

**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
GUILFORD COUNTY WELLNESS SUB-COMMITTEE**

August 31, 2015
Greensboro, North Carolina

The Wellness Sub-Committee appointed by the Board of County Commissioners met on August 31, 2015 at 1:00 pm in the J. Harry Weatherly Conference Room, located on the second floor of the Old Guilford County Courthouse, 301 W. Market Street, Greensboro.

PRESENT: Commissioner Committee members Vice Chairman Jeff Phillips and Commissioner Alan Perdue.

ABSENT: Commissioners Ray Trapp and Carolyn Q. Coleman

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager, Marty Lawing; Deputy County Manager, Clarence Grier Merle Green, DHHS-Public Health Director; John Dean, Human Resources Director; Gregory Bush, Staff Development, Carol Campbell, Human Resources Benefits Manager; Ariane Webb, Deputy Clerk to Board; Jim Albright, Emergency Services Director; Yvonne Moebs, Risk Management Director; Jason Jones; Sr. Budget Analyst; members of the business community and the media.

Vice Chairman Phillips called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm.

Carol Campbell, Human Resources (HR) Benefits Manager, introduced the Guilford County Health Insurance Overview handout and provided a brief summary of insurance claims within the County (see attached).

Commissioner Perdue questioned how the County insurance plan compares to similar plans.

Campbell noted that while County insurance co-pays were lower, the plan is comparable to similar-sized governments.

Vice Chairman Phillips requested a cost breakdown of insurance expenses by employee age.

Campbell stated that Guilford County's health insurance plan has 5,424 members, which also includes 390 retirees. She stated that the average cost to the County is approximately \$485/month, with the County costs for retirees rising to \$809.06/mo.

Merle Green, DHHS-Public Health Director, questioned if the majority of claims were tied to treatment of chronic diseases, such as diabetes.

County Manager Marty Lawing introduced the topic of developing goals for the employee wellness program. He stated that primary goals should address managing claims and plan costs, determining the design of a successful program for the County.

Jim Albright, Emergency Services Director, opined that placing emphasis on primary care would decrease long-term claims and costs. He stated the wellness program should serve as an initial portal of entry for healthcare, which would result in decreased absenteeism, increased productivity, and possibly allow the County to seek second opinions on employees placed on extended leave due to chronic conditions.

Yvonne Moebs, Risk Management Director, discussed her experience with a County-based wellness center in Henderson County. She described potential options such as Lunch & Learn presentations and County-sponsored clinics specializing in certain chronic conditions where generic drugs could be dispensed could encourage employees to become more mindful of health living and lower overall healthcare plan costs.

Lawing stated that County employees excel in utilizing generic prescription options.

Carl Hill, United Healthcare representative, noted diabetes is a driving cost in healthcare expenses, along with obesity. He discussed the programs currently in place to target these conditions.

Green stated that the County should focus on clinics that would address chronic conditions and preventative care.

Moebs recommended conducting annual health risk assessments, and waiving premium costs for those employees that participated.

John Dean, Human Resources Director, noted the key is communication and awareness.

Vice Chairman Phillips spoke to the benefits of exercise and its ability to change fitness and lifestyle behavior. He stated this should be the focus and a primary criterion for any County wellness program.

Lawing discussed options to encourage fitness could range from Lunch & Learn presentations to making exercise equipment readily available for employees.

Green stated the County exercise facility located in the DHHS-Public Health building at 1100 E. Wendover Avenue, Greensboro NC was well used by staff. She recommended the County utilize exercise as part of a 2-prong wellness program that included clinics which emphasized preventative care.

Vice Chairman Phillips questioned the costs of purchasing Fit Bit devices that could measure activity and fitness outcomes.

Jason Jones, Sr. Budget Analyst noted there were lots of options and the costs ranged from \$50-\$150 per device. He referenced a wellness initiative implemented in the City of Salisbury that included the purchase of these devices for employees.

Deputy Manager Clarence Grier discussed wellness campaigns conducted in Orange County, which emphasized a different monthly goal, such as, which employee/department could walk the most miles in a month, or which employee could consume the most vegetables in a month.

Commissioner Perdue commented on public safety initiatives to address wellness, and noted that any activity should emphasize the effects that unhealthy lifestyles have on an employee's family.

Vice Chairman Phillips stated small incentives combined with competition can result in changed mind-sets towards wellness.

Lawing reviewed the goal of controlling costs through decreased claims and stated that healthier employees are typically more energetic and productive.

Albright opined on the excessive use of urgent care facilities and emergency rooms by employees.

Lawing suggested that the committee should consolidate their lists of concerns and prioritize wellness goals.

