

MINUTES

METROPOLITAN EMPLOYEE BENEFIT BOARD

MEDICAL & LIFE COMMITTEE

February 10, 2021

The Metropolitan Employee Benefit Board's Medical & Life Committee met on Wednesday, February 10, 2021 via teleconference at approximately 9:06 a.m.

Committee Members present: Chair: Edna J. Jones; Vice-Chair: Christine Bradley; Shannon Hall B.R. Hall, Sr., and G. Thomas Curtis. Alternate: Harold W. Finch, II

Committee Member Stacey Rucker was unable to be present.

Benefit Board Member Jeremy Moseley was present.

Others present: Christina Hickey, Metro Human Resources, Macy Amos, Attorney, Metro Legal Department and Dr. Gill Wright, Civil Service Medical Examiner.

Christina Hickey called the meeting to order and stated that the first order of business will be a roll call to establish a quorum.

Christina Hickey stated that as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic the Governor issued Executive Order #16 and subsequently Orders #34, #51, #60 #65 and #71 authorizing Boards to meet and conduct their essential business by electronic means if the Board determines that meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of Tennesseans in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. This Executive Order #71 will expire on February 27th. She also stated that before considering items on the agenda the Committee needs to determine by a roll call vote that the meeting agenda constitutes essential business of the Committee and meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of Tennesseans in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Committee members were in agreement to have the meeting electronically.

Ms. Hickey also stated that each time a Board member, staff or other participant who is using audio only participation wishes to speak he or she shall identify themselves in a manner reasonably calculated to permit the public to ascertain the identity of the person speaking.

Christina Hickey opened the floor to nominations for Committee Chair and Vice-Chair.

B.R. Hall nominated Edna Jones for Committee Chair. Tom Curtis seconded. A vote was taken on the nomination for Committee Chair and was approved without objection.

Shannon Hall nominated Christine Bradley for Committee Vice-Chair. B.R. Hall seconded. A vote was taken on the nomination for Committee Vice-Chair and was approved without objection.

The Human Resources staff submitted the following for the Committee's consideration and appropriate action:

1. Self-insured Cigna plan appeal – denial of laparoscopy, surgical, esophageal sphincter augmentation procedure, placement of sphincter augmentation device (i.e. magnetic band).

Christina Hickey reported to the Committee that a member participating in the self-insured Cigna plan was denied a laparoscopic, surgical, esophageal sphincter augmentation procedure and placement of device (i.e. magnetic band) for the treatment of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). She stated that previously, this request and first level grievance for this coverage were denied. She stated the member has appointed PRIA Healthcare Management (PRIA) as their authorized representative to appeal Cigna's denial. Cigna has supplied documentation on their denial (experimental/investigational/unproven) and medical policy for this appeal. PRIA has also supplied documentation for their appeal.

1. Self-insured Cigna plan appeal – denial of laparoscopy, surgical, esophageal sphincter augmentation procedure, placement of sphincter augmentation device (i.e. magnetic band). (continued)

Christina Hickey noted that Hope Zawisza, PRIA Healthcare, and the member are on the call.

Paul Huffman and Dr. Jim Lancaster, Cigna were also on the call. Paul Huffman stated that this procedure is considered experimental/investigational based on the fact that there are not enough current published medical studies for the procedure.

Hope Zawisza addressed the Committee regarding the members condition, current treatments, success rates/statistics for the procedure and medical necessity.

The member addressed the Committee regarding his condition and how it affects him on a daily basis.

The Committee discussed some of the medical literature provided by PRIA that shows that this procedure is covered by various other medical plans and if it is covered by any of Metro's medical plans.

Russ Henderson, Blue Cross Blue Shield, (BCBS), was on the call. He stated that it is also considered experimental/investigational under BCBS of TN.

There was some discussion of Cigna's coverage policy related to the member's condition and how often procedures/treatments that are considered experimental/investigational are reviewed.

Dr. Jim Lancaster discussed Cigna's coverage review process and long term out comes related to this procedure.

There was some discussion of the circumstances related to this case and alternative procedures.

B.R. Hall moved that based on the circumstances this procedure be covered for this member. Edna Jones seconded, and the Committee approved without objection.

Christina Hickey stated that the decision of this Committee is only a recommendation to the full Board for consideration.

With nothing further presented, the meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

**Shannon B. Hall, Director
Human Resources**

**Edna Jones, Chair
Medical & Life Committee**