

ST. LOUIS COUNTY
HEALTH INSURANCE COMMITTEE

The St. Louis County Health Insurance Committee met on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in the County Board Conference Room. The meeting was called to order by Jim Gottschald, Committee Co-Chair.

Members Present:

Christina Hansen for Angie Mattsen	
Katie Finc	Ben Martin
Heather Ninfeldt	Tom Stanley
Jim Gottschald	Alicia Carrillo
Nancy Hintsa	Nancy Nilsen
Judy Wahlberg	Gordy Halverson
Krista Galatz	Kevin Gray
Mark Rubin	
Alyssa Schlichting for Mike McDougall	

Others Present:

Jeff Coenen	Charlie Hopkins
Beth Menor	Colleen Effinger
Jolene Jamnick	

The December and February minutes were approved by consensus with no requested changes. (1:12:02)

PRESENTATIONS

1. The first item from the agenda under Presentations was the Health Care Insights Report presented by Charlie Hopkins of BlueCross and BlueShield of Minnesota (BCBSM). Mr. Hopkins provided the written report as well as a county/city reference report. He highlighted the following from the reports that compared 2020 claims to 2019 claims:
 - On average, 6-7% of claims were delayed due to COVID
 - Plan paid PMPM (per member per month) decreased from \$602.16 to \$587.11 and was 14.9% higher than the reference population
 - Total PMPM at \$616.24 was similar to the reference population's \$600.98 PMPM due to a higher member cost share among the reference group
 - Top practice categories remained the same in 2020
 - Professional claims decreased by 15.7%
 - Pharmacy spend increased by 16.0%
 - Inpatient admission decreased by 14.3%, outpatient visits decreased by 11.9% and ER visits decreased by 18.9%
 - High cases, defined as claims over \$75,000, at \$412.09 PMPM was down from \$458.24 in 2019 but high cases had a larger impact on overall claims when compared to the City/County reference population which had a smaller spread from 2019 to 2020 at \$330.19 PMPM and \$312.00 PMPM respectively
 - High cases for cancer decreased and they increased in the trauma/accidents and musculoskeletal categories

- Despite the 20.6% increase in High Case spend, it was still 7% lower than 2018
- Surgical admissions dropped by 25% and maternity dropped by 15%
- Pharmacy spend on immunoglobulins increased from \$45,000 to \$246,000 which could have been as few as one member
- 176% increase in diagnosis of fever in ER

OLD BUSINESS

2. The first item from the agenda under Old Business was *Vision Plan Enrollment Changes* (0:30:54). Ms. Menor reported steady enrollment numbers in the first 2 years of the vision plan. In December of 2020 there were 564 employees and a total of 1,146 members enrolled and in May of 2021, 576 employees and 1,151 total members.
3. The next item from the agenda under Old Business was a *Dental Subcommittee Report* (0:33:00). Ms. Carrillo summarized the current coverages where employee dental coverage was self-insured and dependent dental coverage was fully-insured with Delta dental. Ms. Menor shared that had the dependent plan been self-insured, the self-insured fund balance would have benefitted in 2018 by \$84,609, in 2019 by \$93,805 and in 2020 by \$136,624. Ms. Carrillo noted that 2020 claims were impacted by COVID and that moving to self-insured would involve taking on any risk. Mr. Coenen added that dental claims tend to be consistent over time and that moving to self-funding made sense.

Ms. Carrillo presented three options:

- Merge both plans into one plan and match employee plan benefits while keeping the six-month waiting period for dependents for more intensive dental services
- Merge both plans into one plan and match employee plan benefits while keeping the deductibles and the six-month waiting period for more intensive dental services
- Keep plans separate and move the dependent plan from fully-insured to self-insured

Ms. Menor shared the subcommittee's conclusion that the premiums for options 1 and 2 were too high so the subcommittee would be exploring option 3 and instead of lowering premiums they would look for ways to increase benefits. Ms. Menor also shared that she contacted the ten Teamster enrollees to get their input as any changes to the dependent dental plan could affect their eligibility. Of the ten remaining enrollees, eight were unaware of their continued enrollment and expressed the desire to drop the duplicate coverage (their Teamster health plan included dental coverage for family members) immediately and two expressed their desire to drop the dependent plan in 2022 or 2023. Ms. Menor noted that the Teamsters new coverage and migration out of the dependent dental plan had a

negligible effect on membership as the dependent dental plan had been consistently growing over the last several years.

