

5 Bullet Points for Future Kaiser Local 7 Retirees

1. Read “Benefits for You, United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 7, Professional and Health Care Division, Colorado, January 2020, Summary Plan Description.” This guide gives you important information about the retirement plan and medical benefits.
2. Contact the Kaiser Permanente Retirement Center at 1-866-627-2826 M-F 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pacific Time and register at www.mylansconnect.com/kp. They formed the RISS (Retirement Initiation Specialists Services) Department on August 31, 2022. Let them know when you plan on retiring and they will assign you a retirement specialist.
3. If you plan on retiring by age 65 and are not yet going to take Social Security, be sure to sign up for Medicare starting 3 months before you turn age 65. For example, if you will be turning 65 on May 15, you can sign up for Medicare at www.medicare.gov on February 1st. If you are going to take Social Security at the same time as Medicare, you can go to www.ssa.gov to apply for both Medicare and Social Security. Kaiser will need your Medicare number before you can sign up for the Kaiser Senior Advantage Plan. Look at the Kaiser Senior Advantage Plans offered: Basic or Core plan, Silver plan, or Gold plan. The Kaiser Retirement Center can forward you the plan descriptions and sign you up for the plan of your choice.
4. If you are eligible for the Colorado Professional Employees Pension Plan, determine which plan is appropriate for your financial needs. Estimate your monthly expenses going forward to help you decide which plan best fits your needs and consult your tax professional or financial advisor. Some examples are Single life annuity, 50% Joint and Survivor annuity, 360 fixed monthly installments, lump sum, and many others. The Retirement Center can forward you this information.
5. If you are investing in the Kaiser Permanente Tax Sheltered Annuity Plan III (TSA), make sure you know what funds you hold and what their expense ratios are. Costs are important. When you retire, you may be able to continue to hold your funds with Kaiser or roll them over to an IRA with Vanguard, for example. One benefit of an IRA rollover is that when done correctly, the money keeps its tax-deferred status and does not trigger taxes or early withdrawal penalties. Another advantage of an IRA rollover is that it may give you a wider variety of fund choices than you would have if you continued to hold your funds in the Kaiser TSA. Consult your tax professional or financial advisor to learn more. You can also talk to Vanguard at 1-800-523-1188. The beauty of Vanguard is that it is not owned by public shareholders but owned by the people who invest in their funds, which keeps the costs down. An informative book on investing and costs is “The Little Book of Common Sense Investing” by John C. Bogle. It’s a short, easy read.