

## 2009 University Benefits Committee Update

*University Benefits Committee:* The University Benefits Committee (UBC) has an advisory role regarding all matters related to the employee benefit programs and makes recommendations directly to the University through the Vice President of Business and Finance. Each college and major administrative unit (e.g., Ames Lab, Extension, etc.) and each employee group (Professional & Scientific, Faculty, Supervisory Merit, and Retirees) has a representative. Members are expected to act as conduits for information to and from their constituents and provide input regarding all matters related to University employee benefit programs. A listing of UBC Members can be located on the ISU website under Committees.

### *Charge of the Committee:*

- Receive employee feedback and suggestions on benefit programs,
- Make recommendations to University leadership regarding benefit programs that meet the needs of the university staff to be competitive with peer institutions,
- Make recommendations regarding benefits policy, the design of benefit programs, selection of providers,
- Monitor provider and plan performance to ensure coverage and cost equity, balance and sustainability.

### *2009/2010 Initiatives*

- **Monitoring benefit costs.** The UBC and the Benefits Office works closely with all of our benefit providers to ensure that multiple benefit options are available and competitively priced.
- **Supporting University budget efforts.** The UBC was given the directive early in 2009 to limit the University's share of health cost increases to 5%, even though health cost trends are currently in excess of 11%. The UBC worked diligently with our health plan vendors to restructure our medical and pharmacy plans to meet the budget challenge while trying to limit the overall financial impact to employees.
- **Evaluate Clinical Programs for our Prescription Drug program with Medco.** Prescription drug utilization continues to increase as more chronic and complex illnesses are treated with medications. The committee worked closely with Medco to analyze clinical program recommendations that enhance member health and safety, while ensuring appropriate drug utilization and lowering cost to the plan and to our members. Accordingly, for 2010 there will be several new clinical programs that will become part of our prescription drug program.
- **Explore Wellness Program Opportunities.** The University Benefits committee continues to evaluate opportunities to incorporate wellness initiatives into our University benefits as a long-term approach to improve the overall health and wellness of our staff and control rising health care costs. The UBC is in the final stages of reviewing wellness programs and making recommendations to University leadership.

*Summary:* The University Benefits Committee has worked closely with the University Administration to attempt to control our benefit costs in a difficult budget environment, while trying to maintain benefits quality and long-term sustainability. We listen to you and if you have concerns, please contact your representative on the University Benefits Committee and provide feedback on existing benefit programs and recommendations for future improvements.