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Peter Franchot
Comptroller

Robert J. Murphy
Director
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TO: All State Agencies and Employees

FROM: Robert J. Murphy, Director
Central Payroll Bureau

DATE: March 8, 2017

SUBJECT: Payroll Changes Effective January 1, 2017

Please make the following information accessible to employees of your agency.

1. Social Security (FICA) Tax for Employees

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has announced that the Social Security taxable wage base for 2017 will increase from 2016 (\$118,500) to 2017 (\$127,200). The employer's FICA tax rate will hold steady at 7.65% for 2017 and the employee social security portion of the FICA tax rate will remain at 6.20% for all wages up to and including \$127,200. The employee Medicare portion of the FICA tax rate will be 1.45% for all wages up to and including \$200,000. The employee Medicare portion of the FICA tax rate will be 2.35% on all wages earned in excess of \$200,000.

FICA Tax is composed of two portions:

1. OASDI (Old Age, Survivors, Disability Insurance) or better known as the Social Security Tax.
 - 2017 FICA taxable wages capped at \$127,200
 - 2017 Social Security tax rate of 6.20% on wages up to \$127,200 results in a maximum payment of \$7,886.40 each for employer and employee as Social Security taxes.
2. Medicare (Hospital Insurance)
 - Medicare tax applies to all FICA taxable wages. There is no cap for this tax.
 - 2017 Medicare tax computed as 1.45% of all wages up to and including \$200,000 (EX: \$2,900.00 for FICA taxable earnings of \$200,000)
 - 2017 Medicare tax computed as 2.35% on all taxable wages in excess of \$200,000 (EX: \$4,075.00 for FICA taxable earnings of \$250,000)

Therefore, for the first \$127,200 in FICA taxable earnings employers and employees will each pay a total tax amount of \$9,730.80 (\$7,886.40 + \$1,844.40). For **EMPLOYERS** all FICA taxable earnings in excess of the \$127,200 will continue to be taxed at the rate of 1.45% for Medicare. For **EMPLOYEES** please see Page 1 Medicare explanation.

2. Medicare (Hospital Insurance) Tax for Certain Employees

The Medicare (Hospital Insurance) Tax, which is the only Social Security tax applicable to some University of Maryland and certain State Police employees, shall apply to every dollar of FICA taxable earnings in 2017. The Medicare (Hospital Insurance) remains the same as 2016. See explanation on Page 1 under Medicare tax rates.

3. State Withholding Tax Changes

The tax rates and rate brackets which became effective for all tax years beginning after December 31, 2011 as listed below, are unchanged for 2017.

Actual Calculation			
Taxpayers Filing Joint, Head of Household, or for Qualifying Widows/Widowers			
<u>Taxable Income</u>	<u>Pay</u>	<u>Plus Percent on Excess</u>	<u>Of the Amount Over of taxable net</u>
\$1 - \$1,000 income	\$0	2.00 percent	
\$1,001 - \$2,000	\$20.00	3.00 percent	\$1,000
\$2,001 - \$3,000	\$50.00	4.00 percent	\$2,000
\$3,001 - \$150,000	\$90.00	4.75 percent	\$3,000
\$150,001 - \$175,000	\$7,072.50	5.00 percent	\$150,000
\$175,001 - \$225,000	\$8,322.50	5.25 percent	\$175,000
\$225,001 - \$300,000	\$10,947.50	5.50 percent	\$225,000
In excess of \$300,000	\$15,072.50	5.75 percent	\$300,000
Taxpayers Filing as Single, Married Filing Separately, or as Dependent Taxpayers			
<u>Taxable Income</u>	<u>Pay</u>	<u>Plus Percent on Excess</u>	<u>Of the Amount Over of taxable net income</u>
\$1 - \$1,000	\$0	2.00 percent	
\$1,001 - \$2,000	\$20.00	3.00 percent	\$1,000
\$2,001 - \$3,000	\$50.00	4.00 percent	\$2,000
\$3,001 - \$100,000	\$90.00	4.75 percent	\$3,000
\$100,001 - \$125,000	\$4,697.50	5.00 percent	\$100,000
\$125,001 - \$150,000	\$5,947.50	5.25 percent	\$125,000
\$150,001 - \$250,000	\$7,260.00	5.50 percent	\$150,000
In excess of \$250,000	\$12,760.00	5.75 percent	\$250,000

Exemption Amount - Remains unchanged at \$3,200 for 2017. An additional exemption of \$3,200 may be claimed for any additional dependent that is at least 65 years of age on the last day of the tax year.

