

Minutes for Fringe Benefits Committee

Meeting: Fringe Benefits Committee (FBC) 2019-2020
Date: December 3, 2019
Location: Salisbury Labs 226

Attendees: Joseph Fehribach (chair), Will Darling, Jaime Dillon, Daniel DiMassa, Ruth McKeogh, Julia Quinn-Szcesuil, Mark Santiago, Wendy Walsh,

Not Present: Dirk Albrecht, Eric Chojnowski, Nima Rahbar, Sarah Wodin-Schwartz, Sharon Wulf

Guest: Jennifer Graves, Talent & Inclusion

Proposed Agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. Minutes
3. Health Care Coverage Concerns
4. Leave for Medical Appointments
5. Other Topics the Committee Wishes to Discuss
6. Adjournment

Meeting

Meeting called to order at 1:03 pm

- Minutes
 - Minutes from 11-6-19 meeting were approved by email approvals and in-person approvals at the meeting
- Health Care Coverage Concerns
 - Members brought up that there appears to be some feeling among the WPI employees that they are paying more for established care than previously. The FBC discussed surveying the appeals made to Tufts to see if those have increased in past years—both the total number of appeals and the appeals that were upheld or denied. Discussion included ensuring strict confidentiality by only getting the number of appeals and whether the appeals were denied or eventually approved.

Committee members discussed some of the confusion could come from people not fully understanding what the selected health plan actually covers. If employees have more thorough information, maybe they would make selections that would reduce this issue. There was discussion about employees self-advocating and asking their physicians how they charge for certain procedures which could reduce their own total cost.

Committee discussed clarifying if acupuncture is now covered under the Tufts plan.

- Leave for Medical Appointments
 - A committee member reported hearing of an employee who was expected to take

vacation time or unpaid time for a medical appointment absence of more than two hours. The committee discussed language in the handbook around medical appointments and how they are covered, including requiring a five-day notice.

Committee discussion included a two-hour limit as the reasonable industry expectation and common practice; employees should check with a supervisor for greater than two-hour leave; adapting work hours (skipping a lunch hour) to add additional time if necessary; and differences between a general medical appointment, emergency/sick leave, and a long-term treatment. For long-term treatment, the employee would use FMLA. For an emergency visit, the five-day rule would not apply because the employee would be using sick time. Further discussion included ambiguity around the cut-off for the two hour limit—is that weekly? Monthly? More? Less? Non-exempt employees have a bigger challenge than exempt or tenured employees as they record their time, so that additional clarification might help keep an employee from feeling as if they cannot take the time for medical appointments.

The overall agreement is the policy needs to be clear enough to prevent any extreme abuse of the policy by either employees taking too much unnecessary time or by supervisors not allowing employees to take needed time for medical appointments. Members mentioned this is also a managerial training issue and a definition issue. To begin, the committee agreed that defining the difference between a well visit, a sick visit, a treatment visit, etc. would be helpful.

- Other Topics the Committee Wishes to Discuss
 - An update on the summer hours policy the FBC submitted to FAP in spring 2019 was requested. The policy would expand the summer hours offering to let employees choose to continue with the normal summer hours policy or to take the allowed total hours as additional personal days throughout the year. This is especially beneficial to divisions that cannot take summer hours at all because of their schedules.
- This is the last meeting of 2019 and a new one will be scheduled some time in January or February 2020.
- Adjournment
 - Meeting adjourned at 1:56 pm

Submitted by Julia Quinn-Szcesuil 12/18/19