

## MINUTES

### METROPOLITAN EMPLOYEE BENEFIT BOARD

#### MEDICAL & LIFE COMMITTEE

**March 28, 2024**

The Metropolitan Employee Benefit Board's Medical & Life Committee met on Thursday, March 28, 2024, in the Sonny West Conference Room, Howard Office Building, 700 President Ronald Reagan Way, Nashville, TN at approximately 9:30 a.m.

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

Committee Member G. Thomas Curtis was unable to be present.

Others present: Christina Hickey, Metro Human Resources and Courtney Mohan, Metro Legal Department.

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

#### 1. Public Comment Period

A maximum of five (5) persons who write their names on the sign-up sheet provided at the meeting will be allowed to comment on matters that are germane to items on the Agenda. Comments are limited to a maximum of two (2) minutes per person. To provide comment, you must sign up prior to the beginning of the meeting.

There were no public comments.

#### 2. Self-insured Cigna plan appeal - denial of glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) coverage for treatment of polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) - Employee from State Trial Courts.

This item was withdrawn.

#### 3. Self-insured Cigna HRA plan appeal - denial of glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) medications - Employee from Finance.

Christina Hickey reported to the Committee that a member participating in the self-insured Cigna plan is appealing the denial of coverage for GLP-1 medications. She stated Cigna does not cover these medications as Metro's plan document specifically excludes drugs intended for weight loss and the plan does not include this drug class as a buy up. She stated it is a benefit exclusion and prior authorization is not accepted and these medications will not be covered under the pharmacy plan.

Paul Huffman and Dr. Carvel Tefft, Cigna were present. Paul Huffman stated that like previous appeals for this Metro currently has not made the decision to cover these weight loss medications. He stated that this is not necessarily a denial from Cigna's part because the drug is not covered, however their stance is still the same.

The member was present and addressed the Committee. She stated that the coverage she is asking for is for pre-diabetes instead of for weight loss. She also stated that the cost of the medication is far less than the cost of the claims made to the plan prior to her starting the medication and reviewed some of those claims. She also stated that her doctor recommends that this medication is necessary for her for the foreseeable future and how much she is currently costing her per month.

There was some discussion of the Board coming to a decision regarding coverage for GLP-1 medications, 3.

2. Self-insured Cigna HRA plan appeal - denial of glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) medications - Employee from Finance. (continued)

how to distinguish this case from every other case that will come, making a policy decision, and this medication is not approved by the FDA for weight loss.

Christine Bradley moved to have GLP-1 medications considered for pre-diabetes reviewed at a Study Session. Shannon Hall seconded, and the Committee approved without objection.

There was some discussion of what the process would be if the Board decides to move forward with the medication being prescribed for pre-diabetes.

Shannon Hall moved to uphold the denial of coverage for the GLP-1 medication. B.R. Hall seconded and the Committee approved without objection.

Item 5 was taken out of order.

5. Self-insured Cigna PPO plan appeal - denial of J1556 Bivigam medications for dependent - Employee from MNPD.

Christina Hickey reported to the Committee a member participating in the self-insured Cigna plan is appealing the denial of J1556 Bivigam medication coverage for their dependent. She stated this medication is used for the treatment of PANDAS. Ms. Hickey stated BCBS was previously covering this medication for this member and Cigna has conducted a peer-to-peer review and does not allow this medication. She also stated Cigna's coverage policy does not cover IVIG for this condition for this dependent as it is deemed experimental/investigational.

Paul Huffman, and Dr. Carvel Tefft, Cigna, were present. Dr. Tuft stated the basis for the denial is that the medication is experimental and investigational for PANDAS.

The members were present and addressed the Committee regarding the request for the medication.

Dr. Carvel Tefft described the medicine and how it correlates to the condition. He stated that the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee could not find a reliable randomized placebo-controlled study and therefore it was deemed experimental and investigational.

After some discussion of standard approaches and Cigna's position paper that states this is an off labeled indication of an appropriate care but lacking more controlled standardized studies, Shannon Hall moved to approve the medication. Christine Bradley seconded.

There was also some discussion of how this medication was covered under one plan and not the other and complaints from members since the change from BCBS to the Cigna PPO plan.

Paul Huffman, Cigna, stated that any issues should be sent to his attention and the client services executive.

A vote was taken on the motion to approve the medication and the Committee approved without objection.

4. Self-insured BCBS PPO plan appeal - denial of coverage for toric lens CSX and laser astigmatism correction CSX - Pensioner from Human Resources.

Christina Hickey reported to the Committee that a member that was participating in the self-insured BCBS PPO plan is appealing the denial of toric lens CSX and laser astigmatism correction CSX. She stated BCBS maintains that benefits are available only for surgery for removal of cataracts (including surgical implant of a prosthetic lens following cataract extraction) and are not available for any other type of refractive eye surgery including LASIK or PRK. She stated the Metro plan does not provide benefits for the following services, supplies or charges: Any services or supplies designed to correct refractive errors of the eyes except as otherwise stated in this plan.

4. Self-insured BCBS PPO plan appeal - denial of coverage for toric lens CSX and laser astigmatism correction CSX - Pensioner from Human Resources. (continued)

The member was present.

Russ Henderson, BCBS, was present. He stated that the medical director has reviewed the case and the member had laser surgery and multi focal lenses implanted which is not covered, and in addition the surgeon billed multiple items which were also not covered.

The member addressed the Committee regarding the denial. He stated that if there is a maximum amount for a single focal lens then that same amount should be applied to a multi focal lens, and this was a cataract removal surgery using a laser instead of a scalpel and the maximum amount of the bladed surgery should be applied to the laser surgery for cataract removal. He stated he is not asking for the entire amount to be covered he wants the minimum coverage to be applied to the options he selected.

There was some discussion of the procedure, members electing and paying for a better service when it's not covered, removing the cataracts, correcting the astigmatism, the benefit of using a laser verses the blade for the procedure and toric versus multi focal lens.

There was also some discussion of the last time this procedure was reviewed and an up to amount for coverage.

\*Denotes Harold Finch leaving the meeting and Vice-Chair Gilbert Gonzales continuing with the meeting.

There was discussion of what the pensioner is asking for makes sense, however, from an administration ability it would be a tremendous undertaking and that is something the industry would have to discuss changing.

\*\*Denotes Harold Finch returning to the meeting.

Christine Bradley moved to deny the request for coverage. Edna Jones seconded, and the Committee approved with B.R. Hall opposed.

With nothing further presented, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

---

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

---

**Harold W. Finch, II, Chair  
Medical & Life Committee**