

**Operations Committee  
Minutes - Approved  
April 27, 2020 – 1:00 p.m.  
Via Zoom Conference Call**

Present: Lisa Holmes, Judy Drake, Schelley Michell-Nunn, Sunday Earle, Gary Mutchler, Greg Pellicano, Mark Emerson  
Excused: Doug Perine, Mike Catalano, Luann King, Ed Fairbrother  
Staff: Elin Dowd, Executive Director; Drew Braman, Deputy Director of Finance; Brittnei Griep, Interim Clerk of the Board; Debra Meeker, Administrative/Computer Assistant

**Call to Order**

Ms. Holmes, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

**Changes to the Agenda**

A report of Request for Proposal (RFP) Best Practices was added to the agenda.

**Approval of Minutes of January 27, 2020**

It was MOVED by Ms. Drake, seconded by Mr. Mutchler and adopted by voice vote by members present, with Mr. Emerson abstaining, to approve the minutes of January 27, 2020 as submitted. MINUTES APPROVED.

**Executive Director's Report**

**COVID-19 Updates**

Ms. Dowd said the Consortium has quickly responded to COVID-19 mandates, including all co-pays relating to testing and care as of mid-March through May 31<sup>st</sup> are being waived. Prescription restrictions and renewals are also being waived. In addition, there is no longer a seven-day window so that a member can always have a two-week supply on hand; this currently does not have a termination date. To ensure that members have access to care during the pandemic, all Telemedicine copays have been waived regardless of diagnosis until May 1<sup>st</sup>. It was noted that an increase in the use of Telemedicine visits creates a positive effect as those visits are less expensive with an average cost of \$40 per visit compared to an emergency room visit cost of \$1,500. There isn't a lot of concern regarding these costs since this area is not a "Hot Spot" and the most vulnerable age group is 65 and older with Medicare being primary for most of that population. The Audit and Finance Committee will discuss this at its meeting tomorrow

**JURAT Update**

The Annual 2019 JURAT filing is wrapping up tomorrow at the Audit & Finance meeting. The auditors will be presenting their findings and then the Year End JURAT will be filed. A couple of weeks prior, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter JURAT was amended and resubmitted; and the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter JURAT for 2020, is due in May.

**MCA Update**

All municipalities were asked to review and help move this forward, all but 7 or 8 municipalities responded. A copy of the draft MCA was sent to DFS for feedback. They recently responded that they are working on it and that there will be changes.

### New Member Solicitation

. Ms. Drake, Mr. Barber, and Ms. Dowd presented to Tioga County just before the pandemic hit and there has been follow up. Zoom Meetings have been set to keep the momentum moving and invitations have been emailed. These Zoom calls will take place on May 12<sup>th</sup>, May 19<sup>th</sup> and May 28<sup>th</sup>. Some of the participants will be asked to join these meetings.

### Joint Committee Meeting

This committee will meet in May regarding needed plan changes for 2021. Three out of the four plans (Gold, Silver and Bronze) will be affected. Other benefits, such as: hearing aid support and vision care are being considered. Utilization Review from Excellus will be in May, followed by ProAct's utilization review in June. The preliminary utilization review is the reason that Ms. Dowd can quote the cost of going to the Emergency Room (ER) vs Telemedicine.

### Staffing

Brittni Griep has moved to the office of the clerk of the Tompkins County Legislature and is transitioning away from supporting the Consortium. Ms. Dowd is thankful to Tompkins County for allowing Brittni to work through the transition of the new assistant, Debra Meeker. Ms. Holmes welcomed Ms. Meeker and thanked Ms. Griep for all she has done.

### Business Continuity Plan

In March, The Consortium received a request with a 30-day reply window, from the Dept. of Financial Services (DFS), for a preparedness plan for the disruption of business. They want to make sure that the Consortium is financially stable and that the risks of membership are evaluated going forward. The Consortium does not currently have a preparedness plan and responded with a statement of practices (such as: making sure that our vendors (Excellus) have business continuity plans in place).

Ms. Dowd asked for some best practices that members have put in place in their municipalities, that could be used as a guide as a policy is being developed. Mr. Pellicano stated that he had been working on this and will send information. Ms. Dowd stated that this is a policy that over time just gets added to and makes for a stronger organization.

### Mid-Year Plan Changes

Ms. Dowd and Mr. Locey have been working to get mid-year plan changes written as a resolution; this is not due to COVID-19, rather it is necessary to put in place as some municipalities want to change plans mid-year. Currently, there is one municipality that is switching from a PPO to Platinum as of June 1<sup>st</sup>. The policy would state that any participants that are making changes will need to give a 90-day notice before the effective date as Excellus builds that plan. When migrating from one plan to another, there is NO carryover of limitations (deductibles or maximum out of pocket). Participants start over, even in the middle of the year and that could mean increasing out of pocket expenses, which is why this is not recommended for high deductible plans.

