

**Minutes**  
**Owning Your Own Health Committee**  
**October 9, 2013 – 9:30 a.m.**  
**Scott Heyman Conference Room**

Present: Mack Cook, Board of Directors; Jackie Kippola; Brooke Jobin, Tompkins County; Emily Mallar, CAP Connect; Chantalise DeMarco, Board of Directors; Andy Olmetti, City of Ithaca; Beth Miller, Ken Forresti, Excellus (via conference call)

**Call to Order**

Mr. Cook called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes August 14, 2013**

The minutes of July 10, 2013 MOVED by Mr. Olmetti, seconded by Ms. Kippola, and unanimously approved as presented. MINUTES APPROVED.

**Old Business**

Mr. Cook provided a report on the wellness campaign as it affects people's off-the-job activities. He said with the assistance of Excellus the Consortium is trying to tackle wellness and employee participation by emphasizing what wellness does with regard to off-the-job activities such as hunting and skiing. Mr. Foresti said based on this there was information sent to Mr. Barber that he shared at the Board of Directors meeting. One area the information focused on was back pain because this is one of the most prevalent issues within the Consortium's population. The information was posted on the Consortium's website. He suggested an informational "blurb" could be sent out each month on a specific health matter and related to a specific time of year. He said something can be produced for the next meeting to share among members.

Mr. Olmetti said with the City's orientation for new employees relating to safety and health he asks employees to prioritize the five most important things in their life and then he asks what the most critical factor is to that prioritization. He said the goal is that they recognize they are the factor to what is most important to them in life and if they are injured or cannot perform as they have in the past he asks how that will impact their lifestyle (economically, physically, emotionally). He said it is important for people to understand what the impact will be if they cannot perform those activities. Mr. Mack agreed and said this approach gets employees participating in their own health by relating their health to how it impacts their personal life outside of work.

**Update on City of Cortland Health Fair**

Mr. Cook said the City of Cortland held a health fair and had 43 people participate in receiving flu shots. He did not get the contact with spouses as he had hoped and said by getting to employees he is not sure the Consortium is reaching the decision-makers in the family unit. He noted the clinic was not limited to those enrolled in the health plan and he opened it up to reach spouses and he viewed that the City picking up the cost of the flu shot was a small token of what the City could do to help employees stay healthy. The cost of the shot per employee was \$25 and resulted in a cost to the City of approximately \$1,200. He said this was justifiable to him because the City of Cortland spends approximately \$.5 million on claims that are not work related.

Ms. Miller asked how this clinic was rolled out to employees. Mr. Cook said department heads and employee representatives were relied on to communicate this to employees. They also displayed posters and included information printed on pay stubs. Employees were informed six weeks ahead of time. He said ProAct is not permitted by State regulations to administer the vaccine to anyone under age 19 because they are not medical doctors. He said next year he would like to find a physician who can administer the vaccine to kids and thinks this will also help to reach spouses.

Mr. Olmetti said the City will be hold its flu shot clinic next week. They have held clinics for the last several years and last year they had approximately 100 participants but did not offer them to spouses or other family members. He said like the County, this is done every year and employees expect it and he believes this is helpful as employees anticipate and plan for it. There was discussion about holding a benefits day as the County does and the benefits of pulling all health-related information into the event to share with employees.

Ms. Mallar commended the Consortium for working with healthcare providers and said the "carnival" approach to future health fairs is a good idea to get people involved because people generally need incentives. She suggested reaching out to infection preventionists in the community because people still have questions about the flu shots despite all of the literature that exists about the safeness of a flu shot. Mr. Cook agreed and said although it was free there are some people who will not get a shot. Mr. Cook said he would like to see it done on a larger scale and holding a Consortium-wide event.

Mr. Olmetti questioned whether topics, such as shingles is something that should be addressed at these events. Ms. Mallar said she does not have information about shingles vaccinations or the expense; however, offered her personal experience with having shingles. She said she had shingles last year and stated one in every three people get it and would highly recommend people be vaccinated if possible. Ms. Miller said there are guidelines regarding the medical policy for administering the shingles vaccine and members should always check with Excellus customer service first.

### **New Business**

Mr. Cook distributed information based on three cities (Cortland, Ithaca, and the Village of Groton) to demonstrate the impact from the Cadillac tax as a result in escalating healthcare costs. The document was a predictive sample of what the employee's costs will be in the next 15 years if health costs continue to rise at 8%, using a 15% contribution rate. He said in looking at what the employee will pay this year an employee will pay \$241 for family premium and will go up to \$741 in 15 years if nothing is done to curve costs. He said the message needs to be communicated to employees that if something is not done the cost of their health insurance premium will be the same as their home mortgage.

Mr. Cook spoke of the 2013 Kaiser Family Foundation report on health care in America. The Foundation surveys approximately 1,800 local governments, small and large businesses in America. He circulated charts from the report and said it is obvious that all employers are speaking of wellness as an opportunity to control healthcare and noted there is a tremendous drop-off from those providers who are talking about wellness to those who are actually providing incentives to employees. Of those who are actually providing employee wellness incentives there is only 8% of the employers that were survey in the report that actually offers incentives which range from gift cards, premium discounts, reductions in deductibles, or contribution percentages. Mr. Cook said he found one program being offered around the State that is having some success. He said the City of Batavia is the only City he has found in the State that

is doing something proactive to incentivize its wellness program. The City Manager has worked with unions and within the union contracts has changed the contribution rate to a 70/30 match, where the State average match is 85/15. However, through biometric testing and participation in wellness an employee can bring this down by 25 points. They have privacy factors built in as well as other factors such as for those employees who are not able to change testing results because of factors beyond their control they receive the full credit.

Mr. Cook said if he were to put this into effect as an individual entity within the Consortium he doesn't think there would be much affect to the entire Consortium's premium but would like to pursue exploring doing this on a Consortium-wide basis with the full cooperation of the employee and employer base. He said this is the only thing he has seen done in New York State that ties wellness to incentives in a meaningful way. Because the contribution rate is negotiated with employee groups this is something that would have to be collectively bargained for. However, Mr. Cook said he does not view this as a "take-away" from employees. Ms. Miller spoke of a similar voluntary program used at Excellus that is run by Interactive Health Solutions and noted that in the first year it was implemented there was an 86% participation rate.

There was a brief discussion of the distrust some employees have towards their employer. Mr. Cook said the City Manager informed him it took two years to get over that issue and noted that all testing is done by a third party and no data other than a raw score comes back to the employer.

With regard to how this could move forward, it was suggested that this could be taken to the Joint Committee on Plan Structure and Design for discussion. Ms. DeMarco also suggested Mr. Cook run a pilot program with non-unionized employees as a starting point. Ms. Olmetti said at some point unions need to be brought in for discussions because they will be a critical point of accomplishing this mission. Ms. DeMarco said this would happen at the Joint Committee. Mr. Cook asked if Ms. Miller could present the information from Interactive Health Solutions to this Committee that would include what impacts the program would have. Ms. Miller will contact Jennifer Stuckert from Interactive Solutions and request that she attend a future meeting to present information that would include a cost analysis and what the Consortium would get out of this type of program. Following that presentation the Committee will decide whether to recommend to move the presentation on to the Joint Committee on Plan Structure and Design. Mr. Cook will reach out to Mr. Malone, Batavia City Manager, to see if he is available to attend the next meeting.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be November 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Pottorff, Administrative Clerk