For taxpayers with higher incomes, the exemption amount is limited as follows:

Taxpayers Filing Joint, Head of Household, or for Qualifying Widows/Widowers		Taxpayer Filing as Single, Married Filing Separately, or as Dependent Taxpayers	
<u>Federal Adjusted Gross Income</u>	<u>Exemption Amount</u>	<u>Federal Adjusted Gross Income</u>	<u>Exemption Amount</u>
\$150,001 - \$175,000	\$1,600	\$100,001 - \$125,000	\$1,600
\$175,001 - \$200,000	\$800	\$125,001 - \$150,000	\$800
In excess of \$200,000	-0-	In excess of \$150,000	-0-

The additional \$1,000 exemption amount for a taxpayer or spouse being at least 65 years of age or blind remains.

Refundable Earned Income Credit Calculation: The calculation for the maximum 2016 Maryland Refundable Earned Income Credit has changed to **26% of the federal earned income tax credit**. The calculation will change again in 2017 to 27%; and in 2018 and thereafter to 28%.

Safe Harbor for Calculation of Underpayment of Estimated Taxes: Estimated tax payments made by individuals for tax year 2017 must be at least 90 percent of the tax developed for the current tax year or 110 percent of the tax developed for the prior tax year.

Nonresident Income Tax: The statute was previously amended to change the calculation of the state income tax on nonresident returns. The state income tax imposed on a nonresident is calculated using the following formula, in accordance with Section 10 of the Tax-General Article.

$$\begin{array}{rcccl}
 \text{Applicable tax rate under Section 10-105(a)} & \mathbf{X} & \text{Nonresident's Maryland taxable income calculated without the subtractions under Section 10-210(b),(c) and (f)} & \mathbf{X} & \frac{\text{Nonresident's Maryland taxable income calculated with the subtractions under Section 10-210(b), (c) and (f)}}{\text{Nonresident's Maryland taxable income calculated without the subtractions under Section 10-210(b),(c) and (f)}} & = & \text{Nonresident income tax amount}
 \end{array}$$

4. Maryland County Income Tax Withholding

For 2017 Calvert County as increased its rate to 3.00%, and Somerset County has increased its rate to 3.20%.

Local Income Tax Withholding Rates for 2017

City or County Of Residence	County Code	Local Income Tax Withholding Rate (percentage of MD Taxable Wage)
<u>Allegany County</u>	01	3.05
<u>Anne Arundel County</u>	02	2.50
<u>Baltimore City</u>	04	3.20
<u>Baltimore County</u>	03	2.85
<u>Calvert County</u>	05	3.00
<u>Caroline County</u>	06	2.80
<u>Carroll County</u>	07	3.05
<u>Cecil County</u>	08	2.80
<u>Charles County</u>	09	3.05
<u>Dorchester County</u>	10	2.65
<u>Frederick County</u>	11	3.00
<u>Garrett County</u>	12	2.65
<u>Harford County</u>	13	3.10
<u>Howard County</u>	14	3.20
<u>Kent County</u>	15	2.85
<u>Montgomery County</u>	16	3.20
<u>Prince George's County</u>	17	3.20
<u>Queen Anne's County</u>	18	3.20
<u>St. Mary's</u>	19	3.00
<u>Somerset County</u>	20	3.20
<u>Talbot County</u>	21	2.40
<u>Washington County</u>	22	2.80
<u>Wicomico County</u>	23	3.20
<u>Worcester County</u>	24	1.75
<u>Unknown Maryland County</u>	**	3.20
<u>Out of State</u>	25-76	1.75

This table is a display of all possible Local Income Tax Withholding Rates effective for payments made on or after January 1, 2017.

**Central Payroll Bureau is required to tax at maximum local rate of 3.20% absent of employee submitted address data on Form W-4. When this occurs the county code on the employee's pay stubs will reflect HW for Howard County.

5. The "Military Spouses Residency Relief Act" remains -

This act amended the "Service Members Civil Relief Act" so that exemption from Maryland income tax is applicable if the following three conditions are met:

- a. Your spouse is a member of the armed forces present in Maryland in compliance with military orders
- b. You are present in Maryland solely to be with your spouse
- c. You maintain your domicile in another state

If you claim exemption under this Act you must complete form MW507(W-4)M and attach a copy of your spousal military identification card in addition to submitting form MW507(W-4).

6. Federal Withholding Tax Changes

The Federal income tax withholding rates will change effective January 1, 2017.

