

Committee on Faculty Benefits and Housing
Report for the C-FSC meeting of September 17, 2020
Vincent Renzi, chair

Together with the co-chairs of the T-FSC Benefits Committee, I met via Zoom on July 15th with Trish Halley, Assistant Vice President for Global Benefits, and Sabrina Ellis, Vice President of Human Resources, who reported that the University has decided to remain with United Health Care as the medical benefits manager for faculty and administrator for 2021, as there was reluctance to make a change in the present pandemic conditions. With this decision now having been made, the Benefits Office will schedule a meeting of the two committees in the coming weeks about proposed medical premiums and benefits changes for the coming year.

I reminded them that improving coverage for infertility treatments remains an important concern for faculty.

As a part of the renewal with United Health Care, the University will be shifting employee assistance benefits from Carebridge to them; and they will be providing an on-campus staff member to us (perhaps to be located in the Work-Life Office, and rotating to the First Avenue corridor and to Brooklyn).

We also received an update on the University's matching of employee retirement contributions. The University had been contemplating a suspension of contribution matching as a means of dealing with pandemic-related financial losses. We expect more word on this once the University's financial situation becomes clearer after the deadline for fall tuition payments. Note that matching contributions were made for September.

Together with the co-chairs of the T-FSC Benefits Committee, I met via Zoom on August 6th with Trish Halley, Assistant Vice President for Global Benefits, regarding medical plan premiums and plan enhancement for 2021. Medical plan expenses are expected to rise only 2.2% for 2020, due to the changes made this year in deductibles and reimbursement rates, well below the 7% increase the previous year. Together with savings due to new pricing from United Health Care, there is expected to be no net increase in costs, therefore there will be no increase in medical plan premiums for the coming year.

Covid-related expense have been off-set by declines in elective procedures. It is too soon to say whether and when we will see a cost impact—presumably people will at some point go forward with those deferred procedures.

If expenses follow projections and Covid-related expenses to do not increase, the University will revisit in early- to mid-2021 the possibility of implementing some of the plan enhancements that were deferred last year. Chief among them is the planned enhancement of infertility treatments.

A joint meeting of the C-FSC, T-FSC, and AMC Benefits Committees will be scheduled for fall with the new account representative from United Health Care.

A second meeting will be scheduled of the committee chairs to meet the new on-site employee assistance benefit staff member from United Health Care.