

State Employee Advisory Commission and Public-School Advisory Commission Minutes

February 11, 2025

The Arkansas State Employee Advisory Commission and Public-School Employee Advisory Commission met on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was recorded and is available upon request through the Department of Transformation and Shared Services. The following members were present:

ASE Commission Members Present:

**Ronda Walthall
Marty Casteel
Jerry Jones
Cynthia Dunlap
Bruce Maloch**

PSE Commission Members Present:

**Julie Bates
Billy Jackson
Kurt Knickrehm
Jim Tucker**

Others present were Grant Wallace, Director of Employee Benefits Division, and Amanda Land, Deputy Director of Employee Benefits Division. Also present were staff from the Employee Benefits Division, EBRx, Milliman, and Navitus Health Solutions.

Chairwoman Dunlap, seeing a quorum, called the meeting to order. Chairwoman Dunlap asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the previous meeting on January 14, 2025. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Marty Casteel and was seconded by Ronda Walthall. All members were in favor.

Chairwoman Dunlap then recognized Director Wallace for the Employee Benefits Division's (EBD) presentation. Director Wallace provided an update on two bills that passed through the Senate last week: SB134, which changes the meeting frequency of the Advisory Commission from monthly to quarterly and reduces the stipend from \$500 to \$100 per meeting, and SB150, which grants flexibility and coordination with CMS regarding the Medicaid

Advantage Program. The bills were in the House and awaiting action and had passed out of the Senate. All other proposed bills impacting EBD were on hold pending a fiscal impact. Director Wallace also mentioned that responses for the third-party administrator RFP were due this week, and evaluations for the student loan RFP were currently ongoing. These are the last two RFPs that have not yet gone through review, but it is expected that reviews will take place within the month. Additionally, Director Wallace explained that the contracts for voluntary products (HSA, FSA, and COBRA) are set to expire, and it is time to initiate an RFP for these. The Accidental Death & Disability insurance contract for state employees was also proposed for RFP this year. The Actuary Consultant Service, which is bundled with the Health Advantage contract but not with the third-party administrator, will require an RFP as well. Lastly, Director Wallace shared that EBD is upgrading the phone system, with the rollout scheduled for around March 5, 2025.

Chairwoman Dunlap next recognized Jay Eickman of Navitus Health Solutions to present the December Formulary Advisory Committee recommendations followed by Kristen Belew. A motion was made by Kurt Knickrehm to approve the pharmacy benefit formulary recommendation, which was seconded by Marty Casteel. All members were in favor. A motion was made by Jerry Jones to approve the medical benefit formulary recommendation.

Seeing no other business to come before the Commissions, Chairwoman Dunlap stated a motion to adjourn would be entertained. Marty Casteel moved to adjourn the meeting, with Bruce Maloch having seconded. All members were in favor.