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HEALTH PLAN TASK FORCE (HPTF)

MINUTES

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2000

10:00 - 12:00

170 HUMPHREY CENTER

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the view of, nor are they binding on the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Dick McGehee (Chair), Linda Aaker, Allan Baumgarten, Avner Ben-Ner, Richard Butler, Keith Dunder, Robert Fahnhorst, Rich Girardo, George Green, Bev Hall, Christopher Hulla, Priscilla Pope, Kathryn Pouliot, Gailon Roen, Harlan Smith, Robert Sonkowsky, Larry Thompson, Barbara Van Drasek, Gavin Watt.

REGRETS: Amos Deinard, Bart Finzel.

ABSENT: Carol Carrier, David Hamilton.

1. CHAIR'S REPORT

Dick McGehee started by introducing George Green, Gailon Roen, and Barbara Van Drasek, new committee members. He then turned to distributed information showing participation in state health programs for all universities in the Big 10. The universities are split between having state coverage or not. Iowa is unique since its faculty and academic professionals are not part of the state plan yet civil service employees are. This might be an option for AFSCME employees at the University.

Q: For those that are not currently with the state, is there any information if they were in the past?

A: That question was not asked but Robert Fahnhorst can get information including when and why they changed and if they are satisfied with their choice.

2. SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE

In the Fall of 1998, the state gave the University an opportunity to address some supplemental insurance issues for University employees. In January 1999, Robert Fahnhorst sent DOER a letter regarding what the University would like to offer and a response was received in December

of 1999 stating that the state was interested in exploring some options. A copy of the reply letter was distributed to all members.

Robert Fahnhorst said that the price tag for many services was too high for immediate implementation, although the 28 day waiting period was something that the state felt could be dealt with fairly fast.

Dick McGehee said that for sabbaticals, the state would allow employees to be considered as though they were living in a county where the low-cost option was the State Health Plan. They would then be able to choose this plan at no cost for an individual or at \$15 for a family and use the out-of-network coverage with the deductibles and co-pays.

Robert Fahnhorst said that this could be implemented yet the University would continue to negotiate for first dollar coverage. Carol Carrier will consult with the dean's council before any arrangements are made.

Regarding the other items on the sheet, Dick McGehee said that:

3. Domestic Partners, is still a no by the state
4. Waive coverage, is negotiable but the solution presented by the state is not good in the long-term
5. 28 waiting period, doable
6. Dependent dental, doable
7. Consultation, start in November and continue until renewal in March
8. Administration Fee, charges are now done arbitrarily and without advance warning, state is willing to give a heads up since the University needs 1 1/2 - 2 years to budget these fees
9. University providers, cannot guarantee low-cost carrier which is reasonable
10. Withdrawal, if the University separates, employees can not switch between plans immediately, notice needs to be given before rejoining

3. PLANNING FOR FOCUS GROUPS AND SURVEY

Chris Hulla said that 26 invites were randomly sent for each session, sessions would last 1 1/2 hours with an introduction period and then a free discussion with notes recorded. The schedule will be:

- February 15 - Duluth, faculty/P&A in a.m., union/civil service in p.m.
- February 16 and 17 - Twin Cities, six focus groups comprised of: one student, one retirees, 2 faculty/P&A, 2 union/civil service
- February 18 - Morris, employee groups
- Following week - Crookston

Q: What will be the student subset?

A: 13 graduate assistants and 13 other students (graduate non-assistants and undergraduates).

The committee then made the following comments about students:

- Students without insurance need to be found; Barbara and Becky will help
- Students involved in governance might be more likely to show up
- Different questions will need to be asked to students
- Diverse insurance backgrounds might complicate results of focus groups
- Separate survey tool will need to be developed for students since risk pools cannot be merged
- Plan administration can be under one umbrella but two separate plans will need to be maintained

Rich Girardo then turned to the survey, which will be developed from the focus group response. It will be a phone survey in which people will receive an 800 number to call. The survey will include a description of HPTF and the PIN number, instructions, a copy of the survey, and the PIN number or equivalent information. He then asked the committee to think about the following questions:

- Should the survey allow open-ended comments at the end of the survey?
- Should everyone participate in the survey?
- Should an ID/PIN number be used (pros include information from a person only counted once and demographic information could be included in the number, cons include anonymity lost and people need to use the number)?

PIN NUMBER

The following comments were made:

- Three digit number could stand for campus, class/unit, and current health plan
- No unique ID numbers, include information in questionnaire
- Generic numbers so that information is not connected to a person, yet would allow only one vote per person
- Many employees do not know their unit and would then tamper the survey results
- People do not usually vote more than once and time/date stamps would be checked
- Survey length would increase if code number not used
- Unit could be identified on the information sent to employees
- Comfort level with a number could be better assessed after focus groups
- PIN number has dropped survey results up to 20% in some cases
- Easy access to a number needs to be ensured
- Communication packet would include survey information, questions, PIN, and phone number

- If employee information is being encoded, then it should be called a demographic number and explained to employees, which should result in less resistance than a PIN number

PARTICIPATION

Q: Why was a self-use phone survey chosen over calling people, paper, or the web?

A: Everyone has a telephone which makes it the best medium to receive responses. There is also no data entry costs. Paper takes longer to complete, costs more, and it is sometimes difficult to assess responses. Web creates problems with data security, storage, and cookies identifying respondents. When Buck has called people in the past the response rate has dropped because the first reaction is to say that it is not a convenient time to answer questions. This method also costs more money.

Q: How many members are there in each group to be surveyed?

A: There are 15,000 faculty and staff and 45,000 students

The committee then made the following comments:

- Random sampling should be used
- Small enrollment plans might not yield significant results
- Global sample size needed to get accurate results
- If the goal of the survey is to foster buy-in from all people, create an opportunity for feedback, and be an educational tool, then everyone should be sent a survey
- Total participation is only needed at a later stage

Q: What is the minimum response rate and what happens if that is not achieved?

A: Roughly 40 - 60% is needed. If that is not reached, a survey announcement will be re-run either during the time to respond or after.

Professor McGehee said that a subcommittee would then work with Buck to develop a survey. The survey would be brought back to the full task force for approval.. He then asked for subcommittee volunteers. Gavin Watt, Bev Hall, and Linda Aaker volunteered. It was also suggested that someone from the Health Service Research Department be invited to join the subcommittee. With further questions, Dick McGehee thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Rebecca Hippert
University Senate