

McCall Vetoes Employee Medical Contribution Plan

Gov. Tom McCall has turned thumbs down on a proposal to use the mid-biennium salary adjustment fund for a state contribution to employee medical insurance plans.

The proposal originally was made by the Public Welfare Commission personnel office and later endorsed by the Personnel Officers Association.

In a letter to the Civil Service Commission, the PWC personnel office said, "Since the interim salary adjustment fund is extremely limited, we would like to recommend the fund be used toward improving fringe benefits such as an employer contribution for medical plan payments."

It recommended the contribution be either \$5 or \$6 per month.

The letter said Oregon is "seriously behind in the program of fringe benefits to employees, specifically in the area of health plan provisions."

If the proposal were adopted, it would be a "significant improvement" in recruiting and retaining employees, it said.

Using the mid-biennium money in such a manner, the PWC personnel office said, "would

maximize the use of this fund to all employees."

Since the contribution would not be subject to income tax or social security tax deductions, take home pay would be increased by the full amount, it pointed out.

The governor's endorsement of the proposal was sought by Chandler A. Stevens, president of the Personnel Officers Association.

In his answer to Stevens, McCall said, "Without speaking to the relative merit, or lack of merit, of your proposal, I must state that it is not possible for me to support it as an expenditure from salary adjustment funds."

"Let me hasten to add, however, that this does not mean such a proposal would not have my support during the regular session," McCall commented.

"I feel that this is a question of policy that requires legislative action, and this action must be by the full body rather than through the Emergency Board," he said.

The governor agreed that state employee fringe benefits must be improved.

"Our office has already taken a number of steps in laying

the groundwork for a program of health fringe benefits and I will be pleased to work with the personnel officers and other interested parties or organizations in developing a pro-

Drive Begun For Members

Lists of state employees who do not belong to OSEA have recently been mailed to all of the association's 79 local chapters by headquarters.

Each non-member will receive three letters from headquarters -- two in April and one in May -- pointing out OSEA accomplishments and membership benefits and asking for support.

Membership Director Betty French asked chapter group representatives or membership committee members to personally contact each non-member inviting him to join OSEA.

"Please consider this a priority project," Mrs. French told chapter presidents, "the success of this entire effort hinges on your follow-through."

gram for the 1969 regular session," he said.

McCall warned that he was not making a pre-commitment to support a specific program. "We will have to balance the

many competing fiscal needs in approaching next session. But it certainly is a pre-commitment to the concept of improving working conditions for our state employees," he concluded.

Fairview Employees Will Get Notification of Merit Hikes

No longer will employees at Fairview Hospital and Training Center be uncertain as to the action taken on their merit pay increases.

From now on, any employee either granted or denied a merit pay increase will be notified in writing of the action taken at least ten days prior to his eligibility date by the hospital administration.

The action is outlined in a supplemental agreement negotiated with the institution recently by OSEA.

The agreement says the "employee's immediate supervisor, upon request by the employee, will provide reasons for the salary action taken."

"This means that in the future, employees will not only

know whether or not they are getting a merit pay increase before they see their paychecks, but they will be able to find out why," Field Representative Donald A. Beninger, who negotiated the agreement, said.

"Annual salary increases are not automatic," the agreement further states, "nor will they be denied because the employer lacks funds."

Beninger said the latter statement was written into the agreement because in the past it has been used as a reason to deny merit increases.

The supplemental agreement is now a part of OSEA's basic collective bargaining contract with the institution.

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