



School Groups Approve EHA Health Insurance Rates

Lincoln, NE, Oct. 26, 2016 – Premium rates for the health insurance plan used by nearly every Nebraska school district will rise by 7.99 percent next year, following action by the Educators Health Alliance (EHA), a consortium of three statewide public school education groups that manages the plan.

When the 2017-18 plan year opens September 1, 2017, it will mark the 15th consecutive rate increase of less than 10 percent, said Neal Clayburn, chair of the EHA Board of Directors. In seven of the past eight years, the rate adjustment has been less than 5 percent.

The rates agreed to by the EHA board are for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) health care plan used by more than 400 public school district and affiliate groups in the state. The plan is governed by the Nebraska Association of School Boards, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators and the Nebraska State Education Association. More than 80,000 Nebraskans are covered by the plan, making it the largest health plan in the state.

The increase applies to all EHA Medical and Dental plan options. Rate increases in the previous three years were 4.9 percent, 1.91 percent; and 2.30 percent. By comparison, the State of Nebraska employee health insurance plan has had Medical rate increase of approximately 8 percent, 11 percent and 10 percent in 2016, 2015 and 2014, respectively.

The 2017-18 plan has no increase in medical deductibles and other copays.

“The EHA Board is pleased that we were able to achieve the renewal without requiring increases in member out of pocket costs,” said Clayburn. “Further, the EHA is adding 2 additional deductible options to the program which would allow local schools and their employees to choose to lower the rates by increasing the deductible.”

The EHA was able to save approximately \$2 Million per year by making changes to the network of pharmacies for the prescription drug benefit. This decision included a comprehensive review of the new network of pharmacies to make sure members will have adequate access to an in-network pharmacy. The savings will be achieved by retaining Walgreens and all other prescription providers currently in the network. However, two pharmacy chains – Target and CVS – will cease to be in the network effective Sept. 1, 2017.

Additionally, the Dental benefits have been updated. The new benefits provide greater emphasis on more coverage of preventative care and, in order to keep the plans cost neutral, add limited copayments for other services.

“The EHA Board’s strong management of the plan and judicious use of health care benefits by plan members have worked to keep plan costs stable,” said Clayburn. “All involved have worked hard to help our plan avoid the huge spikes in premium costs that other plans have experienced.”

“The EHA wellness program has also been instrumental in improving the health and wellness of EHA covered employees,” said Beth Kernes Krause, EHA vice chair and Auburn Public Schools Board of Education member. “The wellness plan continues to expand and is now adding options for individuals and school groups to earn financial incentives for achieving goals set by the program.”

Jack Moles, EHA secretary and Superintendent of Johnson County Schools, noted the program completed a competitive bidding process for selecting the insurer for the 2017-18 year, which provides the EHA assurance that it has the most competitive costs and services available.

“Good management by BCBSNE, and collaboration of the three education stakeholders keeps the plan vibrant and effective,” said Moles. “All should be applauded for their effort.”

The statewide health care network was formed 45 years ago. A 12-member board representing NSEA, the Nebraska Association of School Boards and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators governs the health care plan.

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School Boards



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of School Administrators**