**Owning Your Own Health Committee**

**April 20, 2016 – Approved 5/25/2016**

**1:15 p.m.**

**Legislature Chambers**

Present: Don Barber, Debby Kelley, Bev Chin, Jackie Kippola, Leslie Moskowitz, Nancy Zahler,

Megan Feeley, Julie Fish, ProAct; Beth Miller, Excellus; Conor Cornelius, Interactive Health; Ken Foresti, Excellus (via conference phone)

**Call to Order**

Mr. Barber called the meeting to order at 1:23 p.m.

**Changes to the Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Approval of Minutes of March 16, 2016**

It was MOVED by Ms. Kippola, seconded by Ms. Chin, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of March 16, 2016 as submitted. MINUTES APPROVED.

**Executive Director’s Report**

Mr. Barber reported he has been working on putting together the next newsletter. One focus will be on back injuries and another will be useful information on purchasing generic drugs that was derived from the ProAct utilization report. He said the report showed an increase in the past year in generic drugs being purchased by Consortium members. He asked members to provide him with any additional ideas for newsletter content.

Ms. Zahler said even though the Consortium’s participants offer prescription drug coverage there are others who may be friends or neighbors of members who may not have drug coverage and suggested information be included in the newsletter on programs that are available to help with their prescription costs. Ms. Chin said she would provide resource information for those who may be uninsured for members to share.

Ms. Kippola suggested adding information to the Consortium’s webpage that would help members find their own plan. Mr. Foresti offered to put together information to help people register and login to the Excellus website.

Ms. Moskowitz asked how the last newsletter was distributed. Mr. Barber said the two cities requested electronic copies and other municipalities received paper copies for employee distribution. Ms. Moskowitz asked to be included on the future distribution of electronic copies of the newsletter.

Mr. Barber reported on logo submissions and said they will be displayed at the May 10th educational retreat and those present will have an opportunity to vote on the designs.

Mr. Barber said at the last meeting Mr. Schiele said he would be willing to Chair this Committee. Mr. Barber stated he would present Mr. Schiele’s willingness to Chair to the Executive Committee, noting Mr. Schiele is not a Director. The Executive Committee discussed this and there was no objection to Mr. Schiele chairing the Committee.

**ProAct Utilization Report**

Ms. Feeley reported there was a 10% increase in plan costs which was lower than the comparison population of similar clients. Also, the plan cost per prescription was $78.30 and with other similar client types it was $91.34. The generic drug utilization by Consortium members also went up by one percent which is positive.

Ms. Chin asked what the 10% increase in plan costs is attributable to. Ms. Fish said there were more specialty drug prescriptions filled and stated the trend is showing there is an increasing number of people who are on specialty medications and these have higher ingredient costs and result in a higher plan spend. Mr. Barber said the plan spend on specialty drugs in 2014 was 26.5% and in 2015 it was 28.2%; in addition, the cost of each drug increased. He also noted there were fewer prescriptions filled in 2015.

Ms. Zahler asked if ProAct is prohibited from purchasing drugs from Canada or negotiating for lower-price drugs. Ms. Fish said ProAct partners with CanaRx and they are able to offer most brand maintenance medications to members at zero co-pay and results in significant savings to the plan. She said a report could be provided for the Committee that would show current medications that are taken with a comparison to what would be saved with if the medications were received through the CanaRx program. She said because there is a zero co-pay there is an incentive for members to move to the program and some of their clients have made usage of the program mandatory if the medication is available.

In response to a question regarding CanaRx being a Canadian company Ms. Fish said the drugs are from the same places Pharma gets them for ProAct; the difference is that the middleman is eliminated. She extended an offer for someone who is very familiar with the legality issues to attend a meeting to speak about this.

Ms. Chin questioned how many prescriptions are being obtained through ProAct by mail order; Ms. Fish said there were 518 utilizing members. Mr. Barber said the County allows its members to participate in the CanaRx program. He also stated that the Consortium looked into this previously and decided at that time to let municipalities contract individually with CanaRx if they chose to. Members were interested in hearing more about the program and Mr. Barber agreed to work with Ms. Feeley to gather information to present at the next meeting. A copy of the full utilization report is available under the Resource tab on the Consortium website.

Mr. Barber reviewed the areas that will be covered at the May 10th retreat, stating the focus will be on how premiums are calculated. Ms. Zahler said she continues to hear from people who said they are receiving comparable benefit plans in the private sector but at a cheaper price and asked if there are other plans providing similar plans at a lower cost. Ms. Miller said there are many variables in the plans that can impact the cost and by being a participant in the Consortium municipalities are primarily paying only claims costs and are not being subjected to many taxes and fees they would otherwise be paying.

**Update on Rollout of Blue4U Program**

Ms. Miller said two members in Cortland County have enrolled in the Blue4U program which is a voluntary program and specific to the metal level plans. Mr. Cornelius said they typically see approximately 25% of the members participate in the voluntary program with no incentives. When incentives are added that number typically raises the number of participants to being about half of the eligible population and there is approximately a six-week rollout period. He said a goal should be to roll the marketing campaign out to start six weeks before people are to begin testing and there should be good communication in place between him and the benefit administrators at each municipality. He reviewed the marketing materials that are used to introduce the program and generate interest and also materials that are used to continue keeping members interested and informed. It was noted that members would contact him if there were questions.

Mr. Barber asked when enrollment would take place for members in Tompkins County and if there has been communication with the County for potential members. Mr. Cornelius said there has not been further communication since the program was initially rolled out in February. Mr. Barber spoke of the importance in rolling this program out in Tompkins County and TC3 now that a blood draw site has been identified and asked that Mr. Cornelius arrange to speak with him and Ms. Miller as soon as possible.

Mr. Barber asked members to provide questions they would like Mr. Locey to answer that relate to a discussion of making this benefit available to other Consortium members. He reviewed the following questions that were submitted by Mr. Schiele:

What is the added cost per plan;

Is there a co-pay option available and how would that affect this;

How would making this program available impact collective bargaining; and

When making the benefit available “a la carte” would the cost be leveraged against the interested employees or the entire municipality

Mr. Barber called attention to an Excellus document entitled “Health Equals Wealth, how wellness programs are making business better”. He said it is part of an overall strategy for the Consortium to increase wellness awareness and the article talks about how making people aware of owning their own health can save money. He asked members to think about how this message could be given to employers and spoke of the need to have more employers and employees present at meetings and able to introduce these subjects to members.

Ms. Zahler said the cost savings are compelling to employers and the health benefits should be the incentives for employees. She said it would be helpful if there was more data related to the savings to employees. Mr. Barber said there is some information in the document that addresses this but the employee aspect is important as well. She said she would also like to hear more information about incentives.

Ms. Moskowitz said she would forward to Mr. Barber a link to a report from the John Hopkins School of Health that she thinks would be useful.

**Next Agenda Topics**

The following items were suggested for inclusion on the next agenda:

Additional information on CanaRx;

Making Blue4U program available to other Consortium members; and

Goals to increase membership and awareness of wellness at the employee and employer level

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.