

From: [REDACTED]
To: [ETF SMB Board Feedback](#)
Subject: Retired State of WI employee health insurance
Date: Wednesday, November 27, 2024 12:09:58 PM

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My husband and I are both retired from [REDACTED].

I wanted to give some input about our current Medicare advantage program available through United Health Care. Many of our friends and relatives have Medicare advantage programs and seem to have more/better benefits and a much lower premium than the program retired [REDACTED] employees are offered.

1. Can additional dental and vision benefits be considered as part of our Medicare Advantage plan?
2. If not, could the supplemental dental and vision insurance currently offered be paid for by accumulated sick leave?
3. Can an over-the-counter allowance benefit be added to our Medicare Advantage plan?

Thank you,
Mary Fendry



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

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December 6, 2024

Mary Fendry
[REDACTED]

Dear Mary Fendry,

Thank you for your November 27, 2024, email to the Group Insurance Board (Board) and the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) regarding your concerns about benefits under the It's Your Choice Medicare Advantage (IYC MA) plan and the use of accumulated sick leave conversion credits (sick leave).

You asked if the IYC MA plan could be changed to include dental and vision coverage. These benefits are currently available to retirees. The Board selected Delta to administer these benefits. If that contract was terminated and dental and vision benefits were added to health plan benefits, like IYC MA, provider networks and plan administration would vary plan by plan and the cost for those benefits would be added to the medical benefit premium. The Board used this model many years ago for preventive dental coverage and found that it was more cost effective when provided by one vendor. Further, following consolidation of benefits under Delta, customer service became more consistent.

You asked if sick leave could be used to pay for dental or vision coverage. The sick leave conversion program was designed to help pay the cost of health insurance that is offered by the health plans under contract with the Board for retired state employees. State law doesn't allow the credits to be used for any other purpose. It should be noted that for retirees who elect uniform dental coverage, that is, the preventive care benefit, those premiums are included in health insurance premiums. Therefore, when elected, sick leave is used to pay for them.

You asked if an over the counter allowance could be added to the IYC MA plan. The Board and ETF work to keep benefits as consistent as possible across contracted health plans. Therefore, if this benefit was added to IYC MA, it would likely be added to all plans. Currently, members with Health Savings Accounts or employees with Flexible Spending Accounts can use those dollars to pay for over the counter items like band aids. So, while this benefit could be added, it would duplicate benefits available elsewhere for certain members, and would add a cost to the medical plan.

Note that Navitus Health Solutions (Navitus) does cover some over the counter (OTC) drugs. I am attaching Navitus' 2025 Medicare Part D formulary. The explanation about coverage for OTC drugs is on page 5. Drugs that are OTC and covered on the formulary have the letters OTC in their name. If you open the PDF and press "CTRL" and "F" simultaneously, then search for OTC, you will find those drugs on the formulary. They are covered at the Level identified in the center column. For example, you would pay \$5 for a Level 1 drug.

When comparing the IYC MA plan to other Medicare Advantage plans, keep in mind that the IYC Medicare Advantage plan is ETF's custom group Medicare Advantage passive PPO plan. This plan has low medical out-of-pocket costs, with the same "uniform benefit" services

covered received as active employees and offers access to providers nationwide. Many individual Medicare Advantage plans have very limited provider networks, different benefits and may have higher out-of-pocket costs. Also note that the IYC MA plan premium includes Part D coverage through Navitus.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have additional questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out using the contact information provided below. A copy of your letter and ETF's response will be included in the materials for the February 21, 2024, Board meeting.

Sincerely,

Arlene Larson, Manager of Federal Program and Policy
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