NEW BUSINESS

4. The first item from the agenda under New Business was a *COVID Cost Impact Update* by Mr. Hopkins of BCBSM (1:12:44). Overall COVID claims impact averaged between 1.2 to 2.5% in the BCBSM book of business. Our plan spent 2.7%, slightly above the average. The seven members who were treated inpatient for COVID incurred \$242,371 as of 4/17/21. COVID testing claims accounted for 57% of COVID spend for a total of \$494,198. COVID treatment claims totaled \$349,186 and accounted for 40% of COVID spend. COVID vaccine accounted for 3% of COVID spend as of 4/17/21. Most likely, vaccine spend wasn't yet captured by this report. Mr. Gottschald added that not all COVID claims were paid out of the health fund. Some were paid for with CARES act funding. He also added that not all COVID testing was captured by the health plan as COVID testing funding sources varied by location and provider.
5. The next item from the agenda under New Business was the *Auditor's Financial Report* by Ms. Nilsen (1:28:27). She reported that weekly claims payments were starting to creep up possibly indicating a release of pent-up healthcare demand during the pandemic. She noted that to date, the Teamster disenrollments had no significant effect on the fund. She expressed her belief that the 2021 year-end fund balance would likely land between the \$22,410,971 estimate and the \$17,181,165 budget columns on the report. Ms. Nilson added that the \$22,410,971 year-end fund balance estimate would have been approximately \$600,000 lower had it not been for the CARES Act funding that reimbursed some COVID-related claims.
6. The next item from the agenda under New Business was the High Case Report by Mr. Hopkins of BCBSM (1:33:50). High Case claimants (cases over \$100,000 since 1/1/2021) accounted for 10.34% of spend. There were 6 high case claimants year-to-date in 2021. Most had comorbidities and top diagnoses included COVID-19, kidney failure, obesity, cancer, metabolic disorders and heart disease. The high case claims take longer to process hence, Mr. Hopkins cautioned that there were likely more claims pending.

OTHER BUSINESS

7. The first item under Other Business was a new product and new CEO at BCBSM (0:26:50). Mr. Hopkins reported that Dr. Sammit recently retired and the board chair would serve as the interim CEO through the end of the year while a new CEO was recruited. Coupe Health will be a new product line that simplifies the process of comparing quality and cost (final amount member pays). Coupe Health will be a new platform with greater levels of transparency. Mr. Hopkins committed to a more detailed presentation on Coupe Health at a future meeting.

8. The next item under Other Business was an inquiry by Ms. Carrillo on behalf of her members on the percentage of St. Louis County employees who have been vaccinated (1:41:25). Mr. Gottschald offered the data point that 62% of all St. Louis County residents had completed at least one COVID vaccine shot. He added that not all vaccines will be billed through the health plan and employees are not asked by their employer so this data is not able to be tracked.
9. The next item under Other Business was a Wellness update by Mr. Gottschald (1:44:00). Mr Gottschald had three brief updates: 1) Total Wellness participation remained steady (900+) in 2021, 2) Ms. Kari and Commissioner Jewel were creating five different bike rides on St. Louis County trails both north and south, and 3) the farmers market will ramp up in August.
10. The next item under Other Business was a request by Ms. Menor for committee feedback on the format of future meetings (1:46:40). The Committee feedback was to stay in the virtual format for July and reassess at that time. Mr. Gottschald did state that the St. Louis River room would be best venue for hybrid meetings.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth J. Menor
Senior Benefits Advisor