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Correspondence Memorandum

Date: October 23, 2017
To: Group Insurance Board
From: Liz Doss-Anderson, Ombudsperson
James Kates, Ombudsperson
Mary Richardson, Ombudsperson
Dan Hayes, Attorney/Supervisor
Subject: Ombudsperson Services 2017 Outreach and Education Report

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

The goal of Ombudsperson Services is to provide Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) members with the highest level of customer service related to benefits administered by the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF). In addition, Ombudsperson Services staff provides recommendations to various ETF Divisions and Offices based on day-to-day interactions with members, employers, health plans, and third-party administrators. These recommendations are based on issues these stakeholders identify, as well as any benefit program area in need of clarification or continuing education.

Ombudsperson Services informs the Group Insurance Board (Board) about its activities via two annual reports, the Quality Assurance Activity report, presented in February; and the Outreach and Education report, presented in November. These reports supplement the Semi-Annual and Annual Contact reports and Annual Health Plan Grievance & Independent Review report that Ombudsperson Services provides the Board.

Examples of Ombudsperson Services Education Efforts November 2016 – October 2017

- Participated in workgroups that included the Office of Strategic Health Policy (OSHP), Office of Communications, and others throughout the department in efforts focused on member education and outreach initiatives. Topics included health plan changes and development of the It's Your Choice (IYC) 2018 printed materials, eLearnings, and web-based information. Significant changes were made to the IYC materials this year, particularly those posted on ETF's website.

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

Electronically Signed 11/1/17

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- Participated in the development of eLearning modules that included health insurance topics such as Medicare, It's Your Choice (IYC) open enrollment, and high deductible health plans/health savings accounts.
- Provided the Group Insurance Board with the 2016 Annual Grievance & Independent Review and Member Contact Report and Semi-Annual Contact Report for the first six months of 2017.
- Responded to member questions and concerns on a wide variety of insurance-related topics, including inquiries associated with the concept of self-insurance.
- Participated in 2018 IYC kickoff events for state employers and participating local government employers and answered audience questions.

Examples of Ombudsperson Services Outreach Efforts

November 2016 – October 2017

- Provided resources and informational materials at the Wisconsin Coalition of Annuitants annual meeting in May.
- Ombudsperson Services and OSHP staff presented information to the UW Retiree Association regarding the IYC open enrollment period, changes to the health insurance program for 2018, how the state's program coordinates with Medicare, and utilizing accumulated sick leave accounts.
- Presented information on 2018 IYC open enrollment and program changes to staff at the Board on Aging and Long Term Care. Among other activities, the Board operates the Medigap Helpline and has frequent contact with WRS members on issues related to health insurance.
- Staffed booths at six of ETF's busiest benefit fairs during the 2018 IYC open enrollment period. There was more traffic at the benefit fairs in the southeast this year due to questions and concerns members raised regarding the changes in available health plans.

Looking Ahead

Given the significant changes in available health plans and provider networks, member education and assistance will be important throughout 2018. This is particularly true for members in the eastern part of the state and for those who are transitioning during complex care regimens. Members in the IYC Access plan, IYC Medicare Plus, and State Maintenance Plan who are switching to WEA Trust have also been making inquiries to Ombudsperson Services, and we expect this to continue. We also will be educating members on the change in IYC Access Plan's benefit package as it begins offering Uniform Benefits in 2018.

While Uniform Benefits remains largely unchanged in 2018, we do expect to educate members on the changes to the pharmacy benefit, such as those related to specialty pharmacy, mail order pharmacy, and provider network. We will also provide member education in areas that will be similar to those encountered in 2016. These include the differences between the High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) and the IYC plans, the option to opt-out of the health insurance program, the Uniform Dental Benefit and the option to opt out of receiving it, and transitioning to Medicare coverage. Our goal is to further ETF's emphasis on customer service while assisting in ETF staff education and training, particularly for those staff who help members understand the critical and complex insurance benefits.

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