

Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC)
July 8, 2019
Minutes of the Meeting

[**In these minutes:** 2020 Medical Rates and Low Income Medical Relief Program Update; Dental Plan Administrator and Benefit Changes and 2020 Dental Rates; Wellbeing Program Changes; 2020 BAC Survey Update & Feedback; Discussion Regarding the Next BAC Chair]

PRESENT: Tina Falkner (chair), Dale Swanson (vice chair), Jon Christianson, Candice Kraemer, Cynthia Murdoch, Susanne Vandergon, Kim Little, Brenda Reeves, Connie Rosandich, Terri Wallace, Nancy Fulton, Kenneth Horstman, Amos Deinard, Greg Thurston, Susan Kratz, Mary Blissenbach

REGRETS: Fred Morrison, Christine Bakke, Deb Pavlica, Steff Yorek

ABSENT: Nikos Papanikolopoulos, Amy Monahan, Kathy Brown, Jakub Tolar, Christine O'Connor, Jennifer Schultz

GUESTS: None

OTHERS: Karen Chapin, Ryan Reisdorfer, Curt Swenson, Ryan Hanson, Karen Wallin, Linda Blake, Katie Kolodge, Doug Swyter, Laura Manydeeds, Josh Anderson

Chair Tina Falkner welcomed the committee, and members introduced themselves.

1. 2020 Medical Rates and Low Income Medical Relief Program Update - Ken Horstman, director of Total Compensation, Office of Human Resources (OHR), provided information to the committee regarding the UPlan's yearly health care cost per employee. This [graphic](#) demonstrates the overall trend of increases in health care costs from 2014 to 2019. Horstman also stated that the total annual costs per employee including premiums and out-of-pocket expenses declined over the 2014 to 2019 timeframe, as the percentage of the University contribution increased to above 76% of total annual health plan cost. The main factors for the overall increases include the rising number of high cost claimants (claims over \$50,000) and rising drug costs in the medical formulary. Horstman then stated that none of the UPlan medical plan benefits will change from 2019 to 2020. Overall, the 2020 standard biweekly premium rates for employees will see an [increase](#). While some plans included a decrease in premiums, such as an individual on an ACO plan, other had increases of about \$2-\$9 per paycheck. The largest increase in rates were applied to an employee with spouse and children coverage on the Medica Choice National plan, an increase of \$66.53 per paycheck.

Horstman noted that these rates are what the Office of Human Resources (OHR) are proposing to the Board of Regents (BOR) and will not be finalized until the BOR approves them. Additionally, Horstman informed the committee of the decision to discontinue the low income medical relief program. He noted that this program was meant to be a temporary fix to an increase in premiums in 2014 and to address a small decrease in benefit levels on the plans

implemented in 2014. This program was re-approved on a year to year basis. He said that information about the elimination of the plan will be sent to those employees currently utilizing the program in August.

Curt Swenson commented that many low income employee's wages have remained flat and the program was a great benefit to them. He asked how many people are currently on the program. Horstman stated that there are 995 on the program. Swenson further commented that this will hit the lowest income employees, many of whom find it difficult to earn wellness points to further offset their premiums.

Ryan Hanson concurred with Swenson's comments and added that this change will disproportionately impact labor represented groups and it appears as though the University is balancing its books on those who can least afford to be impacted. Swenson further asked what the cost of the program was in 2019. Horstman replied that it cost about \$421,000. Brenda Reeves and Candice Kraemer suggested that perhaps the program could not be eliminated altogether but offered to the lowest tiered wage employees. Horstman stated that he appreciated all of the comments from the committee and would take them back to OHR to have further discussions. He added that it is obviously challenging to keep costs as low as possible with nationwide healthcare costs trending upwards. He opined that the UPlan is better than many state, county, and municipal plans in Minnesota.

Susanne Vandergon stated that she is very appreciative of the level of coverage by the plan and is in favor of changes. Terri Wallace noted her own savings that she was able to attain after switching to an ACO plan from the National plan. Tina Falkner added that when the medical cost relief program was first implemented, it was intended to be used for a one year period.

