




air pollution control district
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Agenda Item: F-6
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Board Agenda Item

TO: Air Pollution Control District Board

FROM: Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Officer 

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SUBJECT: Employee Insurance Plans and Programs

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive summary and rates of the employee insurance plans and programs for 2026.

DISCUSSION:

One of the goals of our agency is to provide employees with health benefit programs that meet their needs. These needs include quality care, an adequate choice of providers, and the ability to select from a variety of options and costs. At the August 21, 2025 hearing, your Board delegated authority to the Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO) to enter into and renew multiple employee benefit insurance plans that became effective January 1, 2026.

The District staff benefits committee [consisting of one representative each from Service Employees International Union Local 620 (SEIU), Engineers and Technicians Association (ETA), Management, and Confidential-Unrepresented] met on multiple occasions to review benefit plan information to help select the best options available to recommend to the APCO. The following summarizes the final benefits package that was authorized by the APCO:

- Renewed Blue Shield medical HMO and PPO plans;
- Renewed Delta Dental Medium PPO and DHMO plans;
- Renewed Vision Service Plan/ABD municipality pool to provide vision insurance;
- Contracted the IRS Section 125 plan with ISOLVED;

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- Renewed Standard Insurance Company Long Term Disability benefit plan;
- Renewed Standard Insurance Company Voluntary Term Life benefit plan;
- Renewed Standard Insurance Company Management Life & Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) plan;
- Renewed Standard Insurance Company Short Term Disability coverage for the District's management employees;
- Renewed Standard Insurance Company AD&D plan for all employees;
- Renewed Employee Assistance Plan through Standard; and
- Renewed Aflac Supplemental Catastrophic Insurance programs.

MEDICAL – In order to receive lower premiums than would otherwise be made available to employees in a small group plan, in 2010 your Board adopted a resolution authorizing District participation in the Special District Risk Management Authority's (SDRMA) medical benefits program. After conducting a thorough review of available plans within and outside of SDRMA, our benefits committee recommended renewing the Blue Shield HMO and PPO plans for the 2026 plan year at a 13.8% cost increase for the HMO and PPO plan.

The District applies \$770 towards medical premiums for employee only coverage, \$1,108 for employee +1, and \$1,218 for family coverage. The remaining premium is paid by the employees pursuant to their respective Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

A comparison of the 2025 and 2026 monthly rates for medical benefits are as follows:

<u>Blue Shield – HMO</u>	<u>2025 Rate</u>	<u>2026 Rate</u>
Employee-only	\$1,195.83	\$1,361.66
Employee + spouse	\$2,382.39	\$2,711.99
Family	\$3,098.24	\$3,526.72
 <u>Blue Shield – PPO</u>	 <u>2025 Rate</u>	 <u>2026 Rate</u>
Employee-only	\$855.93	\$974.38
Employee + spouse	\$1,707.74	\$1,943.61
Family	\$2,214.50	\$2,520.41

DENTAL – Our benefits committee reviewed the rates and benefits under multiple plans and recommended renewing the Delta Dental Medium Plan PPO plan for the 2026 plan year with a 1.3% decrease to the PPO plan compared to the prior year. The Delta Dental Medium DHMO plan had no change to premiums for the 2026 plan year.

The District applies up to \$41.10 toward the dental premium for employee only coverage, \$48.74 for employee +1, and \$66.62 for family coverage. The remaining premium is paid by the employees pursuant to their respective MOUs. The monthly rates for dental plans are as follows:

<u>Delta Dental Medium DMO</u>	<u>2025 Rate</u>	<u>2026 Rate</u>
Employee-only	\$21.32	\$21.32
Employee + 1	\$37.90	\$37.90
Family	\$55.93	\$55.93

<u>Delta Dental Medium PPO</u>	<u>2025 Rate</u>	<u>2026 Rate</u>
Employee-only	\$41.61	\$41.10
Employee + 1	\$74.98	\$74.06
Family	\$121.13	\$119.58

VISION – There was a decrease of 11.6% to the Vision Service Plan (VSP) premiums for the 2026 plan year. The District pays the full amount of employee-only vision premiums, \$7.32 for employee +1, and \$9.82 for family coverage. Any remaining premium for family coverage is paid by the employees pursuant to their respective MOUs.

The 2025 and 2026 monthly rates for vision benefits are as follows:

<u>VSP</u>	<u>2025 Rate</u>	<u>2026 Rate</u>
Employee-only	\$7.25	\$6.41
Employee + spouse	\$11.26	\$9.96
Family	\$17.85	\$15.80

FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN – The District maintains an IRS Section 125 plan that allows certain benefit premiums to be deducted from an employee's pay on a pre-tax basis. This plan also allows employees to set aside pre-tax dollars for certain medical and dependent care expenses. There was no rate increase to maintain this plan for the 2026 plan year. The District is switching carriers for this benefit to provide a better customer service experience to employees.

LONG TERM DISABILITY – The District provides extended wage replacement coverage for all its employees in a group long-term disability program, which was renewed with our current provider, Standard Insurance Company. This is a disability plan that provides employees a benefit of 60% of earnings after a 60-day waiting period if he/she is disabled from their own occupation for up to two years, or any occupation up to age 65. There was no rate increase for the 2026 plan year.

VOLUNTARY LIFE – The District Voluntary Life product is offered through Standard Insurance Company as well. There was no rate increase for 2026. This benefit is 100% employee funded.

MANAGEMENT LIFE & ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND DISMEMBERMENT (AD&D) – The District provides additional group term life and AD&D insurance of \$20,000 for each management, supervisory, and confidential employee through Standard Insurance Company; the APCO is provided with \$50,000 coverage. There was no rate increase for the 2026 plan year.

SHORT TERM DISABILITY (STD) – The STD policy through Standard Insurance Company provides short term wage replacement to cover non-industrial injuries and illnesses for the APCO and managers, as they do not participate in the State Disability Insurance program. There was no rate increase for the 2026 plan year.

VOLUNTARY ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND DISMEMBERMENT INSURANCE – The District offers employees the ability to purchase Voluntary AD&D Insurance through Standard Insurance Company. There was no rate increase for 2026 and was subsequently renewed. This benefit is 100% employee funded.

CATASTROPHIC CARE PROGRAMS – These are products offered through Aflac that enable employees to voluntarily purchase portable catastrophic care programs in the event of a serious illness. Costs are fully funded by the employee and are based on age upon entry into the program and the contracted level of coverage.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PLAN – This is a benefit that offers a wide range of services to both District management and employees. Services range from face to face counseling with licensed professionals to telephonic consultations regarding personal finance issues. Standard Insurance Company provides this service at no cost to the District or its employees.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The District benefit contribution rates were determined in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget, as approved by your Board on June 26, 2025. Premium increases will be absorbed by employees pursuant to their respective MOUs. There is no fiscal impact from the other benefits.