

## **State and School Employees Health Insurance Management Board**

### **Standing Monthly Meeting October 23, 2024**

The standing monthly meeting of the State and School Employees Health Insurance Management Board convened Wednesday, October 23, 2024, in Room 117 of the Woolfolk Building located at 501 North West Street in Jackson, Mississippi, at 9:03 a.m. The presiding officer was Ms. Liz Welch, Chairman of the Board. A quorum was present.

#### **Voting Members Present**

Ms. Liz Welch, Chairman  
Mr. Christopher Burkhalter, Vice Chairman  
Mr. Mike Chaney  
Mr. Mark Formby  
Dr. Felicia Gavin (*represented by Ms. Sheila Buie*)  
Mr. Kelly Hardwick  
Mr. Ray Higgins (*via Teams*)  
Dr. Alfred Rankins  
Mr. Kell Smith

#### **Voting Members Absent**

#### **Non-Voting Members Present**

The Honorable Walter Michel – Chairman,  
Senate Insurance Committee  
The Honorable Jerry Turner – Chairman  
House Insurance Committee

#### **Non-Voting Members Absent**

The Honorable Briggs Hopson - Chairman,  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
The Honorable John Read – Chairman,  
House Appropriations Committee

#### **Department of Finance and Administration Staff Present:**

Mr. Bert Emrick  
Ms. Karen McKlemurry  
Ms. Carlotta Edwards (*via Teams*)  
Ms. Makleisha Logan-Hite (*via Teams*)  
Ms. Lori Paes (*via Teams*)

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was chaired and called to order by Ms. Liz Welch, Chairman of the Board.

### **Agenda Item 1: Minutes of the September 25, 2024 Standing Monthly Board Meeting**

Chairman Welch announced that the minutes of the Board's September 25, 2024, standing monthly meeting had been provided to all Board members for their review in advance of today's meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Mark Formby for the Board to approve the minutes for September as presented. Dr. Alfred Rankins seconded the motion. The motion passed by an 8 – 0 vote, with members Burkhalter, Chaney, Formby, Buie (designee for member Gavin), Hardwick, Higgins, Rankins, and Smith voting affirmatively.

### **Agenda Item 2: HIPAA Exemption Election**

Chairman Welch recognized Mr. Bert Emrick, State Insurance Administrator, who advised that staff recommends that the Board continue to elect an exemption of the State and School Employees' Health Insurance Plan from certain federal regulations under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Mr. Emrick explained that although the Board has consistently elected to generally comply with the intent of the HIPAA requirements voluntarily, it has nonetheless voted annually to exempt the Plan from regulation under these provisions for the past twenty-six years. He advised that should the Board elect to continue this exemption for 2025, notification of this election would be filed with the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, and likewise provided to participants as a part of the Plan Document. Dr. Rankins moved to approve the exemption election. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hardwick. The motion passed by an 8 – 0 vote, with members Burkhalter, Chaney, Formby, Buie (designee for member Gavin), Hardwick, Higgins, Rankins, and Smith voting affirmatively.

### **Agenda Item 3: SHP Network Discussion CAR-T Cell Therapy – UMMC**

Chairman Welch recognized Mr. Bert Emrick, who informed the Board that under the current network arrangement, UMMC is not a covered provider for participants who need for cellular immunotherapy/gene therapy, including CAR-T cell therapy. The services in question must be completed at a Center of Excellence. UMMC does not currently qualify for this designation. Participants must travel out of state to receive these services, as a Center of Excellence is not available within the State of Mississippi. A discussion was held about the Center of Excellence designation regarding UMMC providing services for CAR-T cell therapy. Mr. Mike Chaney made a motion that the State Health Plan put UMMC in network for CAR-T cell therapy out-patient, and if necessary, in-patient basis. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hardwick and passed by an 8 – 0 vote, with members Burkhalter, Chaney, Formby, Buie (designee for member Gavin), Hardwick, Higgins, Rankins, and Smith voting affirmatively.