2. Dental Plan Administrator and Benefit Changes and 2020 Dental Rates - Ryan

Reisdorfer, health programs manager, Office of Human Resources (OHR), announced that the dental plan RFP has been completed and Delta Dental will now be the sole dental administrator for the UPlan. He thanked Brenda Reeves and Terri Wallace who served as BAC representatives on the RFP committee. Reisdorfer stated that the committee felt Delta Dental presented a strong commitment to service to the University and a majority of employees (about 85%) are already in one of Delta's plans. OHR will develop information for those employees currently on one of the HealthPartners dental plans for transitioning to a new plan during open enrollment this fall. He noted that many providers offered by HealthPartners will be available on Delta plans with the notable exception of HealthPartners dental group providers.

Reisdorfer said that the rates for the dental plans will remain the same as they were in 2019, yet offer a slightly better benefit. The annual maximum for dental services will increase from \$1,800 to \$2,000 each year. Jon Christianson asked if there was anything from HealthPartners' presentation to the BAC that influenced the committee's decision. Reisdorfer replied that their particular presentation had no bearing on the decision to go with Delta Dental. Reeves commented that previously HealthPartners did fail to deliver on some prior commitments.

Horstman added that cost and less disruption were ultimately the deciding factors in retaining Delta.

3. Wellbeing Program Changes - Laura Manydeeds, Wellbeing Programs administrator, OHR, provided an update on changes to the Wellbeing Program for the 2019-20 school year. She began her presentation by providing a [slide deck](#) to the committee. It included a new mission statement for the program and highlighted the different ways the program aims to improve University employees' lives. Currently the Wellbeing Program focuses heavily on the physical wellbeing of the employee but in the future will aim to address other areas such as social, emotional, and environmental health. Manydeeds said that many of the changes to the program are intended to make it more inclusive and accessible and increase engagement over the course of the entire year.

Manydeeds continued by presenting the changes to the points system highlighted on pages nine through eleven of the slide deck. The most notable changes include rewarding points as they go. For example, a participant earning 2 points per visit for Fit Choices rather than waiting to see if the participant achieves 8 or 12 visits per month for six months. She added that some features were being removed, such as Weight Watchers, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, and the new employee eligibility waiver. Reimbursements for University classes have also been removed.

Christisanson asked if the Wellbeing Program disproportionately benefits higher income employees. Reisdorfer replied that there has been no analysis on that aspect of the program but noted that many people feel they cannot afford to take some of the classes offered. Swenson noted that the Journeys program is not very viable for those employees without daily access to a computer. Even though many of these programs can be done via the RedBrick app, a number of employees do not own smartphones. Hanson concurred and said that there seems to be a disconnect between healthcare decisions and their impact as it is harder for those who have a lower income to access these programs. Manydeeds added that several of the changes being made are trying to address these inequities and daily activities, such as routine stretching for Facilities Management employees, can be counted towards earning wellness points.

Cynthia Murdoch commented that the program still seemed to focus on physical health and asked how it is trying to address other aspects of overall health, such as mental health. Manydeeds replied that the program will see more efforts next year with the transition to the new vendor, Virgin Pulse. Kraemer added that the coaching options seemed very limited and that she had a difficult time finding availability. Kim Little asked how many employees start the program and how many finish. Manydeeds replied that about 39% finished the program last year, compared to 45% in 2017. She attributed the drop to the change of vendor in 2018. About 55-60% of all employees engage in something and more data will be available over time as the program continues.

4. 2020 BAC Survey Update & Feedback - Chris Kwapick, senate associate, University Senate Office, presented a copy of the proposed BAC survey for 2020. He noted that usually the survey goes out in February of each year and often at the last minute without much change.

Additionally, the survey often receives feedback from employees without contact information which can be troublesome. He then asked the committee for feedback on the changes.

Vandergon asked if the Google Form could have some better fonts so the text stands out better as well as additional prompts for name and information after a claim issue is identified. Kwapick replied that he would see if those changes could be made. Falkner noted that the form needs to be as accessible as possible for things like screen readers. Murdoch suggested paring down the opening paragraph so that people can move through the survey more quickly. Dale Swanson wanted to make sure that the survey is looking for input on all issues, not just claim issues. Swenson asked if the survey can go out in any version other than an online Google Form. Horstman said that while we could add phone or paper options, the committee should take a step back and ask what it is they are really looking for given the low turnout for the survey.

5. Discussion Regarding the Next BAC Chair - Falkner stated that the 2019-20 school year will be the final year of her chairing the BAC. She said it has been a rewarding experience but feels it is time for someone new to take over. She suggested that members consider running for the chair position and encouraged folks to reach out to her with any questions.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chris Kwapick
University Senate Office