

**Benefits Focus Group Minutes  
(11/03/04)**

**(In attendance, alphabetically listed)**

**Note: Names listed are BFG members; non-members may attend but are not always listed.**

<u>Regular Members</u>	<u>Alternate Members</u>	<u>Staff Advisors</u>	<u>Recorder</u>
John Agen	Joyce Dolan	Robert Blinch-Edwards	Diane Vanderwest
Gil Fernandez	Nancy Meskimen	Linda McKinney	
Bette Fritz			
John Glanden			
Pat Horan			
Bill Gaines	<u>Also Present</u>		
Dick Minster	Capt. Al Woodle		
Benita Saldutti	Capt. Tom Laracey		
Louise Van Pelt			
Ed Whitehead			

**Call to Order- Chairperson**

John Agen called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m., Wednesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004.

**Roll Call**

Diane Vanderwest called the roll. Bill Gaines of the Engineering Department is a new member replacing Karen Lusk.

**Approval of Minutes**

John Agen called for approval of the minutes from the last meeting. The minutes from October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004, were approved.

**Monthly Cost Review – Linda McKinney**

Linda reviewed the monthly medical/pharmacy cost charts with details of totals. We are \$1 million over for 10 months through July with total costs topping \$8 million projected for the whole FY. These costs do not include stop-loss coverage, auxiliary costs or third party administrator or associated costs to run a self-insured plan.

On a more positive note, for the first time since 2002, prescription drug costs have gone below \$100,000 for a one-month period. They have topped out at over \$180,000 in February of 2004. Other good news for the month of July is for the first time since January our monthly costs have gone below \$700,000 per month.

Any rebates or reimbursements from stop-loss insurance claims over \$150,000 go back into the medical fund, tracked by the Finance Department on their monthly breakdowns.

Benita asked about the plan starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005. Linda advised that the goal is to have this all fairly resolved before January implementation. At, this time, the non-represented employees and the retirees will pay the new amounts that have been posted for the online sign-up and active employees will start paying the \$5/wk. Last year the Teamsters agreed to spousal surcharge, so that is also in effect for January. PBA has not agreed to that at this point. And, no final decision has been made for future retiree costs at this point. Linda will get clarification on whether the plan's final form (cost increase, with no plan change) will go to the commissioners for a vote or be an administrative signoff.

### **Alternative Medicine – Robert Blinch-Edwards**

Robert presented handouts to members and provided information on CAM, complementary alternative medicine and holistic medicine. Acupuncture and chiropractic care are forms of alternative medicine. There are many websites available on the subject of holistic medicine, which has been around for many, many years. CAM programs vary with regard to costs and require time to show results. Before an individual starts a type of CAM program, consult with your primary care physician.

There was a short discussion on the unavailability of flu shots for this year.

Linda advised that for the December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004, regular BFG meeting, Mark Wilkinson and Larry Stine, representatives of AIG/Valic would be here to speak to the group and answer questions about VEBA's.

Robert briefly discussed American Health Holding, a disease management program, which is also a wellness program with a health risk assessment incentive. The program is set up for 24/7 availability with a nurse and an EMI case manager for health care and concerns. Sarasota County is in the process to introduce this for next year. Representatives from American Health Holding will meet with the BFG in January at the regular BFG meeting, 1:00-3:00 pm, January 5, 2005 to be held in the Commission Chambers.

It was suggested that we move forward with a comprehensive wellness program for 2006. A comprehensive program would have high-risk CPT coded members contacted and guided through follow-ups with a wellness coach. Due to HIPPA, the City does not know which individuals have high-risk codes. Only aggregate information such as the code description and quantities are known. American Health Holding could lay the foundation and provide that third party proactive approach for certain high-risk health profiles and will be addressed and presented in the January BFG meeting to see if that company is something we are interested in pursuing.

Robert also mentioned a company called A to Z, E-Benefit, an on-line program that allows you to privately check your health options for alternative medicine or therapy. There are many online health sites for alternative health suggestions.

Linda could not commit to Robert's suggestion to have HCS come in and be a part of a comprehensive program to provide wellness workshops to benefit the employee as well as the employer. Robert could also

provide information on the cost benefit analysis proposal. It would also be necessary to have a baseline or assessment model from which to build the program to know whether it is making a difference or not.

Robert provided a handout presentation of the City of Gainesville's award-winning wellness program.

**Adjournment and Next Meeting**

John Agen adjourned the meeting at 2:15 p.m. The next meeting will be *Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004*, 1:00-3:00 p.m. in Room #100 of the Federal Building.

/dv

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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John Agen, Chairperson, or  
Benita Saldutti, Vice-Chairperson