

**SUMMARY OF 26 August 2016 NAVIGATING RETIREMENT SESSION:
NAVIGATING HEALTHCARE PLAN COSTS AND EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES TO WESTERN'S
BCBSM HEALTHCARE PLAN FOR RETIREES, SPOUSES AND DEPENDENTS.**

This session was held in response to concerns about the cost of dependent coverage for WMU retirees. The purpose was to provide background information on how premiums are established and to provide a guide for those who might wish to seek alternative coverage for dependents.

Part One: Healthcare Plan Costs. Joe Ekstrom, Vice President of the Campbell Group.

Acrisure Benefits Group, a part of The Campbell Group, analyzes WMU past healthcare costs and projects future costs on a per contract basis. [Each retiree, with or without dependents, is counted as one contract."] WMU uses this data to determine future premiums. Although those hired as of January 2016 will not have retiree healthcare as we know it, our coverage remains the same. Currently, WMU "subsidizes" retiree premiums at 90% with an individual contribution of 10%. There is no subsidy for dependents.

Several factors have led to premium increases the last couple of years: moving Stop Loss payment amount to 18 months to get on a monthly basis; significant increases in Rx costs [i.e. from \$2.6mil to \$3.5mil in the past year for all covered active and retired employees] with the greatest share of increase attributed to those over 65 and on Medicare; a host of new State and Federal taxes, fees, charges mandated by the Affordable Care Act. Most of those costs have now been factored in and it's predicted that the next increase in premiums for the upcoming year may be less than in recent years.

You can review Joe Ekstrom's Power Point slides regarding healthcare plan costs by clicking [here](#).

Part Two: Options to the PPO for dependents. Gigi Stellema, Health Insurance Account Manager, Paul Goebel Group and Cindy Broom, BCBS of Michigan.

Gigi and Cindy walked us through the alphabet soup that is Medicare, Medicare Advantage and Medigap policies. You can find a comprehensive explanation of this presentation at www.medicare.gov.

The MEDICARE ADVANTAGE plans or Part C bring together Medicare Parts A, B and D and offer other optional benefits under one umbrella. You have "one card" -- (i.e. BCBS) and don't have to show others. You are billed monthly and apparently can have the premium paid automatically. Miss a payment and you are "out" of the game until the next open enrollment period which this year is from October 1st until December 7th. The various premiums are folded together somehow.

MEDI-GAP coverage is supplemental to Medicare A, B and D. These policies are offered by private companies and vary widely in terms of coverages and premium costs. Dental and Vision are rare options. Note: the WMU BCBS plan works as a Medi-Gap policy for retirees and dependents on Medicare. If you are considering seeking different coverage for a dependent/spouse, your first step should be to familiarize yourself with your current coverages so that you can make meaningful comparisons among choices.

To find your current coverages, you have two options:

Google WARF WMU AAUP or go to www.wmuaaup.net and click on the WARF button on the far right. At the WARF site, click on [healthcare and other benefits](#). This link takes you to many useful links, the first one to your benefits as listed on the Human Resources website.

You can also access BCBS of Michigan website and log in to see your coverage.

In addition, Medicare.gov offers comparisons of Medigap policies you might find it useful to check out before meeting with a health insurance advisor. Without your current coverage and a review of your medical history, etc, their assistance will be limited.

Options for assistance currently include:

Gigi Stellema, Health Insurance Accountant Manager, Paul Goebel Group.

161 Ottawa Ave; NW, Suite 301, Grand Rapids, MI. 49503

e-mail: gstellema@goebelgroup.com.

Phone: Local: 616-454-8257 or Toll Free 800-623-4591, Ext 5612.

Paul Goebel Group is a partner agency with Acrisure. Gigi can assist in comparing your current benefits, which she knows quite well, to alternative health plan options both for Medicare and individual plan options. You may call or email her to set up a phone or face-to-face consultation.

Lisa Fuller, Regional Coordinator for the Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program, Senior Services of Southwest Michigan. 918 Jasper, Kalamazoo, MI 49001 Phone: 269-382-0515.

Lisa recommends speaking with the agent who has your car and homeowners insurance. If the agent doesn't sell Medigaps, he/she may be able to refer you to someone he/she knows/trusts and indicates that you stay away from agents who are licensed to sell only 2 to 4 companies. She also shared questions to ask an agent from CMS [Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services] Publication 02110 which are linked to this summary. You can review those questions by clicking [here](#).

Lisa Fuller will present Comparing Medicare Supplement Plans on October 21. At that time you will learn what the MMAP can do for you. Watch for the ALERT. Note: those of you who are out of state should work with Senior Services or other agencies in your area. There is no Medigap network and plans differ from state to state.

An elder law attorney would also be a good source for gaining a trusted reference.

A final note: we have been assured that a spouse/dependent taken off the current plan can return during open enrollment provided the retiree is still alive.