**Q: Will my family receive benefits at my death?**

- For DIPNC, if you are in receipt of monthly disability benefits, you will be entitled to a death benefit.
- For Disability Retirement, if you designated a monthly survivor, they will continue to receive benefits.
- For Disability Retirement, your family will receive a benefit if you have chosen (and paid for) a Contributory Death Benefit (CDB).

**Q: What happens when I become eligible for a service retirement?**

You will receive notification that you will soon be eligible for service retirement, for DIPNC you will also receive an estimate and an election form.

**Q: Will my Long-term/Disability Retirement benefit stop if I return to work?**

Yes, if you return to work for State employment.

**Q: How can I stop my benefit?**

Return Form 7A – *Medical Report for Eligibility Review* on which your doctor indicates that you are no longer disabled.

**Q: What if I don't want my employer to know about my disability diagnosis?**

You can provide the medical documentation directly to the Retirement Systems, but your employer will need to verify employment information and provide information for our processing of your case.