

## Frequently Asked Questions 10-28-10

**What is the Consortium?** The Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium is comprised of 13 municipalities located within Tompkins County's geographic borders. The municipalities banded together to collectively purchase health insurance and prescription drug coverage at a reasonable rate for their covered employees and retirees. The municipalities currently in the consortium are: County of Tompkins, City of Ithaca, Towns of Caroline, Danby, Dryden, Enfield, Groton, Ithaca, and Ulysses, and Villages of Cayuga Heights, Dryden, Groton, and Trumansburg.

**Why did the Consortium form?** Municipalities with fewer than 50 employees purchase health insurance and prescription drugs from more expensive "Community Rated" products. By grouping together with a consortium of 2,000 employees or more, the smaller municipalities can purchase the same coverage at a discounted rate. By shopping collectively and competitively, the Consortium members enjoy lower administrative costs, too, thus adding to the savings to both the employers and the employees.

**If employees and employers are paying more each year for coverage, where's the savings?** The Consortium established a self-insured model and will collect premium equivalents to cover expenses at its leanest method. The self-insured model costs less than staying in a model of buying insurance policies that are laden with profit. Employers and employees may notice rates inching up, but at a significantly lower rate with few or no giant rate hikes. The savings is in moving to the Consortium rather than staying in old plans.

**What if the Consortium collects more premiums than needed to cover expenses; will employees & employers receive a rebate?** No, any "excess" would stay in the Consortium budget to offset a cost increase for the following year. This is one method of keeping premiums level.

**Are co-pays and networks changing?** No, the co-pays are established as part of collective bargaining negotiations, and will remain the same unless renegotiated in labor contract negotiations. The network of doctors and participating providers is identical to that of 2010. Essentially, it is the same coverage.

**What might change?** Many employees in the Consortium currently receive their prescription drug coverage from Excellus. As of January 1, 2011, covered employees within the Consortium will use a card administered by Medco, a nationally recognized organization with tens of thousands of pharmacies that honor Medco card. In special circumstances, Medco may use a different formulary than Excellus. For example, if one drug is identified as a generic drug by Excellus, Medco may revert to a name-brand drug, thus increasing the employee's co-payment. This is a rare circumstance.

**Whom do I call if I have questions?** This varies for each employer; the County, City, and Town of Ithaca have human resource departments with designated personnel to answer questions. The Consortium plans to have a designated administrative person who can answer routine questions. You can also visit [www.tompkins-co.org](http://www.tompkins-co.org) and click on the Consortium's link.

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### Consortium Members:

County of Tompkins ~ City of Ithaca ~ Town of Caroline ~  
Town of Danby ~ Town of Dryden ~ Town of Enfield ~ Town of Groton ~ Town of Ithaca ~  
Town of Ulysses ~ Village of Cayuga Heights ~ Village of Dryden ~ Village of Groton ~ Village of Trumansburg

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