

**Benefits Focus Group Minutes
(12/07/05)**

Note: Regular BFG members names are listed ; 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
Dolly Gamble	Jesse Hubbard	Kurt Hoverter	
Bill Gaines	Joe Munyak	Linda McKinney	
John Glanden	William Tatum		
Jim Godshall			
Pat Horan			
Carol Karr (replaced Casey Humpert today)			
Tom Laracey		<u>Also Present:</u>	
Gail Magliano (new)		Carlotta Bradley, Caremark	
Sue Martin (new)		Mike Gilliam, Caremark	
Dick Minster			
Benita Saldutti			
Al Woodle			Total pres= 23

Call to Order

John Again called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m., Wednesday, December 7, 2005 and asked for roll call.

Roll Call

Diane Vanderwest called the roll and recorded the meeting. New members today: Sue Martin, Ed Smith Stadium; Gail Magliano, Housing and Community Development (replacing Louise VanPelt); Javier Vargas, Public Works regular member (replacing Nancy Meskimen) with Jesse Hubbard, Dave Myers or Kim Lambert, as alternate members for Public Works (replacing Alex Hernandez).

Carol Karr attended today for Casey Humpert, Van Wezel. When the regular member of a department cannot attend, at least one alternate member should attend.

Approval of Minutes

Benita called for approval of the minutes from the last meeting of October 5, 2005. The final minutes were approved as presented.

Pill-Splitting Research -Robert Blinch-Edwards and Caremark representative guests

Mike Gilliam and Carlotta Bradley from Caremark, and Robert Blinch-Edwards of HCS, provided informational research for “pill-splitting.” The BFG recommended a plan to allow pill splitting to reduce the costs of certain prescription medicines. The approach will be reviewed by the local physician health organization before implementation. Certain drugs can be administered in higher doses with pharmacy instructions to split the pills in half to the appropriate dosage, using a pill splitter, obtained from pharmacies. Since lesser dosage amounts often cost nearly as much as the higher dosage, pill-splitting could potentially save thousands of dollars per year for the City and our employees and retirees. Look for more communication on this at a later date.

Sue Martin, BFG new member representing Ed Smith Stadium, addressed the group about the Weight Watchers at Work Initiative. The BFG recommended a trial incentive for those successfully meeting their Weight Watcher targeted weight by the end of the 13-week program. The incentive would reimburse the employee for 50% of the program cost for meeting attendance goals and 5% weight loss achievement.

The first Weight Watchers at Work meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 14, 2005 with the program running 13 weeks on Wednesdays between 12:00 and 1:00pm.

Medicare Part D –Linda McKinney

HR sent out letters to retirees advising the new Medicare Part D plan was not recommended. According to the actuary reports obtained, our plan offers a better benefit.

Monthly Cost Review – Linda McKinney

Linda reviewed total cost charts and the pharmacy cost chart for the months of June through August. Linda explained the spike in June's figures due to the processing inclusion of 3 huge claims during that month. Cost figures for July and August were back down around the \$600,000 figure these costs had been averaging. The same 3-month period on the pharmacy costs indicated costs up from \$110,000 to \$130,000 (for August), but generally down, trend-wise. These monthly cost charts are available in HR anytime.

Other Business

Reduced Costs Wellness Options-

Linda McKinney proposed an idea to the group whereby there could be a 10% cost reduction if certain health factors were satisfied once a year. Some of the factors mentioned were: appropriate blood pressure; non-smokers; appropriate blood sugar levels; BMI within the good range for weight; and good cholesterol levels. These factors could be medically managed or personally managed. The group was asked for input on the subject by providing email to Linda or bringing their ideas about this proposal to the next meeting. Look for more information to be provided on this idea at a later time.

Hospital Costs-

The group was advised to be a pro-active consumer about hospital care. It's your right to get a detailed bill and go over the billing for accuracy. Report any double charges (charged twice for one item/service) or over-charges for things (such as a doctor visit at the hospital that didn't happen).

Adjournment and Next Meeting

John Agen adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m. The next BFG meeting is scheduled to be **Wednesday, February 1, 2005**, 1:00-3:00 p.m. in Room #100 of the Federal Building.

/dv

Minutes Approved: _____

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