

From: [Schulze Connie R](#)
To: [ETF SMB Board Feedback](#)
Cc: [Sieg, Tricia - ETF](#); [Bhagavath Bala](#)
Subject: Letter--GIB--November 2021
Date: Friday, November 12, 2021 9:54:38 AM
Attachments: [Letter--GIB--November 2021_BB_LR.pdf](#)

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Good morning. Please find attached a letter from UW Health physician leaders expressing our support for expanding coverage for WRS employees. Specifically, coverage for diagnosis and treatment of infertility. We would very much appreciate it if the board considered this request at their meeting in February of next year (2022). Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you!

Connie Schulze
Director, Government Affairs
UW Health & UW School of Medicine and Public Health
Madison, WI
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Contact: Connie Schulze
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November 12, 2021

Group Insurance Board
c/o Board Liaison
Department of Employee Trust Funds
PO Box 7931 Madison, WI 53707-7931
Sent via email transmittal to BoardFeedback@etf.wi.gov

RE: Coverage for the diagnosis of and treatment for infertility

Dear Chairperson Day and Members of the Board:

UW Health is home to the specialty clinic, Generations Fertility Care where the mission is to assist in building the next generation by providing everyone the opportunity to have a family. We deliver remarkable, accessible and innovative fertility care to help patients achieve one of life's greatest joys - having a baby. However, for many patients our services are out of reach because as WRS participants, fertility coverage is an uncovered benefit. **Therefore, we ask that you include coverage for the diagnosis of and treatment for infertility in Wisconsin's group health plan at your February 2022 meeting.**

Infertility is recognized as a disease by the World Health Organization, the American Medical Association, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists whereas the US supreme court has ruled that it is a disability. Infertility is defined as a broad disease state that encompasses the inability to achieve a viable pregnancy within one year of attempting to conceive, and it is a condition affecting millions of patients in the United States. In Wisconsin, the number is 172,000+.

The impact of the disease can be devastating; studies on the psychosocial impact of infertility have placed it on par with a diagnosis of cancer. Furthermore, 40% of women struggling to conceive suffer from anxiety and depression which is twice the rate seen in fertile women. In extreme cases, this can lead to thoughts of or attempts of suicide.

We contend, infertility treatment should be a covered benefit for these reasons:

1. Employee satisfaction is 4 times better when IVF is covered and their likelihood of missing work is 2.5 times less when IVF is covered.
2. Cost of fertility care is miniscule compared to many other universally covered procedures and 97% of employers report no increase in cost per member per month.
3. Lack of fertility coverage increases health disparity as it disproportionately impacts Black, Hispanic and cancer patients. University of Michigan found that fertility coverage leveled the playing field with the largest increase in use of fertility services was among the supplemental staff and students.

In conclusion, reproduction is a major life activity as recognized by WHO and the US Supreme Court. With

10-20% of employees affected by the condition, we have the power to improve employee satisfaction, wellness and address health disparity by providing fertility coverage for minimal to no additional cost increase in the premium.

Thank you for your consideration and please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bhagavath".

Bala Bhagavath, MD
Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology
Director, Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility
Medical Director, Generations Fertility Care

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurel W. Rice".

Laurel W. Rice, MD
Ben Miller Peckham, MD, PhD, Chair in Obstetrics and Gynecology
Chair and Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
UW Madison School of Medicine and Public Health



STATE OF WISCONSIN
Department of Employee Trust Funds
A. John Voelker
SECRETARY

Wisconsin Department
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November 15, 2021

Connie Schulze
cschulze@uwhealth.org

Dear Connie Schulze:

Your Board Correspondence letter has been received by the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF).

If the correspondence was received at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to a board meeting, it will be distributed at that meeting.

The Group Insurance Board will receive your correspondence unedited and unredacted. Subject to the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law, any consideration and discussion of the correspondence may occur at the board meeting.

Correspondence received by a board will be posted on the ETF website after it is reviewed for any redaction that might be necessary pursuant to applicable state or federal law. Absent specific, written authorization from the individual, ETF is prohibited from posting HIPAA protected health information on the ETF website. In addition, your correspondence may be subject to the Wisconsin Public Records Law.

Regards,

Kimberly Schnurr
Board Liaison, Office of the Secretary