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SECRETARY

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## Correspondence Memorandum

**Date:** April 18, 2023  
**To:** Group Insurance Board  
**From:** Tricia Sieg, Pharmacy Benefits Program Manager  
Office of Strategic Health Policy  
**Subject:** 2023 Program Agreement Update

**This memo is for information purposes only. No Board action is required.**

### Background

On February 10, 2023, a health plan in the Group Insurance Board's (Board's) Group Health Insurance Program contacted the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) regarding coverage of needles and syringes used for members to administer prescription drugs other than insulin. The health plan had a member who was prescribed a new self-injectable drug and inquired about coverage under the pharmacy benefit. The health plan stated it did not cover these supplies under the medical benefit. At the time of the call, the pharmacy benefit only covered smaller gauge insulin syringes, per the certificate of coverage for pharmacy.

### Information Gathering

ETF surveyed health plans to determine whether they included coverage of non-insulin syringes under their medical benefits. Five plans covered larger gauge needles and syringes under their medical benefit as durable medical equipment. The five remaining vendors did not provide coverage for needles and syringes but relied on pharmacy benefits for coverage.

The Board's pharmacy benefit manager, Navitus Health Solutions (Navitus), noted that most of its clients include coverage of all needles and syringes on the pharmacy formulary. Navitus also stated that the cost of adding the coverage of all needles and syringes would be minimal.

### Coverage Updated

Based on this information and in keeping with uniform coverage for all members, all non-insulin needles and syringes were added to the commercial pharmacy formulary as of April 1, 2023. Larger needles and syringes are now covered on the commercial pharmacy formulary with a 20% copay requirement from members. This is the same

Reviewed and approved by Eileen Mallow, Director, Office of Strategic Health Policy  
Electronically Signed 04/25/2023

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level of coverage as other medical devices and supplies on the commercial pharmacy formulary, including respiratory therapy supplies.

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