

MINUTES

METROPOLITAN EMPLOYEE BENEFIT BOARD

MEDICAL & LIFE COMMITTEE

September 17, 2019

The Metropolitan Employee Benefit Board's Medical & Life Committee met on Tuesday, September 17, 2019 in the Sonny West Conference Room, Howard Office Building, 700 2nd Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee at approximately 10:01 a.m.

Committee Members present: Chair: Christine Bradley; Vice-Chair: Stacey Rucker; Members: B.R. Hall, Sr., Edna J. Jones. Alternate(s): Shannon B. Hall and *Harold W. Finch, II.

Committee members Stephanie Bailey and Talia Lomax-O'dneal were unable to be present.

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

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

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

Committee Chair Christine Bradley 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 Cigna Choice Fund, (CCF), plan appeal – Employee from Music City Center.

Christina Hickey reported to the Committee that an employee from the Music City Center is asking for coverage of hypoglossal nerve stimulation therapy in the treatment of obstructive sleep apnea under the Cigna Choice fund plan. Cigna considers this therapy to be experimental and investigational and states that there is insufficient evidence in the published medical literature. Cigna's position is also that they need further studies on this therapy to evaluate outcomes. She stated that information from Cigna and the member are included in this packet.

It was noted that the employee was aware of the meeting, however, they were not present.

Dr. Gill Wright described the device. He stated that this device is implanted and it stimulates the nerves to the diaphragm. He stated that it is reported to be useful with sleep apnea when they don't respond to Cpap and other treatments.

There was some discussion regarding how long the device has been on the market and that it has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration, (FDA), as safe.

There was some discussion regarding other alternatives, (CPAP or BPAP), that the employee has tried, and that it seems the employee takes issue with the CPAP devices being on the face.

Dr. Gill Wright described the procedure to implant this device, surgical procedures and a dental device to help remedy sleep apnea.

There was some discussion of the seriousness of sleep apnea and that it can cause additional medical conditions.

Paul Huffman, Cigna Choice Fund, was present. He stated that in June of 2019 all obstructive sleep apnea treatment services were reviewed and this device is still considered investigational and experimental.

After some discussion of the other alternatives and exhausting other remedies for the condition, Edna Jones moved to deny coverage for this device for this individual. Shannon Hall seconded.

Paula Smith, Blue Cross Blue Shield, (BCBS), was present. She stated that she is not aware of the exact medical policy for treatment of sleep apnea.

There was some discussion regarding who makes the decision as to whether or not something is considered experimental.

*Denotes the arrival of Harold Finch.

There was further discussion regarding the seriousness of sleep apnea and how future treatments develop.

It was noted that this device is also considered investigational and experimental under Blue Cross Blue Shield.

The Committee was in agreement that they would like to speak with the individual regarding their treatments.

Dr. Gill Wright noted that the medical record shows that the individual has tried an oral appliance and a tongue retention device.

A vote was taken on the motion to deny coverage for this device for this individual and was approved with B.R. Hall opposed and Stacey Rucker abstaining.

Christina Hickey noted that she will reach out to the individual and highly encourage them to attend the October Board meeting.

With nothing further presented, the meeting adjourned at 9:47 a.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

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

**Christine Bradley, Chair
Medical & Life Committee**