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Correspondence Memorandum

Date: October 18, 2019

To: Group Insurance Board

From: Liz Doss-Anderson, Ombudsperson
 Mary Richardson, Ombudsperson
 Dan Hayes, Attorney/Supervisor
 Office of Legal Services

Subject: Ombudsperson Services 2019 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 2018 – October 2019:**

- Participated in workgroups throughout the Department, including those in the Office of Strategic Health Policy and the Office of Communications, designed to improve member communications and outreach activities. These included Medicare Advantage implementation, Connect Your Care implementation, It's Your Choice (IYC) 2020 printed materials, videos and web site information.

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

David H. Nispel Electronically Signed 10/28/19

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- Provided the Group Insurance Board with the 2018 Annual Grievance & Independent Review and Member Contact Report and Semi-Annual Contact Report for the first six months of 2019.
- Participated in the development of video modules covering health insurance topics such as explaining the many ways to access emergency or urgent care, explaining Nurse on Call and Telehealth options, and creating a checklist to gather information in advance so it is ready when a member needs it .
- Responded to member questions and concerns on a variety of insurance-related topics, such as benefits and plan coverage, dental benefits, how to appeal denied claims, and member suggestions for improving the insurance programs. We also educated members on Medicare-related issues, including how the group health insurance program coordinates with Medicare and the importance of enrolling in Medicare when they need to do so to avoid costly claims and Medicare penalties.
- Provided input for a variety of ETF publications through the Customer Interaction Council, an internal workgroup.
- Attended the 2020 open enrollment employer kickoff event for state employers and participating local government employers.

Examples of Ombudsperson Services Outreach Efforts

November 2018 – October 2019:

- Participated in the Wisconsin Coalition of Annuitants Annual meeting in May. Approximately 75 annuitants attended. Provided resources and information for members.
- Provided information on 2019 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, Medicare and prescription drug coverage.
- Staffed ETF's information tables at three high-traffic benefits fairs during the open enrollment period. The fairs were at UW–Madison, the Department of Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King.

Looking Ahead

The 2020 plan year will see relatively few changes in Uniform Benefits, but we have begun to receive questions related to new coverage for bariatric surgery and will likely see continued interest next year. We anticipate inquiries about Uniform Dental Benefits and the new option for members who do not participate in the group health plan to purchase coverage. We also plan to assist members with issues related to the new

“Medicare Some” contracts for family coverage when one or more family members are on Medicare and others are not.

We will continue to collaborate with other divisions and offices within the Department on projects such as developing videos and other print and online educational materials for members.

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