

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

GROUP BENEFITS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 2020



SECTION 1: SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Group Benefits Advisory Committee (GBAC) convened on two occasions in Calendar Year 2020. The first meeting scheduled for March 2020 was postponed to late June as committee members and ERS personnel transitioned from in-office to remote operations. The committee welcomed five new members at the June 30 meeting, which was conducted virtually via web conference. The June 30 agenda included an overview of the Fiscal Year 2019 Group Benefits Program (GBP) annual report; updates on the impact of COVID-19 to the GBP health plans; a recap of the recent changes to the tobacco certification policy; the response data from the 2019 benefits survey; an overview of the new HealthSelectShoppERSSM program effective September 2020; a review of Discount Purchase Program offerings; discussion of possible incentives for wellness program participation; and topics of interest for future discussion. The meeting concluded with committee members setting the date for the next committee meeting.

The second meeting in Calendar Year 2020 was held October 7 via web conference, with all but one of the committee members in attendance. The October 7 meeting included a presentation from a GBP member on fertility benefits; a look ahead to group benefits matters related to the 87th Texas Legislature; follow-up discussions on the Discount Purchase Program and the 2019 benefits survey; and GBP updates, including the pending discontinuation of the KelseyCare Advantage Medicare HMO. The meeting concluded with committee members scheduling March 25, 2021 as the date for the next committee meeting.

Detailed information for each meeting can be found in the meeting minutes (see Attachments C and D).

SECTION 2: SUMMARY OF TOPICS DISCUSSED

June 2020 Meeting

At the June 30 meeting, ERS staff presented an overview of the nationally-recognized Group Benefits Program (GBP) annual report, including the various programs included within the GBP, health plan enrollment and enrollment trends, population health and costs, steps taken to control costs, and best practices. Staff updated the committee on the impact of COVID-19 on the health plans and participants, plus federal legislation and stimulus packages introduced to help employers and participants during the pandemic. In addition, updates were provided on HealthSelectSM mental health services, HealthSelect coverage of diabetic supplies, and plan design changes for the State of Texas Vision PlanSM.

Staff covered the pending implementation of the revised tobacco certification policy, in which the committee had previously recommended inclusion of electronic cigarettes and vaping products. Staff and the committee discussed results of the 2019 benefits survey, noting that 82% of respondents indicated their GBP health coverage meets their needs. The committee received a preview of HealthSelectShoppERS, a new program offered beginning September 2020 where eligible HealthSelect participants can shop for certain cost-efficient, non-emergency services that are eligible for an incentive through a shared savings approach. Staff then engaged the committee in a discussion on possible incentives for wellness program participation. Committee members noted some challenges promoting wellness opportunities within their workplaces along with new channels for offering wellness programs to employees and retirees. The committee members then discussed possible topics for future committee meetings. (Refer to *Section 3, Topics Identified for Future Discussions* for more information.)

October 2020 Meeting

At the October 7 meeting, the committee received a presentation from a GBP member to consider expansion of infertility coverage within the GBP health plans. Staff led a discussion on the outlook for the upcoming 87th Texas Legislature, noting the health insurance program remains financially strong and that ERS would not request appropriations above its base funding level to maintain current benefits. Committee members discussed the pandemic's financial impact to their agencies and institutions, citing reduced court filing fee revenue and declining student enrollment at institutions of higher education. The committee received follow-up presentations from staff on Discount Purchase Program offerings and the results of the 2019 benefits survey.

Next, staff provided a series of updates on GBP matters, including the discontinuation of KelseyCare Advantage Medicare HMO effective January 1, 2021; the status of the long-term care offering; the impact of COVID-19 on GBP health plans; recent changes to the HealthSelect mental health network and benefits; health plan coverage of COVID-19 and flu vaccinations; and tobacco user enrollment. Following discussion of topics for future meetings, the committee set the date for the March 2021 meeting before adjourning.

SECTION 3: TOPICS IDENTIFIED FOR FUTURE DISCUSSIONS

Staff use the suggested topics from committee members as the foundation for future committee meeting agendas.

Following the June 30 meeting, committee members offered a few topics for consideration at future meetings. Suggested topics included:

- Additional analysis of the results of the 2019 benefits survey
- Updates on the long-term care offering
- Updates on the impact of COVID-19 on health plan utilization
- Committee input on possible Discount Purchase Program offerings
- Mental health benefits utilization

Following the October 7 meeting, committee members suggested topics for consideration at future meetings. Possible topics included:

- Discussion of fertility coverage within GBP and other state health plans
- Updates on proposed legislation impacting GBP health plans

The agenda for the March 25, 2021 meeting is being developed and will include suggested topics from the committee members along with other items of interest from relevant stakeholders.

SECTION 4: COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee members offered recommendations to promote the various wellness opportunities available through the GBP. Members acknowledged the challenges in marketing wellness programs to employees and retirees, encouraging the possible use of promotional flyers that could be distributed through each agency's payroll department. To spur engagement and accessibility, the committee also urged staff to consider offering more wellness programs virtually. Some committee members reported that wellness participation increased in Calendar Year 2020 as wellness offerings such as nutrition classes and virtual exercise classes are now available online to everyone.

Committee members have no formal recommendations to present to the Board of Trustees at this time.

Attachment C – Minutes of the June 30, 2020 Group Benefits Advisory Committee

Attachment D – Minutes of the October 7, 2020 Group Benefits Advisory Committee