



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Authority to amend health care benefits under the PPO plan for active employees and pre-65 retirees to include the Naturally Slim Program

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR BOARD MEETING OF MARCH 15, 2018

COMMITTEE ON PENSION, HUMAN RESOURCES AND CIVIL SERVICE

Mr. David St. Pierre, Executive Director

Authority to amend health care benefits under the PPO plan for active employees and pre-65 retirees to include the Naturally Slim Program

Dear Sir:

Blue Cross Blue Shield has introduced a new voluntary health and wellness option to its PPO plan. The program is called Naturally Slim. It is an online behavior modification program focused on delivering sustainable weight loss. Its goal is to reduce the prevalence of obesity, pre-diabetes and metabolic syndrome (a combination of 3 or more risk factors associated with heart disease, diabetes, cancer and other serious medical conditions). Studies estimate that 37% of Americans have pre-diabetes, with up to 90% of these individuals unaware that they are pre-diabetic. Without intervention, 15-30% of these pre-diabetic adults will develop type-2 diabetes.

The Naturally Slim program uses behavior modification based on skill building, not dieting, to achieve weight loss and reverse obesity and pre-diabetes. This behavior modification method is clinically-proven to be the most effective and sustainable method for weight loss. The focus of the program is learning the skills for when and how to eat, not just what to eat as with a traditional diet. The program consists of 17 video coaching sessions delivered by subject matter experts over a 6-month period. It is delivered via an eHealth technology platform similar to e-learning and can be accessed from any device with internet access including via a mobile app. It includes weekly video segments, program quizzes, skill-building exercises, an "inspiration" page with motivational tools and a social support community.

Participation in the program is completely voluntary. It would be marketed to PPO plan participants as a wellness campaign with a set start and end date. Participants receive a program welcome kit mailed to their

home upon registration at no charge to the participant or the plan. The program uses weekly weigh-ins, similar to other weight-loss programs, to help participants track progress. Participant's individual program information is kept private. The District only receives aggregate data regarding the program.

The Naturally Slim program has delivered measurable clinical results. The average participant weight loss for those participating in the program is 10.6 pounds. Regarding medical risk factors, overall results have shown: a 29% reversal rate in the prevalence of pre-diabetes; a 31% decrease in the rate of participant's with high blood pressure; and a 50.7% reversal rate in the prevalence of metabolic syndrome.

There are no administrative fees associated with the introduction of this program. The only cost would be in the form of claims related to the online sessions. These sessions would be billed as an in-network claim under the PPO plan. Because the program meets the Affordable Care Act guidelines for preventive care, the claim is paid 100% by the plan with no cost to the participant. The plan is only billed for sessions actually completed by the participant. Based on average participation rates across other Blue Cross plans, the District estimates that it would incur between \$15,000 and \$20,000 in additional claims expense as a result of the campaign.

In an effort to further the District's commitment to employee health and wellness, authorization is requested to add the Naturally Slim Program to the PPO plan as a voluntary plan feature for active employees and pre-65 retirees participating in the PPO plan.

Requested, Beverly K. Sanders, Director of Human Resources

Respectfully Submitted, Mariyana T. Spyropoulos, Chairman, Committee on Pension, Human Resources & Civil Service

Disposition of this agenda item will be documented in the official Regular Board Meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners for March 15, 2018