

**West Suburban Health Group
Steering Committee Meeting**

Monday, October 30, 2017 at 10:30 AM
Natick Community Senior Center, Natick, MA

Meeting Minutes

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Jim Kern, Chair	Town of Dedham
Marc Waldman, Board Chair	Town of Wellesley
Jerry Lane	Town of Dover
Christopher Coleman	Town of Needham
John Senchyshyn	Town of Wayland

Guests in Attendance:

Ann Costello	Assistant Treasurer
Richard Tranfaglia	Town of Natick
John Townsend	Town of Natick
Linda Clark	Town of Natick
Maryanne Davis	Natick Public Schools
Blythe Robinson	Town of Wellesley
Gayle McCracken	Town of Wellesley
Miriam Johnson	Town of Dedham
Mary Bousquet	Town of Holliston
Nicole Costa	Town of Holliston
Richard Keough	Dover Sherborn RSD
Clare Graham	Dover Sherborn School Committee
Dawn Fattore	Dover Sherborn RSD
David Ramsay	Town of Dover
Kate Fitzpatrick	Town of Needham
Rachel Glisper	Town of Needham
Brad Crozzer	Town of Wayland
Paul Redmond	Town of Shrewsbury
Kevin Mizikar	Town of Shrewsbury
Karen Jelloe	Town of Wrentham
Sally Adams	Town Council, Town of Wrentham
Bryan Adams	WFP
William Hickey	Harvard Pilgrim Health Care
Erin Hayes	Tufts Health Plan
Joe Anderson	Fallon Health
Michael Breen	Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA
Kate Sharry	Group Benefits Strategies
Carol Cormier	Group Benefits Strategies
Chris Nunnally	Group Benefits Strategies
Karen Carpenter	Group Benefits Strategies

Steering Committee Chair Jim Kern called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM.

Jim Kern encouraged the representatives of the participating WSHG units to join in the conversation with respects to Agenda item #5, “What are participating governmental units doing for FY19 and beyond?”

Introduction of those attending the meeting.

Approval of the minutes of the October 5, 2017 meeting:

Marc Waldman moved to approve the October 5, 2017 minutes as written.

Motion

John Senchyshyn seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Treasurer’s Report:

Assistant Treasurer, Anne Costello, distributed and reviewed the financial reports through September 30, 2017 (unaudited figures). She said the Fund Balance increased \$2.06M in September to \$4,323,926.

Carol Cormier said that according to the Fund Balance policy, the Fund Balance should be around \$10 million.

There was a discussion about financial position.

Marc Waldman made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s report.

Motion

Jerry Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

GBS Reports:

Carol Cormier said the GBS reports were included in the packet but will not be discussed in detail due to time constraints.

Review approved changes for FY19 & what WSHG has done to contain costs:

Carol Cormier referred to the meeting packet exhibit listing the decisions the Board made about the WSHG health plan offerings for FY19. She said the Rate Saver plans will be eliminated on July 1, 2018 and WSHG will offer the Benchmark and HSA-Qualified health plans.

Ms. Cormier said the employers who choose to offer the HSA-Qualified plans will have bargaining options of Ch.150E bargaining, Ch.32B,S.19 coalition bargaining or informal coalition bargaining if all of the unions agree to that method.

Ms. Cormier said each governmental unit will need to bargain the elimination of the Rate Saver plans, unless they have already done so. She said the change from the Rate Saver plans to the Benchmark plans is eligible for Ch. 32B, S. 21-22 bargaining.

Future of WSHG – a discussion:

Jim Kern said the WSHG Steering Committee and Board have expended significant effort to reach a decision to offer the HSA Qualified Plans (HSAQs). He said the Town of Dedham implemented the HSAQ plans in FY16 to non-union employees.

Karen Jelloe said the Town of Wrentham is also offering the HSA Qualified Plans.

Chris Coleman joined the meeting.

Carol Cormier said there was some concern that the employees most likely to enroll in this type of plan would be the younger, more healthy employees. She said, in fact, in the case of the Cape Cod Municipal Health Group, 67% of the 208 employees enrolled are over 40 years of age and 46% are over 50 years of age.

Jim Kern said the Town of Dedham is contributing 50% of the deductible into the employees HSA account and contributing the other half of the deductible to the enrolled employees after tax as a stipend.

