

THE BENEFITS BULLETIN

March 2008

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON EDUCATORS BENEFIT BOARD

OEBB's

RFP Round Up

RFP process moves closer to being complete. Follow along with this quick review of the process.

The Oregon Educators Benefit Board (OEBB) released the requests for proposal (RFPs) for medical, pharmacy, disease management, and health and wellness on January 14, beginning a several months-long process that will lead to the Board's ultimate mission: offering high-quality benefits

to Oregon school districts and education services districts.

OEBB staff and consultants followed up the medical by releasing the dental and vision RFPs on January 14.

All the RFPs closed on February 19.

Since then, the Board has moved to the selection phase of the process. Members of the Board made the decision to be part of the selection committee. Therefore, eight of

the 10 members will be a part of the interview process that will take place at the end of March.

The interviews will be considered public meetings and open to the public. Tentatively, the interviews will be March 17, 18, 20, 24, and 25. Times and locations will be posted later.

Medical interviews will be March 17, 18 and 20. Dental interviews follow on March 24, and Vision on March 25.

Carriers chosen to provide OEBB with plans will be selected at a Board meeting in April at which point negotiations will begin to determine rates.

The Board expects to release premium rates by mid to late May. All contracts with carriers should be finalized by early June.

For more information or questions about OEBB's RFP process, call (503) 378-4606 or e-mail oebb.info@state.or.us.

Road Trips!

Following the success of the Board meeting in Portland last November, OEBB sets its sights on the Eugene area.

**By SCOTTE . RUPP
 Communications
 Coordinator**

On March 13, the Oregon Educators Benefit Board will meet in the Eugene area.

It will be the second of

several road trips the Board makes throughout the year, to meet future OEBB members who are unable to attend a meeting in Salem, address their concerns and answer questions.

"We're attempting to reach out and present future OEBB members with an opportunity to meet with us, get to know us," said Brett Yancey, Board vice chair.

"This is important and I

think it shows good faith on the Board's part."

Yancey, who lives in Eugene, also is the business manager for Springfield School District.

His district will host the

Board's second road meeting outside Salem. The trips

also serve to let the people who will be receiving OEBB benefits this year know that Board members understand

"It's good for people to understand there is good stuff happening at OEBB, and that decisions are being made that will benefit them."

-- Brett Yancey
 Vice Chair, OEBB



See 'Road' on back

Behind The Board: Brett Yancey

By **SCOTT E. RUPP**
Communications
Coordinator

When the Oregon Educators Benefit Board began to make its way through the House and Senate during the 2007 session, he was there to fight it.

He so strongly opposed the forming of a statewide insurance pool for employees of Oregon's school and education service districts that he testified against the initial concept of OEBB in the Legislature.

But the Senate Bill passed and was signed into law on March 21 by Governor Theodore Kulongoski.

The next most logical step, Brett Yancey decided, was to apply for and become a member of the 10-member Board.

"I can sit and criticize this from the sidelines, or I can do something about it," Yancey said about his decision to be a part of OEBB. "Once the decision was made, I decided to get on board, to get involved with the future of healthcare in Oregon for school employees.

"I wanted to be part of the solution, part of finding fair and honest solutions."

The business manager at Springfield School District for the last six years, Yancey previously worked for Roseburg and Scio school districts before returning to his hometown of Eugene where he lives with his wife and three



Brett Yancey

children.

During that time, he had followed the insurance pool issue every time conversations about it surfaced, so felt qualified to help positively establish the effort.

He was pleasantly surprised when he received the call from the governor's office informing him of his selection to the Board, and doubly surprised when he was asked to fill the position of vice chair. It was an honor to be asked, he said, but he was glad just to have been selected as a member.

As a Board member, Yancey has relied on his breadth of knowledge gained working in a small, a mid-sized, and a large district. Because of this experience, Yancey said he brings a unique perspective to the Boardroom.

"I've represented all three sized districts and approach

Brett's most important OEBB developments:

- 1) High-quality plan designs that meet the comparability requirements
- 2) A customer service model that values employees and district staff
- 3) Exceeding the expectation for meeting a tight timeline

being a Board member from each perspective," he said, adding that he understands what it's like to work in a one-person office like many smaller districts, or with a team as found in the mid-sized and larger districts.

"I am also a public education employee that's going to be in the program, a recipient of the benefits. That's a perspective that not everybody at the table can bring."

Since coming together as an official body in July 2007, OEBB has taken several major steps forward, preparing to offer benefits, for about 25,000 school employees beginning Oct. 1, 2008.

One of the most important steps taken, Yancey said, was the Board's comparable plan design creations. to choose up to four medical plans from the nine offered by OEBB.

Carriers for the medical, dental and vision plans will be selected in April and rates will be announced in May, he said.

Springfield is not obligated to enter OEBB until 2010, the last year of district phase

in to OEBB, but Yancey said he will encourage the employee groups in his district to consider a 2009 entrance.

"When rates come in, and they're favorable, I'd be doing an injustice to the employees of my district not to encourage them to move in early," he said.

As a Board, there are still several areas needing the Board's attention or decisions to deliver the promise of OEBB.

