

**Operations Committee
Minutes – APPROVED
April 24, 2023 – 1:00 p.m.
Town of Ithaca/Board Court Room**

Present: Laura Granger, Committee Chair; Schelley Michell-Nunn (*arrived 1:05p*); Judith (Judy) Drake; Brian Weinstein; Ruby Pulliam; Janine Bond (*arrived 1:05p*); Bud Shattuck*; Rordan Hart, Board Chair

Excused: Sunday Earle; Rita McCarthy; Ed Fairbrother; LuAnn King

Absent: Mark Emerson

Staff/Guests: Elin Dowd, Executive Director; Teri Apalovich, Finance Manager; Kylie Rodrigues, Benefits Specialist; Lynne Sheldon, Clerk of the Board; Brandon Holt, Kelli Lasher, Amy Handelman, Cathy Millet, Excellus BCBS; Steve Locey, Paul Pelton, Rob Spenard, Locey & Cahill; Shondrea Cobb, Jen Achterberg, Town of Big Flats; Sarah Thomas, Tompkins County; Denise Malone, City of Ithaca

* = Via Zoom remote due to extraordinary circumstances

Call to Order

Ms. Granger, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. At this time, due to lack of quorum, Mr. Hart, Board Chair, appointed himself as well as Mr. Shattuck, Executive Committee member, as interim members of the Operations Committee. This action was made for the Operations Committee to reach an adequate quorum number for voting purposes during this meeting.

Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of January 23, 2023, Minutes

It was MOVED by Ms. Drake, seconded by Ms. Pulliam, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of January 23, 2023, as submitted. MINUTES APPROVED.

*(Ms. Michell-Nunn and Ms. Bond arrived – 1:05pm) *Quorum now complete for original Committee members.*

Presentation Regarding Pharmacy Benefit Management

Ms. Dowd thanked everyone for attending, including some benefit clerks, and noted that Excellus BCBS would be presenting. She explained that the Consortium placed a Request for Proposal (RFP) in 2021, and at that time Excellus was one group that the Operations Committee wanted to look at again and consider. Ms. Dowd introduced the Consortium's Excellus BCBS Account Manager, Mr. Holt, who introduced the rest of the Excellus Team. The team discussed their overall approach to pharmacy and benefit management, as well as discussed what employers and employees could expect of their experience under Excellus pharmacy, benefits, and the transition.

The presentation followed up with a question-and-answer session. Ms. Malone asked if there would be an individual to work with during any transitions as timing would also fall during open enrollment timing. Ms. Lasher said that Excellus would be taking all those pieces into consideration, understanding when open enrollment timeframes are, where there is movement during the transition, and staying in constant communication.

Ms. Thomas asked if the members could still utilize CanaRX. Mr. Holt concurred and said that there's no integration in terms of the claims or costs, but if members are seeing cost savings they can't with Excellus, they will still have the benefit of CanaRX. Ms. Thomas also asked what the timeline would be for members and how changes to the formulas would impact on them. Mr. Holt explained that as part of Excellus' analysis, they have done a formulary disruption, which has looked at the claims for calendar year 2022 to see what the disruption would be for members moving from, which members would be most impacted, and how to communicate to members to let them know at least 60 days prior.

Mr. Weinstein asked regarding the prior authorization process and what is the turnaround time for them. Ms. Handelman explained the process that providers can call in or send the authorization electronically. She said that on average, the authorization is typically 24-48 hours.

Executive Session

It was MOVED by Ms. Drake, seconded by Mr. Weinstein and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present and via remote, to enter executive session at 1:56 p.m. to discuss matters relating to the possible formation of contracts with third parties. The meeting returned to open session at 2:24 p.m.

MOTION NO. 001-2023– MOTION TO ADVANCE THE PROPOSAL FROM EXCELLUS TO AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL

It was MOVED by Ms. Pulliam seconded by Mr. Weinstein, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present by video or in person, to approve the advancement of the proposal from Excellus to the Audit and Finance Committee for recommendation and approval. MOTION CARRIED.

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Executive Director Report

Ms. Dowd referenced her Executive Director report for March 2023. She encouraged the Committee to review her information on the changes that are coming about. This report covers changes to benefits in the areas of ground ambulance, COVID-19, behavioral health, and frozen formulas.

Open Meeting Law

Ms. Dowd reported that the Consortium made a recommendation at the Executive Committee allowing video conferencing at the Standing Committee levels to help maintain committees to get more involvement and/or reach quorum. This recommendation stems from the idea that all approvals are finalized at the Executive Committee and the Board of Director meetings. The Executive Committee and Board of Directors' attendance will remain the same indicating members must be physically present to establish quorum at the main location, and or in a posted satellite location for voting purposes once quorum is met.

Medicare Advantage/EGWP

Ms. Dowd said the Operations Committee has been discussing Medicare Advantage and Employer Group Waiver Plans (EGWP). Aetna has already submitted their rates for 2024, but the Consortium is also looking at other options, including reviewing Excellus rates. She said there is a potential to have several plans with Excellus as we are exploring new options both with and without Excellus. She said the Consortium is still exploring options and gathering information and will be keeping the Committee informed.

Utilization Review May 4th

Ms. Dowd reported that there is an upcoming Joint Committee meeting which will include both Excellus and ProAct utilization reviews. This information provides the Consortium and members with information about plans, how the Consortium is utilizing those plans, and to ask questions.

New Plan Addition Form

Ms. Dowd said that a new Plan Addition Form will roll out to Benefit Clerks. There will be a continued discussion at the next Operation Committee meeting to discuss the implementation of the form.

Future Discussion Topics

Gender Affirming Language
COBRA Small Group Administration

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

The next meeting will be held July 24, 2023

Respectfully submitted by Lynne Sheldon, Clerk of the Board