

## **MINUTES**

### **METROPOLITAN EMPLOYEE BENEFIT BOARD**

#### **MEDICAL & LIFE COMMITTEE**

**February 19, 2019**

The Metropolitan Employee Benefit Board's Medical & Life Committee met on Tuesday, February 19, 2019 in the Sonny West Conference Room, Howard Office Building, 700 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee at approximately 10:01 a.m.

Committee Members present: Vice-Chair: Jerry Hall; Members: Stephanie Bailey, B.R. Hall, Sr., Edna J. Jones and Talia Lomax-O'dneal. Alternate(s): Shannon B. Hall and Stacey Rucker.

Committee Chair: Christine Bradley was unable to be present.

Others present: Christina Hickey, Metro Human Resources and Nicki Eke, Attorney, Metro Legal Department.

The meeting was called to order and Christina Hickey stated that the first order of business is to elect the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair and opened the floor to nominations.

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

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

Committee Vice Chair Jerry Hall stated that the decisions of this Committee are only recommendations to the full Board for consideration.

#### **BENEFIT BOARD ITEMS**

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

1. Self-insured PPO plan appeal – Denial of proton beam radiation therapy.

Christina Hickey reported to the Committee that a member participating in the self-insured PPO plan administered by BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee was denied proton beam radiation therapy for the treatment of prostate cancer. She stated that this request and first level grievance for this coverage were denied. She stated that the member has submitted this appeal and other relevant information and BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee has supplied documentation on their denial and medical policy for this appeal. This information is included in the confidential medical section of the Committee packet.

Paula Smith, Blue Cross Blue Shield, (BCBS), was present.

Dr. James Gray, Medical Director, ProVision Cares Proton Therapy Nashville, was present.

Paula Smith stated they have submitted the medical policy for this particular request. She stated that proton therapy for prostate cancer is considered investigational only because there is not superior evidence that it is better than the conventional radiation therapy to support also the additional costs associated with the proton therapy. She also stated that there is just not enough evidence or research to support this particular procedure for this particular condition.

There was some discussion regarding when something is no longer considered investigational, what are the benefits of this treatment versus traditional treatments and that this is covered by Medicare.

Michelle Tallman, Humana, stated that Humana does cover this procedure under the radiation therapy benefit.

There was some discussion of whether or not is this a question of primary or secondary coverage.

Paula Smith, BCBS, stated that Medicare would be the primary payer and Metro would be secondary in this situation.

There was some discussion regarding cost analysis for this procedure versus the regular treatment and how much does Medicare cover.

Dr. James Gray, Medical Director, ProVision Cares Proton Therapy Nashville, reviewed a presentation regarding the procedure. He also discussed the terms experimental and investigational with respect to the proton therapy. He stated that much of the industry still uses those terms, however this therapy was approved for use in humans by the Federal Drug Administration, (FDA) in 1988. He reviewed the procedure and some statistics.

After some discussion regarding the procedure, other treatments, and costs, Stephanie Bailey moved to allow payment for this treatment (proton beam radiation therapy) for this patient. Edna Jones seconded and the Committee approved without objection.

With nothing further presented, the meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

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

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**Jerry Hall, Vice Chair  
Medical & Life Committee**