Moebs introduced the topic of business and local government wellness programs, and discussed Henderson County's wellness program and clinic. She stated that the clinic served 800 employees, was centralized and resulted in savings greater than the expenditures required to run the clinic.

Grier discussed the City of High Point's nursing clinic staffed by contracted health care professionals.

Larry Reece, Wells Fargo representative, reviewed wellness clinics in City of Greenville and Rockingham County. He noted that, when developed correctly, clinics can put downward pressure on claim costs and that successful wellness programs are built upon a supportive: budget, culture and communication.

Hill suggested incentives to support the County wellness program, such as partnering with a local YMCA or fitness center to provide free or discounted memberships to employees actively participating in the program.

Vice Chairman Phillips expressed concerns with the centralized clinic option, stating that Guilford County was unique because employees are dispersed between two large municipalities.

Hill recommended establishing wellness champions within each department who could encourage employee engagement and participation through ongoing conversations about wellness.

Vice Chairman Phillips notes that the program must have staying power and consistency for long-term impact.

Lawing questioned the correlation between successful wellness programs and decreased claims.

Hill noted that it takes 3-5 years to gauge the success of an employee wellness program and observe decreased costs.

Albright discussed the success of Cone Health's wellness program and its focus on diabetes.

Campbell stated that success of any wellness program would hinge upon the County encouraging a work/life balance.

Commissioner Perdue questioned the number of employees that receive yearly incentives under the current wellness plan.

Campbell discussed the current incentive plan and stated that 1,219 employees and 418 spouses qualified for incentives during 2014.

Commissioner Perdue spoke to the benefits of yearly exams and questioned how to advertise these benefits to all employees.

Campbell spoke to the frustration of making yearly physicals and prevention methods readily available, however only half of County employees take advantage of these opportunities.

Commissioner Perdue stated the County must define the best practice physical and what physicians are required to offer in the form of tests.

Lawing introduced the topic of employee clinics and discussed the options of have staff nurse practitioners and physicians work within the clinic versus sites staffed by contracted employees.

Lawing reviewed biometric screening options and noted it was a good option for the half of County employees who did not have a yearly physical. He spoke to the benefits of biometric screening as a detector for disease management.

Moebs expressed concerns with the potentially comprising employee private health information.

Lawing stated that the County would only receive aggregate data and would not receive any detailed health information.

Lawing discussed options for wellness program participation incentives.

Hill suggested conducting a survey of employees to get ideas on the best incentives to offer, which normally results in increased participation, especially if the survey is sent directly from the employer, versus United Healthcare.

Jones discussed discounted gym memberships as an incentive for wellness program participation.

Vice Chairman Phillips noted that incentives make participation in any wellness program more attractive.

Dean discussed the current \$100,000 United Healthcare wellness incentives; stating that conducting a health risk assessment and biometric screening would be needed to create a baseline used to measure wellness goals. He noted that biometric screenings typically costs between \$45-\$48 per person.

Lawing reviewed participation in the 2014 Healthy Rewards program, stating that \$141,500 in incentives were paid to employees. He reviewed the incentive rates for online health risk assessments, disease management tools and completing a yearly physical.

Moebs suggested developing departmental wellness sub-committees.

Lawing suggested conducting an incentive survey.

Albright noted that the incentive survey would need to have an age component, as incentive interests varied dependent upon the employees' stage of life.

Lawing stated that incentive amounts would have to be monitored as anything above \$50 is considered taxable.

Linda Clyne, Wells Fargo representative, noted that the premium differential is linked to open enrollment.

Lawing clarified that wellness clinics are not attached to the Affordable Care Act. He discussed healthy rewards incentives and suggested replacing the yearly physical requirement with biometric screenings.

Vice Chairman Phillips questioned if the committee was discussing incentive pay-outs for 2015 or 2016.

Campbell clarified that the committee was discussing the outcome of incentives paid in 2016.

Lawing questioned the average value of the health risk assessment.

Hill noted that the deadline to spend \$100,000 wellness incentive is December 31, 2015.

Dean stated that the incentive could be used to conduct biometric screenings.

Emily Eschew, Wells Fargo representative, suggested purchasing gift cards with the incentive lump sum until guidelines have been developed.

Commissioner Perdue discussed the incentive survey and suggested that one question should ask why employees have not previously participated in wellness programs.

Vice Chairman Phillips questioned if employees would be interested in participating on wellness sub-committees or focus groups, to truly learn about their interest in wellness programs.

Lawing stated a draft survey would be developed and submitted to the committee at the next meeting.

The committee scheduled the next meeting for Tuesday, September 22, 2015 at 10:30am.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned by unanimous consent at 2:45pm.

Ariane Webb, Deputy Clerk to Board