

# **State Employee Advisory Commission and Public-School Advisory Commission Minutes**

**May 6, 2025**

The Arkansas State Employee Advisory Commission and Public-School Employee Advisory Commission met on Tuesday, May 6, 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**

**Jerry Jones**

**Cynthia Dunlap**

**Bruce Maloch**

**Marty Casteel**

**PSE Commission Members Present:**

**Billy Jackson**

**Jim Tucker**

**Greg Rogers**

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 April 8, 2025. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Marty Casteel and was seconded by Billy Jackson. All members were in favor.

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

Marty Casteel to approve the medical benefit formulary recommendation, which was seconded by Billy Jackson.

Chairwoman Dunlap then called on Director Wallace to present the contract review for the annual one-year renewal of the agreement with UAMS EBRx. Director Wallace stated that the renewal is for one year at a cost of \$1.68 million. The agreement remains a standard service contract, under which EBRx will continue to act as a consultant, assisting with audits and appeals. A new component added for the upcoming year involves third-party reviews: if an appeal is denied after the initial review and a subsequent denial by Director Grant, a final review may be conducted by an external third party—such as independent medical or pharmacy professionals—who will have the authority to uphold or overturn the denial. These third-party review services will be subcontracted by EBRx, with associated fees passed on to EBD. A motion to approve was made by Marty Casteel and seconded by Jerry Jones.

Director Wallace then provided an update from the Employee Benefits Division (EBD). Director Wallace informed the group that the final analysis of all legislation passed during the recent session that affects EBD is still in progress. A summary in spreadsheet format is expected to be available for review within the next week or so. Director Grant added that the implementation of the new IT system is progressing smoothly, and onboarding efforts are going well. He also noted that the evaluation process for the third-party agreement with Health Advantage is underway. The bidding period has closed, and submitted proposals are now being evaluated.

Lastly, Chairwoman Dunlap invited Paul Sakhrani and Greg Collins from Milliman to give an update of the financial report.

Seeing no other business to come before the Commissions, Chairwoman Dunlap stated a motion to adjourn would be entertained. A motion to approve was made by Marty Casteel. All members were in favor.