Carol Cormier said while it may be alright to contribute over 50% to the employee during the first year to encourage enrollment, but to continue doing so would significantly increase the rates of the HSAQ plans.

Marc Waldman said the Town of Wellesley will begin its negotiations this week and said education about the plans is important.

The representatives from the Towns of Needham and Shrewsbury said they will be offering both the Benchmark and HSA plans for FY19.

Christopher Coleman suggested including information in the educational meeting about transitioning to a Health Savings Account (HSA) from a Medical Flexible Spending Account (FSA). He also said with an employer contribution of 50% of the deductible to the HSA and the savings from the lower premium, a member would be better able to fund the other half of the deductible.

Carol Cormier reviewed the cost containment measures that WSHG has already adopted to date. Ms. Cormier said the measures include - adding the myMedicationAdvisor®/CanaRx alternative savings programs, changing plan design, changing Medex and Medicare Enhance to EGWPs, eliminating the Legacy plans and soon to eliminate the Rate Saver plans, creating and joining the MA Municipal Reinsurance Arrangement (MMRA), changing the Joint Purchase Agreement to recover the 1st month of run-out-claims from a withdrawing unit, and adding the HSA Qualified plans.

Ms. Cormier said GBS is looking at other ways to reduce costs for its clients by researching and doing analysis on “high performance health plan” programs. She said Chris Nunnally of GBS is spearheading the project.

Chris Nunnally said he looking at vendors that will save money to groups while adding benefits to the plans. He said some of the programs include carving out pharmacy, enhanced diabetes programs, smart shopper tools, telehealth, and cancer care management. Mr. Nunnally said all of the programs will have a positive ROI and will most likely not be subject to collective bargaining. He said he will stay after the meeting to answer any questions.

Jim Kern said WSHG should look at all of its options, but said he doesn't want to let the perception or misperception of things rule. He said one misrepresentation is that you have to be a large group to be viable.

Carol Cormier spoke about the Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust and how they remain a very viable, financially healthy but small group. She said WSHG had a bad year last year financially, but said this year is showing recovery.

There was a discussion about the Group Insurance Commission (GIC) and the request for proposals it put out.

Ms. Cormier said the three major points of the GICs RFP are the intent to self-fund all of its plans, to reduce the number of health insurance carriers, and to carve out prescription drugs. She said the GIC is also looking to add HSA-Qualified Plans, but not until FY20 or later.

Ms. Cormier said she thought that WSHG should develop a strategic plan for the future.

Marc Waldman and others agreed with Ms. Cormier, and Jim Kern suggested meeting more often than the group has been meeting. Mr. Kern said the Managers and Superintendents could be invited.

Carol Cormier said other groups hold annual Manager & Superintendent Meetings to keep them abreast of what they are doing. She suggested the Steering Committee could meet monthly and the Board meet quarterly.

In response to a question asked by Jim Kern, Bill Hickey said it usually helps to get in front of the decision makers and the employees, so everyone knows what is happening and why.

Educational session for Unions on HSA-Qualified Plans – November 30:

The meeting on November 30th was planned from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM at the Natick Community Senior Center in Natick, MA.

Carol Cormier said Bill Hickey offered to give the presentation and noted that he does an excellent job. She said the presentation is generic and applies to all of the carriers. Ms. Cormier said each of the carriers will explain any differences in their plans and processes. She asked everyone to let GBS know how many people are expected to attend.

Kate Sharry said GBS will film the presentation so it can be uploaded to each unit's website.

Other Business:

Kate Sharry said Group Benefits Strategies will be hosting a municipal health insurance forum on November 28th and will be inviting all clients to attend to hear about the progress of the MMRA and other topics related to the high performance health plan concept. Ms. Sharry said the MMRA Board members would like to grow the MMRA by adding new members. She said it will be held at the Fidelity Ice Rink at 9:30 AM, with lunch at noon. She said there will be other topics and that GBS will be sending the invitation out soon.

Marc Waldman made a motion to adjourn.

Motion

John Senchyshyn seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

WSHG Steering Committee meeting, 10/30/17

Chair Jim Kern adjourned the meeting at noon.

*Prepared by
Karen Carpenter,
Group Benefits Strategies*