- The withholding allowance per exemption will remain at \$4,050
- To view the Federal Tax Tables visit our Web site at:

http://Comptroller.marylandtaxes.com/Government_Services/State_Payroll_Services/

Click on "General Information"
"2017 Federal Income Tax Withholding Information"

7. Annual Wage and Tax Statement (Form W-2) for 2016

The Central Payroll Bureau will issue laser-printed annual Wage & Tax Statements (Form W-2) by January 31, 2017. Confidentiality and efficiency are achieved through mailing the W-2 statements directly to all employees, former employees and employees on leave of absence or similar circumstances.

Three copies of the W-2 statement are provided for use with Federal and State returns plus a copy for the employee to retain. Additional copies are available to the employee or agency payroll personnel via our web site home page, menu option POSC, throughout the year beginning January 23, 2017.

8. Maryland Electronic Filing Program

Maryland Income Tax returns can be filed for "free" using "iFile". For information on iFile visit the Comptroller's web site at:

www.marylandtaxes.com

or call: 1-800-MD-TAXES

Individuals can email their state tax questions to:

taxhelp@comp.state.md.us

9. Explanation of the W-2

Our web site offers a detailed explanation of the W-2 which can be downloaded for employees who need assistance in understanding the difference between their year-to-date earnings shown on the last pay stub (or “stubs” if the employee worked for more than one agency during the year) and the taxable wages shown on their Form W-2. The “Your 2016 W-2, What You Need to Know” information can be accessed from our home page:

http://Comptroller.marylandtaxes.com/Government_Services/State_Payroll_Services/

Click on "State Employees"

Click on "Your 2016 W-2, What You Need to Know"

***NOTE:** The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 requires that employers report the total aggregate cost of group health plan coverage to their employees annually on the W-2. Although this cost is included on the W-2 (in Box 12, under Code DD), it is informational only and is **NOT** included in taxable income. The aggregate cost of coverage that is reported on the W-2 is based on what you pay toward the Pharmacy Plan, Basic Health Insurance and the subsidized amount the State of Maryland pays toward your plans coverage.*

10. Request for Duplicate W-2

Duplicate W-2's may be requested via phone starting on February 6, 2017. Current available request lines are: 410-260-7964 (local) and 1-888-674-0019 (toll free in Maryland). Requests taken by phone are batched and processed on a weekly cycle. For faster service employees are encouraged to download a copy using the POSC (Payroll Online Service Center) application, located on the Central Payroll Bureau Web site:

http://Comptroller.marylandtaxes.com/Government_Services/State_Payroll_Services/

11. State Tax Return Requirements

Employee contributions to any of the following retirement or pension systems will be noted on the first line in box 14 of the W-2 labeled as “STPICKUP”. If an employee is due a refund of their Maryland taxes, failure to add the “state pickup amount” on line 3 of the 502 form or line 19 of the 505 form Maryland state tax returns can result in the refund being delayed. This is an additional modification required because the “state pickup amount” is only sheltered for Federal income tax purposes and is fully taxable for State income tax and Social Security (FICA) purposes.

Check Stub Description

ST TCHR RETMT	ST EMP RETMT
ST POL RETMT	JUDGES RETMT
LEGIS RETMT	LAW ENF RETMT
LAW ENF PN-MODS	ST TCHR PENS
ST EMP PENSION	ST TCH ALT PEN
ST EMP ALT PEN	
ST MSD EMP MOD	

Employees will use the amount in box "16" of the Form W-2 (labeled "State wages, tips, other compensation") for their State taxable wages. Because the Maryland Tax Return (Form 502 or 505) uses the "Federal adjusted gross wages" as the starting point for determining State taxable wages, box "16" (State Wages) was deliberately left blank in previous years. The use of software tax preparation programs or electronic/internet filing requires state wages to be reported without Federal adjustments, so box 16 will this year contain the correct amount needed by those programs to begin completing the state tax return.

See instructions in the State Income Tax Packet or visit the Comptroller's Maryland Tax web site at:

www.marylandtaxes.com

Under the heading "Tax Information"
Click on "Personal Taxes"
Click on "Filing Information/Forms and Instructions"

12. Maryland Charities Campaign Deduction

The voluntary deductions for the Maryland Charities Campaign, which were solicited in the Fall of 2016, will be effective starting with the Regular Payroll pay period ending January 3, 2017, paid on January 11, 2017 (the corresponding University of Maryland pay period ending is January 7, 2017, paid on January 13, 2017 and Contract pay period ending is December 27, 2016 and paid on January 4, 2017). The payroll deductions will continue for 26 pays.

13. Unemployment Insurance

The rate effective for the first payroll in January 2017 (PPE 1/03/17) is .0028. Unemployment Insurance Wages exclude cafeteria plans and dependent and health care plans.