

State Employee Advisory Commission and Public-School Advisory Commission Minutes

November 5, 2024

The Arkansas State Employee Advisory Commission and Public-School Employee Advisory Commission met on Tuesday, November 5, at 10:00 a.m.

ASE Commission Members Present:

Ronda Walthall

Marty Casteel

Bruce Maloch

Jerry Jones

Cynthia Dunlap

PSE Commission Members Present:

Julie Bates

Kurt Knickrehm

Billy Jackson

Others Present: Grant Wallace, Director of EBD; Amanda Land, Deputy Director of EBD; Jay Bir, EBD; Krista Grafe, EBD; Denise Flake, EBD; Sylvia Landers, Colonial Life; Trey Gardner, EBRx; Jay Eickman, Navitus; Paul Sakhrani, Milliman; Marc Bagby, Lilly; Lori Bowen, BLR; Takisha Sanders, Health Advantage; Jessica Akins, Health Advantage; Stephen Carroll, AllCare Specialty; Natalie Cantley, Abbott; Amanda Story, Hargraves Consulting; Amanda Smith, Abbott; Julia Weber, Brian Loeb, Brent Parker, Emilie Monk, Glenda Martin, Bob Atkins, Debbie Rogers, Keith gulley, Nima Nabavi, and 3 others.

1. Call to Order

Chairwoman Cynthia Dunlap called the meeting to order and recognized a quorum for both the ASE and PSE Commissions.

2. Approval of October 8 Minutes, Cynthia Dunlap

Jerry Johnson moved to approve the minutes from the September 10 Regular Meeting, seconded by Ronda Walthall. **Motion Passed.**

3. Director's Update, Grant Wallace

Director Wallace said there are two Requests for Proposals (RFPs) on the ARBuy website. One is for technology system administration, which is the ARBenefits portal. The other is for the spousal health insurance reimbursement program, which should be concluding by November 8. Director Wallace added they are putting the final touches on the RFP for the third-party administrator.

Kurt Knickrehm asked what the spousal health insurance reimbursement program was. Director Wallace answered it was a program discussed previously which would cover the premium for somebody whose spouses have insurance outside the State's plan and EBD would cover the difference between the two premiums to possibly reduce the liability of the plan.

The last RFP being worked on is a program for consulting, advising, and working on public student loan forgiveness. This was created under former President George H.W. Bush's administration and forgives student loans if someone works for the government or a nonprofit for 10 years. Regular payments still must be made but it is an incentive for people to go to work in those two sectors. It is very complex and there is a lot of paperwork which can lead to confusion. This initiative would have somebody come in and consult and advise and work individually with our state employees who have those loans.

Active employee Open Enrollment has wrapped up and he believes it went well and there were approximately 1,900 forms still needing to be processed. Director Wallace also said he was encouraged by the amount of password resetting they were doing, which means people were utilizing the online portal, which does help speed up the process. Currently EBD is in Retiree Open Enrollment and he emphasized the only thing retirees can do is change their plan.

Billy Jackson asked if a retiree does not do anything for the Open Enrollment period, then they will stay on the same plan they currently are on. Director Wallace answered that is how it works, if there are no changes needing to be made, then retirees do not have to do anything for EBD and their plan will continue as is in 2025.

4. Formulary Review, Jay Eickman and Kristin Belew

A. Pharmacy Formulary, Jay Eickman

Jay Eickman presented the October Formulary Advisory Committee (FAC) recommendations. The following drugs were recommended to be added or changed on the formulary:

- Tazorac Cream (0.05% and 0.1%)
- Veltassa Powder (8.4gm, 16.8gm, 25.2gm)
- Veltassa Powder 1gm
- Lokelma Pak (5gm, 10gm)
- Femlyv Tab
- Tremfya Injection 200mg/2mL
- Febuxostat tab
- Topronin tab delayed release
- Ondansetron 24mg Tab
- Disulfiram tab 500mg
- Oxycodone Tab
- Jynneos Injection
- Capvaxive
- Oxbryta Tab
- Dupixent 100mg/0.67mL injection
- Alinia Susp
- Hydrocodone bitartrate ER cap

Jackson moved to approve the Pharmacy Formulary recommendations, seconded by Walthall.
Motion Passed.

B. Medical Formulary Review, Kristen Belew

Kristen Belew presented the Medical Formulary Review, which are drugs administered in a clinical setting. The following drugs were recommended to be added or changed on the formulary:

- Actimmune
- Amtagvi
- Capvaxive
- Ceredase
- Fuzeon
- Kisunla
- Mydcombi
- Piasky
- Tecelra cellular therapy
- Tecentriq Hybreza
- Ultomiris
- Ventavis

Julie Bates asked if they consider what the availability of a class of drug is to treat certain afflictions. Belew said they normally do a disease state overview especially when there is a novel medication or a novel mechanism which comes to market. For example, with Kisunla the side effects are so high with risk of brain hemorrhage or brain edema there is enough calls for them to be cautioned without comparing the efficacy with other products.

Chairwoman Dunlap asked about Piasky and what are they looking for when a drug is “clinically effective”, yet not recommended. Belew answered saying the efficacy of Piasky and Ultomiris are similar at stopping the effects of Paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria (PNH), so they then lean towards the lower cost medication. If a patient wants to appeal Piasky, then because they say it is clinically effective, there is a higher chance of an appeal being granted, but likely only after the patient has tried the lower cost alternative first.

Johnson moved to approve the Medical Formulary recommendations, seconded by Kurt Knickrehm. **Motion Passed.**

Other Business

Chairwoman Dunlap reminded the Commission they would move back to the normal schedule of the second Tuesday of the month for the meeting.

Jackson motioned to adjourn until December 10, 2024, seconded by Johnson. **Motion Passed.**