

System Council U-4 Medical Wellness Plans



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The Company and the System Committee have met on a regular basis since the ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement which included the establishment and implementation of the Joint Healthcare Advisory Committee.

The Committee has monitored and reviewed cost drivers which impact the Bargaining Unit Health Care Plan and developed strategies to mitigate cost through education of the Membership on specifically targeted benefits. Our goal through education and better consumerism is to hold down costs which will minimize increased contributions and minimize benefit changes.

The Committees initially focused on the Prescription Drug Plan. The Committee's goal through education was to increase the use of generic medications by decreasing the use of brand medications. Why? Because the average retail cost for a generic medication is \$25 and the average retail cost for a brand medication is over \$150. We were successful in engaging some Members to ask the question of their physician as he/she is writing a prescription "Can you prescribe a generic medication?" This early success drove down the overall cost approximately 5%, with a monetary savings of \$400,000 dollars plus. We must and will continue to educate our Membership as we know additional savings can be achieved. This in an effort to address the ever increasing medical trend and to control costs.

In an effort by the Committee to continue to educate our Membership to make wiser and efficient users, we will embark on two additional initiatives.

- The Committee will begin emphasizing the Health and Wellness screenings sponsored each year using CIGNA's technical team and scheduled through your local work headquarters Wellness Coordinator. Our goal is to increase participation of Plan Participants including spouses and eligible dependents. This is the first step in assisting Plan Participants in utilizing other preventive benefits made available through negotiations and designed to keep future cost down. The theory of diagnosing and treating ailments before they become catastrophic will not only help divert cost, but will more importantly be instrumental in saving one of our Brothers, Sisters or family members from unnecessary trauma; or worse loss of life.

- Educating the Membership on the most efficient and cost effective order to utilize services when new symptoms occur. The Committee recommends where possible to follow the PWUE steps. Primary Care Physician first; Walk in Clinic second, Urgent Care Center third and Emergency Room fourth and last. If our Membership can think in this order, there are millions of dollars to be saved and better outcomes for all. From a cost standpoint; the average cost of a Primary Care Visit is \$40, a Walk in Clinic is \$75, an Urgent Care visit is \$92 and an Emergency Room visit is \$1,378. Just think of the money that can be saved, if the Emergency Room is strictly used for true life threatening emergencies.

Studies have shown and the Committee believes that we can be more efficient consumers of healthcare and by doing so have better outcomes.

“Together We Can Keep Each Other Well”

“I am My Brother’s Keeper”

You’re System Council Negotiating Committee