**Agenda Item 4: 2025 Plan Document**

Chairman Welch again recognized Mr. Bert Emrick, who presented the draft 2025 Plan Document. In addition to containing the rules and regulations for the Mississippi State and School Employees' Life and Health Insurance Plan, the Plan Document provides a comprehensive description of how the Plan works, and includes a listing of covered, as well as excluded, services and benefits. The Plan Document is typically updated and revised annually to reflect approved benefit changes, as well as other modifications as needed to the Board's rules, regulations, and guidelines relative to enrollment, eligibility, claims administration, appeals, and related operational matters of the Plan.

A summary of the recommended changes to be effective January 1, 2025, will be presented at the Board meeting, along with a copy of the proposed 2025 Plan Document.

A motion was made by Mr. Burkhalter to approve the 2025 Plan Document as presented. Mr. Chaney seconded the motion. The motion passed by an 8 – 0 vote, with members Burkhalter, Chaney, Formby, Buie (designee for member Gavin), Hardwick, Higgins, Rankins, and Smith voting affirmatively.

**Agenda Item 5: Financial Statements**

Chairman Welch recognized Mr. Bert Emrick, who briefly reviewed the financial statements for the State and School Employees' Life and Health Insurance Plan for the month of September 2024. Copies of the financial statements from September 2024 were provided to the Board members for review prior to the meeting. No action was required or taken by the Board on this item.

**Agenda Item 6: General Schedule**

Chairman Welch recognized Mr. Bert Emrick, who reviewed the schedule of major activities and actions to be taken by the Board for the next several months.

**Agenda Item 7: Old Business – Additional 6-Month Extension for Acentra Health**

Chairman Welch recognized Mr. Bert Emrick, who reminded the Board that during the July 26, 2024, meeting, the Board voted to extend the contract for the Utilization and Care Management vendor Acentra Health. This extension was for an additional 6-month period. The Office of Insurance has reviewed this contract in comparison with all other vendor contracts and a standard 1-year extension is the norm. To keep our contracts uniform, an additional 6-month extension is needed to give the full 1-year extension. This additional extension was reviewed by the AG's office and determined that there is no legislation that would prevent this request.

This would move the contract through June 30, 2026, which will be in line with the other

vendor contracts that support the Mississippi State and School Employees' Health Insurance Plan. Mr. Burkhalter made a motion for approval of the additional 6-month period to move the full extension period to one calendar year. Mr. Chaney seconded the motion, which passed by an 8 – 0 vote, with members Burkhalter, Chaney, Formby, Buie (designee for member Gavin), Hardwick, Higgins, Rankins, and Smith voting affirmatively.

**Agenda Item 8: New Business – Board Meeting Calendar Review**

Chairman Welch recognized Mr. Bert Emrick, who informed the Board that the Mississippi State and School Employees' Health Insurance Management Board historically meets each month on the fourth Wednesday. In November and December, the Office of Insurance begins the process of reserving conference room space and IT coordination. In review up future calendar dates, State holidays have been identified as potentially interfering with the scheduled Board Meeting dates.

Fourth Wednesday of May 2025 falls during the Memorial Day holiday week  
Fourth Wednesday of November 2025 falls during the Thanksgiving holiday week.

Dr. Rankins made a motion to approve moving the May 2025 Board meeting up one week to May 21, 2025, due to the Memorial Day holiday week and moving November 2025 Board meeting up one week to November 19, 2025, due the Thanksgiving holiday week. Mr. Kell Smith seconded the motion, which passed by an 8 – 0 vote, with members Burkhalter, Chaney, Formby, Buie (designee for member Gavin), Hardwick, Higgins, Rankins, and Smith voting affirmatively.

**Adjournment**

Chairman Welch announced that the next standing meeting of the State and School Employees Health Insurance Management Board is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., on Wednesday, November 20, 2024.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.



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Liz Welch  
Chairman

State and School Employees Health Insurance Management Board