For Yancey, they are, in order of importance to him, 1) keeping with the intention of the bill that created OEBB and reducing costs of insurance and administration to schools; 2) providing the very best healthcare to school and education service district employees throughout Oregon; 3) and providing a fair balance between employee needs and the tax payers.

"I think OEBB is going to be an increase in benefits for most employees," he said. "And people are going to receive a greater level of support than they have had in the past, prior to OEBB. These are going to be great benefits. Look at the plan designs, they're are high-quality benefits."

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How will OEGB affect districts' pooled plans?

The movement to OEGB should have no impact on district pools.

Will OEGB offer tiered, composite or both types of rates?

OEGB will be offering both composite and tiered rate structures for districts to consider during negotiations or management policy development.

When will I be able to begin enrolling for benefits?

The OEGB benefit plans will be available October 1, 2008. Your ability to enroll in the OEGB plans depends on the district you work in and

which, if any, collective bargaining group you are a part of.



Will there be any review or study of the effectiveness of OEGB?

Yes. Senate Bill 426 created the Task Force on Educator Health Benefits. The Task Force will consist of six members: one from the Senate, one from the House of Representatives, one who is a district employee represented by a labor organization, one who is a district management employee, and two who are not OEGB participants and who have expertise in health insurance or employee benefits plan design or administration.

The Task Force is expected to review the benefit plans and administration provided by OEGB to determine the cost savings created by the mandatory pool and submit a report to an interim committee on education or public employment no later than October 1, 2012.

Eligibility Explanations

By GLENN BALY

Policy/Program Coordinator

The Oregon Educators Benefit Board (OEGB) recently established eligibility standards for participating in the benefit plans to be offered in 2008. Detailed in two administrative rules, the standards were developed to help members and administrators understand the requirements for participating in OEGB benefit plans.

The goal of the Board in developing these -- and all its administrative rules -- is to set policies and standards that encompass the needs and practices of districts and employee groups.

The concept behind these standards is to set an eligibility framework that allows district and employee group flexibility when determining eligibility criteria.

The framework sets the minimum standards of eligible individuals who may participate in OEGB benefit plans. OEGB began by applying the eligibility criteria specifically cited in SB 426 recognizing that current collective bargaining agreements include eligibility criteria as well. This approach recognizes that upon implementation of the new administrative rule (February 1, 2008) some districts and employee groups had either a collective bargaining agreement or formal district policy that allows employees that work below the fifty percent threshold identified in the statute to participate in the benefits programs, while others restrict participation to employees that work more than the fifty percent threshold (e.g., at or above 0.75 FTE). It also recognizes that some districts and employee groups have agreed to cover opposite sex domestic partners, while

others have not.

The current administrative rules on benefit eligibility allow those employee group- or district-specific agreements and policies in place on February 1, 2008, to define eligibility outside the minimum standards (e.g., less than 0.50 FTE). If a district or employee group is considering changing eligibility requirements to a level lower than the 0.50 FTE standard set in the OEGB rules, Board approval will be necessary. The Board's review and approval ensures that the potential impact on the statewide pooled benefit plans is considered prior to final decisions being made to expand eligibility. However, changes at or above the standards set in rule, can be agreed to without the involvement of the Board.

For a complete version of OEGB's eligibility rule, go to www.oregon.gov/das/oebb.

OEBB Has Moved

**NEW ADDRESS: 1225 Ferry St. SE
Salem, OR 97301**

**By SCOTT E. RUPP
Communications Coordinator**

Since the Oregon Educators Benefit Board assembled last year, it's been a rare occasion that the twice-monthly meetings have been consistently held in the same place.

Though the constant movement from building to building throughout Salem may have better acquainted people with the Department of Agriculture, Willamette Education Service District, and Administrative Services buildings, beginning in April Board meetings will have a permanent home, and the constant shuffling should cease.

On February 11, OEBB staff moved to a new office. The space, 1225 Ferry Street SE, is just four blocks from its former location in Salem. Staff share space on the main level with the Public Employees' Benefit Board staff.

In an effort to centralize operations, OEBB's new office also has a boardroom where future meetings will be held, except those scheduled for other locations throughout the state.



OEBB's new office in Salem.

A collaborative effort between OEBB and PEBB, the move has been in the works since August 2007 and has been a smooth, efficient process, said Heidi Williams, OEBB's director of operations. Staff and Board contacts remain the same.

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this is a major change and to help clarify areas of confusion and misunderstanding about the future of healthcare and benefit offerings.

"We're hoping people will reach out to us, learn, ask questions, and see how this thing works," Yancey said. "Hopefully they will see how far we've come.

"And it's good for people to understand there is good stuff happening at OEBB, and that decisions are being made that will benefit them."

The stakes are high for everyone, he added, specifically, for the members receiving benefits. Quality must remain a key priority of the Board, he added.

"It will be good for people to attend a meeting. It gives them an opportunity to simply gather as much information as possible and see how the Board operates, and to see what happens," he said.

The meeting will be at Springfield Public Schools, 525 Mill St., Springfield in the boardroom of the Administration Building.

For more information, visit www.oregon.gov/das/oebb.

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