

Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC)
May 9, 2019
Minutes of the Meeting

[**In these minutes:** Employee Benefits Update; Update on 2020 Rates; Plan Review - Prime Therapeutics; Employee Comments - Prime Therapeutics]

PRESENT: Tina Falkner (chair), Jon Christianson, Nikos Papanikolopoulos, Christine Bakke, Candice Kraemer, Cynthia Murdoch, Susanne Vandergon, Brenda Reeves, Connie Rosandich, Terri Wallace, Kenneth Horstman, Amos Deinard, Jody Ebert, Christine O'Connor

REGRETS: Dale Swanson (vice chair), Fred Morrison

ABSENT: Amy Monahan, Nancy Fulton, Steff Yorek, Susan Kratz, Carl Anderson, Kathy Brown, David Bodick, Jennifer Schultz

GUESTS: Megan Besser, senior account executive, Prime Therapeutics; Amy DeVeney, clinical program manager, Prime Therapeutics; Lauren Jolly, senior account manager, Prime Therapeutics

OTHERS: Karen Chapin, Ryan Reisdorfer, Mary Blissenbach, Curt Swenson, Ryan Hanson, Karen Wallin, Cherrene Horazuk

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

1. Employee Benefits Update - Ryan Reisdorfer, health programs manager, Office of Human Resources (OHR) notified the committee that he has a new member joining his team, Katie Kolodge, who will be serving in the area of health programs for OHR.

2. Update on 2020 Rates - Ken Horstman, director of total compensation, OHR, stated that the dental plan RFP is concluding soon and the contract must be in place prior to setting the UPlan rates for 2020. He anticipates having proposed rates for discussion by the early June meeting.

3. Plan Review - Prime Therapeutics - Falkner introduced Megan Besser, senior account executive, Prime Therapeutics; Amy DeVeney, clinical program manager, Prime Therapeutics; and Lauren Jolly, senior account manager, Prime Therapeutics, to provide a review of the University's pharmacy plan. Besser began the presentation by providing a [slide deck](#) to the committee and presenting an executive summary for 2018. Overall, she said, costs for the UPlan went up by 6.8% since 2017. During the same period, Prime's book of business (BoB) went up by 6.4%. Primary factors in the rise of costs is the rise in specialty medication costs. Individual member costs, however, are down by 0.9% and remain at a lower rate than Prime's BoB. Jon Christianson asked how the Fairview Specialty Pharmacy plan interacts with Prime. Besser responded that all specialty medication prescriptions are required to go through Fairview and Prime helps administer the programming.

Besser continued by outlining the top medication categories by cost. For traditional drugs, medications related to diabetes cost the plan the most money, she said. For specialty drugs, the highest costs are related to autoimmune illnesses. DeVeny stated that insulin is the main medication driving diabetic costs, yet some potentially positive news is that two of the most widely used insulin drugs, humalog and novolog, will have generic versions released over the course of the next year or so. This can potentially drive down costs by as much as 50%. Christianson and Jody Ebert both commented that even though generics can be good for cutting costs, pharmacies and regulators must be vigilant in making sure these drugs are safe and have the same effectiveness before moving patients off of the brand drug. Devaney then described autoimmune illnesses such as rheumatoid arthritis and ulcerative colitis, and the medications used to treat them. The top drugs for these illnesses, she said, include Humira and Enbrel. Cost for these drugs are typically high but can vary based on the method of delivery such as autoinjectors or self-administering multiple-use vials. Generics for these autoimmune diseases will not be available for another 15 years. For both diabetes and autoimmune disorders, Prime works with the drug companies to provide rebates in order to save on costs which go directly to the UPlan.

Besser then provided information comparing the University of Minnesota to other large universities in Prime's BoB. Compared to these other institutions, total cost per member per month at Minnesota is on the lower end of the scale. She said Prime is involved in the UPlan's Clinical Committee which partners with members of the University community and trade representatives to review clinical strategies to keep drug costs affordable for UPlan members. In 2018, the committee reviewed nearly 400 drug classes including 70 new drugs. This committee assists in making recommendations to move members to lower cost alternative drugs, usually generics. Terri Wallace commented that the prior authorization (PA) program is not quite perfect in that she recently received a PA notification and upon calling her pharmacy was informed that no changes were needed. Chapin said that some of those letters may have been sent inadvertently, since the drugs had already become generic, so a PA was no longer necessary.

DeVeny then described the oral oncology split fill program. In partnership with Fairview, oral oncology medications may cause adverse side effects that result in discontinuation of therapy for some members. A partial or "split fill" is available for members new to therapy to save money and reduce waste, she said. Prime has also implemented a new award-winning controlled substance management program which has helped curb the over-prescription of opioids. Finally, Besser addressed the merger with Walgreens for home delivery options and acknowledged that the rollout of the new program has been difficult. They are taking steps to improve customer service and account management.

Susanne Vandergon commented that she was involved in a medication recall and received an inordinate amount of literature and counter-intuitive instructions. She said better coordination would be useful. Deveney replied that recalls are usually classified and therefore different entities have different responsibilities in order to maintain patient privacy.

4. Employee Comments - Prime Therapeutics - Susanne Vandergon then gave an overview of University employee comments from the recent BAC [survey](#) regarding Prime Therapeutics.

There were 87 individual comments and 24% were positive in nature, she said. The remainder of comments varied but most focused on poor experiences. Several of the comments focused on the Walgreens home delivery merger and the issues surrounding that service.

Cherrene Horazuk added that it seems most of the complaints surround customer service issues, or roughly 30%, which is pretty significant. Chapin said that she checks with the OHR call center often and has very few mail order issues that come up at this point, although there were more issues when the program first became effective. Several of these issues are being resolved. Nikos Papanikolopoulos commented that generally the UPlan's pharmacy services are tremendous, especially given the number of medications covered. Falkner said we do have very rich benefits when it comes to the formulary and the price is not always a determining factor in approving medications.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chris Kwapick
University Senate Office