Ms. Drake stated this is a policy for the employers (municipalities) as the Consortium does not control individual employees. There is a minimum of 2 years that a municipality would have to stay with a chosen plan. She gave the example of the Town of Ithaca when it offered the Platinum Plan. If someone switched to that plan, they could not go back to the PPO Plan for at least three years. Ms. Holmes confirmed that this is the procedure for Tompkins County too.

It is different if a municipality offers the plan already, then if a new plan is being offer, as was a concern of Ms. Michell-Nunn. If a municipality offers multiple plans to employees there is a cost to the Consortium for each of those plans. Other techniques to use during union negotiations were discussed, as Ms. Earle expressed concerns regarding the 2 ½ year lock in, as being a “hard sell”.

Ms. Holmes clarified that what is being asked of the committee is to vote on the recommendation of a municipality to be on any chosen plan for 2 years. Ms. Holmes then asked for a motion to accept the Resolution with additional language. Ms. Dowd read “Be it further resolved that the Consortium Board of Directors strongly recommends that a municipality that migrates to a lessor benefit remain with that decision for two full plan years.” It was MOVED by Ms. Drake, seconded by Mr. Emerson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present on Zoom, to approve the resolution as amended.

**RESOLUTION NO.        – 2020 - ADOPTION OF POLICY REGARDING MID-YEAR PLAN CHANGES**

WHEREAS, it has been brought to the attention of the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium (“Consortium”) Board of Directors that the Consortium’s policies require updating regarding mid-year plan changes which are the result of collective bargaining, municipal board policy, personnel policy, or an individual qualifying for a plan change consistent with IRS 26 CFR §1.125-4 – Permitted Election Changes, and

WHEREAS, the Consortium offers several health insurance benefit plan options which include various Indemnity Plans, various Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) Plans, a Comprehensive Value Plan, and several High Deductible Health Plans (HDHPs), and

WHEREAS, these various health insurance benefit plan choices include a number of different deductible options, out-of-pocket maximum options, and other benefit limit options that are all managed on a calendar year basis, and

WHEREAS, allowing mid-year changes to benefit plans by a Participating Municipality for a collective bargaining group, employee group, and/or retiree group could cause administrative and financial issues for the covered member and/or the Consortium, and

WHEREAS, the Consortium needs to establish a policy and procedure to ensure any plan changes occur in a timely fashion with the least amount of administrative and financial disruption to the Consortium and to the covered member as possible, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Operations Committee, That the GTCMHIC hereby adopts a policy requiring all Participating Municipalities in the Consortium to notify the Consortium’s Executive Director on or before October 31<sup>st</sup> each year of any benefit plan changes being made by said Consortium Participant with an effective date of January 1<sup>st</sup> of the next plan year,

RESOLVED, further, That the Policy also requires GTCMHIC Participants seeking to make mid-year benefit and/or plan changes must provide notice to the Consortium’s Executive Director no later than 90-days preceding the effective date of said change or changes,

RESOLVED, further, That due to the complexities associated with migrating specific patient information regarding the covered member’s satisfaction of their deductible, out-of-pocket maximum, and/or any specific benefit limitations, the Consortium will not be populating the new benefit plan with any of this data or information,

RESOLVED, further, That the GTCMHIC Board of Directors strongly discourages Participating Municipalities in the Consortium from making mid-year changes involving a group of employees or retirees who are either already in a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) or would be moving into a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP).

RESOLVED, further, That the Consortium Board of Directors strongly recommends that a municipality that migrates to a lessor benefit remain with that decision for two full plan years.

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#### **RFP Best Practices**

Ms. Dowd is working on procurement of services and other expenses. The consortium's services are high cost, which includes Excellus and ProAct, as well as, auditors' services too. In the past, procurement has been done in two different ways. One: Mr. Locey has handled it. Two: either Mr. Barber or Ms. Cocco submit a proposal on Bid net, through Tompkins County purchasing and it has gone out for the public to respond with an RFP.

The Consortium is growing and has staff now. It also needs a procurement policy that includes RFP procedures that states how often the market gets shopped, how that will be done and by whom. Ms. Drake asked that a past RFP be shared to make an outline and fine tune it for the next meeting. There are a couple of important things happening this year, that this policy is needed for. One, is the Excellus audit that is coming up and traditionally BMI has been used, and two an RFP needs to be done for Prescription Benefit Management Services this year.

Ms. Dowd hoped that rather than a draft, that this group could give some direction and share best practices of what they have in place. Ms. Holmes stated that recently the County revamped its procurement policy and that Mr. Braman was very involved, but she wasn't sure if that would be applicable. Mr. Braman stated that it could be easily amended as he was just reviewing the DFS website and requirements. He will review it further and touch base with Ms. Dowd.

#### **Future Discussion Topics**

At the next meeting, this Committee will discuss the RFP Best Practices and times and dates of the meetings.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was set for June 1, 2020 at 1 p.m.

#### **Adjournment**

It was MOVED by Ms. Michell-Nunn, seconded by Mr. Emerson; and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 2:07 p.m.