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Correspondence Memorandum

DATE: January 26, 2016

TO: Group Insurance Board

FROM: Vickie Baker, Ombudsperson
Liz Doss-Anderson, Ombudsperson
James Kates, Ombudsperson

SUBJECT: Ombudsperson Services 2015 Quality Assurance Activities Report

This memo is for informational purposes only. No Board action is required.

Ombudsperson Services staff work with various Divisions and Offices throughout the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) on initiatives related to the quality of service received by Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) members regarding administration of their benefits. Through our day-to-day interactions with members we identify areas of concern and those in need of clarification or focus in order to make large-scale improvements. Ombudsperson Services then provides quality-related recommendations to managers throughout the Department. These improvements benefit all parties, notably members, employers, plans and third-party administrators.

As ombudspersons, we have multiple daily contacts with WRS members, plan contacts and employers. As a result of these interactions, we learn about the issues, questions and problems our members experience with their health, pharmacy and dental plans. We are often the first ones at ETF to know about a problem, issue or concern. On occasion we see several of our members encounter the same issue or we consider whether a single reported problem may actually result in a number of our members being impacted. This report provides an overview of our quality assurance activities in 2015.

Benefits Administration

Ombudsperson Services staff respond to members' inquiries and complaints primarily regarding health insurance and prescription drug benefit administration. These types of member contacts may involve questions or concerns about how a benefit is structured, how a plan is following contract requirements or clarification of a benefit so a member has a better understanding of his or her benefits.

Reviewed and Approved by David H. Nispel, General Counsel,
Legal Services

Electronically Signed: 1/29/16

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For example, Ombudsperson Services:

- Participated, along with the Office of Strategic Health Policy (OSHP), in monthly meetings with a health plan experiencing persistent customer service issues. The meetings resulted in systemic changes and monitoring of several matters concerning individual members. As a result of these contacts, the plan is now billing direct-pay retirees through a single monthly invoice that is less confusing for members than the two separate invoices they previously received.
- Worked in conjunction with OSHP to remedy a systems error with one of the health plans. The plan had Medicare enrollees set up incorrectly in their system, and these members were being assessed 10 percent coinsurance for non-Medicare covered services. The effort resulted in the reprocessing and correct payment of 76 claims for WRS members.
- Reviewed complaint codes health plans use in annual reports at the request of the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance for purposes of consistency in reporting.

Publications, Correspondence and Website Information

Quality assurance efforts by Ombudsperson Services include assistance with periodic evaluation and updating of ETF's benefit publications. These include: timely issuance of ETF website updates to assist our members in understanding new topics related to WRS benefits and working internally with the health plans in order to clarify or correct WRS benefit information in their materials.

A majority of our quality assurance work focuses on health insurance benefits and the information provided in ETF's yearly It's Your Choice (IYC) outreach materials and at health fairs. These materials underwent significant changes in 2015. ETF forms associated with health insurance enrollment were updated, and information provided to our members by their individual health plans was reviewed by ETF staff.

For example, Ombudsperson Services:

- Reviewed and edited the Sick Leave Conversion Credit Program booklet, along with staff from OSHP and the Division of Retirement Services.
- Reviewed and commented on PowerPoint slides for Domestic Relations Order webinars for various audiences, including active employees, annuitants, and private attorneys.
- Recommended revisions to the Health Insurance Application/Change Form.

- Reviewed, commented and edited online and print materials related to IYC and the health benefit changes for 2016.
- When system errors related to enrollment files occurred, Ombudsperson Services staff worked collaboratively with department staff to ensure the ETF Call Center and affected parties were aware of the situation and any remedies available to members.

Technology-Related Efforts

In our role as ombudspersons we are involved in the support and maintenance of internal IT systems as well as providing feedback to technical staff regarding performance issues or areas in need of quality improvement. Ombudsperson Services has also provided extensive subject matter expertise to the Department's major IT initiative: implementation of the new Benefit Administration System (BAS) known as myETF.

For example, Ombudsperson Services:

- Served as subject matter experts in development of myETF requirements.
- Participated in testing of new parts of myETF and reviewing work orders for completeness.
- Served as a member of the BAS Quality Assurance, Performance and Support Team which provided day-to-day staff support during myETF Rollout 1.
- Maintained coding in the Benefit Complaint System to be consistent with myETF Benefits (MEBS), new program option names and the stand-alone dental plan.

Looking Ahead – 2016

With the significant changes to the health insurance program for 2016, Ombudsperson Services staff will continue to monitor health plans compliance with the new coverage provisions. We have already seen different interpretations by plans of the Habilitation Services coverage that was added to the contract for 2016. Coverage under the new separate dental contract has also been in the forefront with ETF staff making sure that those who decline dental coverage or those who elect dental coverage have correct contracts in place. 2016 is a year of many changes, and Ombudsperson Services will respond to the concerns and issues these changes represent for WRS members.

Staff will be available at the Board meeting to answer questions.