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## Correspondence Memorandum

**Date:** January 23, 2017  
**To:** Group Insurance Board  
**From:** Liz Doss-Anderson, Ombudsperson  
James Kates, Ombudsperson  
Mary Richardson, Ombudsperson  
Dan Hayes, Supervising Attorney  
**Subject:** Ombudsperson Services 2016 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 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 communications 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 affect a large number of members. This report provides an overview of our quality assurance activities in 2016.

### Benefits Administration

Ombudsperson Services staff respond to members' inquiries and complaints primarily regarding health insurance and prescription drug benefit administration. These 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 members have a better understanding of their benefits.

Reviewed and approved by David Nispel, General Counsel, Legal Services

Electronically Signed 1/27/17

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For example, Ombudsperson Services:

- Along with the Office of Strategic Health Policy (OSHP) began monthly meetings with a health plan experiencing ongoing customer service and enrollment and eligibility issues. With monthly meetings planned throughout the year, we intend to address concerns with termination of direct pay contracts and the disabled dependent review process in addition to any other issues that arise during the year.
- Identified a health plan's members being incorrectly assessed office visit copayments due to an enrollment error at the plan. The plan took corrective action on member enrollment records and reprocessed claims for members.
- Discovered incorrect deductible amounts listed for the IYC Access Plan on the ETF web site. Verified corrections on web site for accuracy.
- Worked with OSHP staff to ensure members had a correct understanding of the pharmacy benefit manager's exception to coverage and copayment reduction processes.
- Regularly collaborated with OSHP staff on benefit clarification for members and plans when there was a discrepancy in understanding how a benefit of the plan contract is administered.

### **Publications, Correspondence and Website Information**

Quality assurance efforts by Ombudsperson Services include assistance with periodic evaluation and updating of ETF's benefit publications. 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, are two major examples.

Much 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. 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:

- Participated in OSHP's Member Communication and Education Workgroup, which focused on development of consumer friendly materials for the It's Your Choice period.
- Participated in a Department-wide focus group that made recommendations and revisions to the Health Insurance Application/Change Form.

- Provided feedback to the Office of Communications on various aspects of IYC open enrollment materials, including web site content and brochures.

### **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 for the Department's major IT initiative: implementation of the new Benefit Administration System (BAS) known as myETF.

For example, Ombudsperson Services:

- Served as a member of the ETF Change Management workgroup. In particular, this group focused on Department changes, their impact on employees, and particularly changes that relate to the BAS and ETF's eventual move to a new building.
- Served as subject matter experts in development of myETF business requirements and bridging of information from the Benefit Complaint System (BCS) to myETF.
- Participated in testing of myETF and reviewing work orders for completeness.
- Maintained coding in the Benefit Complaint System to be consistent with myETF Benefits (MEBS).
- Provided testing and feedback regarding the new StayWell wellness web site portal.

### **Looking Ahead – 2018**

With significant changes to the health insurance program expected for 2018, Ombudsperson Services staff will continue to monitor communication to members about these changes and work to ensure that health plans remain in compliance with the any new plan designs.

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