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***Correspondence Memorandum***

**Date:** October 20, 2022

**To:** Group Insurance Board

**From:** Liz Doss-Anderson, Ombudsperson Services  
 Mary Richardson, Ombudsperson Services  
 Office of the Secretary

**Subject:** 2022 Ombudsperson Services Member Education and Outreach Report

**This memo is for informational purposes only. No Board Action is required.**

The goal of Ombudsperson Services (OS) is to provide Wisconsin Retirement System members with the highest level of customer service related to escalated issues regarding their ETF-administered benefits. In addition, OS staff provide 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.

OS informs the Group Insurance Board (Board) about its activities via two annual reports: the Quality Assurance Activity Report presented in February, and the Education and Outreach Report presented in November. These reports supplement the Semi-Annual and Annual Case Reports, and the Annual Health Plan Grievance and Independent Review Report that OS provides the Board.

As with last year, OS focused on issues and initiatives that would help members understand their benefits and services available from their health plan, the Pharmacy Benefit Manager, and our supplemental plans. Due to the exit of WEA Trust (WEA) and the addition of new plans, new networks and new administrators, OS staff have been involved in cross-functional member communication strategizing and planning to anticipate and address member questions with the onset of It's Your Choice (IYC) 2023. Assisting members beginning their transition of care from their current plan to their new plan chosen during Open Enrollment (OE) may require OS intervention to facilitate transitions for members with complex care.

*Pamela L Henning*

Reviewed and approved by Pam Henning, Assistant Deputy Secretary  
 Electronically Signed 10/26/2022

Board	Mtg Date	Item #
GIB	11.16.22	14F

**Table 1: Examples of OS Member Education and Outreach (Nov. 2021—Oct. 2022)**

<b>Topics Based on Issues or Cases</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action</b>
Health Plan Changes	2023 changes are significant: WEA exiting the Group Health Insurance Program (GHIP), a new health plan entering the GHIP, network changes, new administrators for Access, State Maintenance Plan (SMP) and Medicare Plus.	<p>Advocated enhanced communications as a member of ETF’s Member Communication and Education Committee</p> <p>Participated in planning and development of the “Transitioning to a Different Health Plan” video.</p> <p>Actively participated in IYC Project Team activities including updates to the Benefit Complaint System (system of record for OS cases).</p>
ETF Website Clarity	Some webpages warrant updating for consistency and improved navigation based on year-long interactions with members providing feedback to OS (Quality Assurance).	<p>Communicated to IYC OE project team and Office of Communications for 2023 IYC consideration.</p> <p>Provided member feedback on search results improvements regarding topics such as the various “Certificate of Coverages”, increased visibility of the Optum Portal on our web site and a link to the most current Navitus and Medicare D Rx Formularies.</p>
COVID-19 Benefit Coverage	Federal rules were fluid, requiring the need for timely updates regarding test kit coverage for both non-Medicare members and Medicare members as coverage guidelines changed.	Worked collaboratively with Office of Strategic Health Policy (OSHP) and Office of Communications (OC) to update ETF website.
Dental and Vision Coverage	Members lack understanding that the list in the IYC guide is a partial list of all benefits and limitations; and to contact Supplemental Plans Delta Dental and Delta Vision for the complete list.	Worked with OSHP and OC to improve language in IYC web pages and Decision Guides.

Topics Based on Issues or Cases	Description	Action
Local Employers with High Deductible Health Plans (HDHP) and Medicare Enrollment	Plans unclear about claims processing for retirees when their former employer has chosen a HDHP, and the member is on Medicare.	Worked with OSHP staff who, in turn, educated health plans on the process at the Council on Health Care Improvement September 2022 meeting.
Grievance and ETF Administrative Review Process	Based on member feedback, webpages that clearly explain the plans grievance process and the ETF Administrative Review Process is needed.	Working with OSHP to enhance ETF webpages in 2023.  Provided refresher training to ETF Call Center staff on OS functions, health plan grievance process and the different levels of Administrative Review available to members at ETF.

### Looking Ahead

During the months of November, December, and, most commonly, January, OS receives an increase in contacts from members who have enrollment issues related to changes they made either during OE or as a new hire. Working with internal staff, employers, and the members, OS helps to resolve these issues in a timely manner.

We anticipate helping members who are having difficulty transitioning to their new health plan. OS is proactively preparing to assist members in the following areas:

- Finding access to new providers
- Giving assistance for prior authorization
- Finding ancillary providers for items like durable medical equipment and diabetic supplies, and hearing aid repair services.

The updated grievance information on the ETF website is to be completed in the first quarter of 2023. In addition, we will update the OS brochure to include the health plan grievance process and other helpful resources. Finally, we will continue to collaborate with other ETF divisions and offices on projects such as developing online resources, eLearning programs, and other print and online educational materials for members about how best to access and resolve issues related to their benefits.

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