Health Plan

In 2016 the University faced new budget challenges resulting in a deeper assessment of employee benefit spend. In an effort to find savings, the University requested proposals for OU’s medical insurance (active, COBRA & retiree populations), dental insurance, life insurance, long term disability insurance and accidental death and dismemberment insurance carriers. As a result, effective January 1st, 2017, OU’s medical carrier changed from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma (BCBS) to Cigna for the employee, COBRA and pre-65 retirees. BCBS remained the carrier for retirees over the age of 65. The dental coverage remained with Delta Dental however the plan changed from fully insured coverage to a self-funded arrangement. The University’s life, LTD and ADD carrier also changed from the Standard to Lincoln Financial.

With the switch from BCBS to Cigna, OU continued to offer the PPO with a deductible of $500 per individual and the High Deductible Plan with a Health Savings Account. The premium rate renewal resulted in a reduction to employees with dependent coverage and a slight increase to employees with single coverage only. In an effort to continue OU’s push towards a tobacco free campus, a tobacco surcharge of $20 per pay period was also introduced to the active employee rates for tobacco users. Through favorable claims experience, the Norman Campus gave a medical premium holiday to Norman Campus Program employees and retirees.

The dental coverage premium rates remained the same however the sooner credit contribution towards these rates was reduced by $5. Employees no longer default into dental coverage but instead are required to make a voluntary decision to enroll.

Wellness Initiatives

In the 2016-2017 calendar year, all three campuses became certified as a Healthy Campus and Healthy Business. This year also saw many other changes. The Norman Campus kicked off the Norman specific “OU Wellness” program. With this program, a wellness portal was introduced to employees with incentives that included the choice of a free Fitbit or $50 voucher towards wellness approved items at the ONE U Store. OU Wellness collaborated with OU’s Parking Office and the Bike Sooner Program to offer employees a Bike Share Program called Crimson Cruisers. This program allows the OU Community to reserve a Campus Cruiser bike to get around campus for work, class or leisure.

The HSC campus retained the name “Healthy Sooners” and spearheaded the standing desk initiative. They saw much interest and great success with the program. A Breastfeeding Awareness initiative was also kicked off and both campuses have seen a very positive response from employees. In addition, the Mobile Mammography program saw a significant increase in
employee participation this year. Many other programs continued to achieve a positive turnout throughout the year including: Full Plate, Eat Down Your Blood Sugar, and Weight Watchers.

**Retirement**

The University was granted approval through the Oklahoma Board of Regents to initiate several projects throughout the year. In an effort to help alleviate the serious fiscal constraints due to low contribution funding for the University. Special Voluntary Retirement Incentive programs of 2016 and 2017 were implemented. The objective of the programs was to assist the University with reducing payroll and benefit costs during fiscal year 2017, 2018 and beyond. Both programs saw higher than projected participation. The Board of Regents also approved the University’s 12-month waiting period for new employees before entering one of the two Defined Contribution Plans and receiving contributions from the University. The 12-month waiting period was initiated on July 1, 2016.

OU Human Resources in partnership with Fidelity Investments launched the 401(a) Defined Contribution consolidation program. This program allows for employees that have multiple 401(a) accounts to consolidate them into one account thus not incurring double administration fees quarterly on their accounts. The University held and will continue to hold multiple 401(a) consolidation workshops to help assist employees in completing this process.

OU Human Resources in partnership with all of the University’s retirement vendors continued to address the charge of education towards retirement readiness and income replacement. OU Human Resources along with Fidelity Investments added more education workshops throughout the year on all campuses discussing topics ranging from Retirement readiness, Social Security, and Financial Wellness. OU HR and Fidelity also partnered in its 3rd Annual Financial wellness week where employees were given an opportunity to meet with several of the University’s benefits vendors, focusing on ways to improve financial health and learn of new programs and practices offered to assist in financial matters. OU Human Resources increased the number of Fidelity one on one meetings available for employees as well as the addition of meetings with TIAA-Cref. Further, OU Human Resources along with Fidelity Investments saw an increasing need to educate employees on saving towards retirement. To assist in this effort, the University turned on the “Easy Enroll” program with Fidelity Investments. This is a tool that provides a user-friendly method of educating employees about the University’s voluntary retirement savings plans and provides an easy enrollment method to start saving in those accounts towards their retirement. Fidelity Investments will continue their campaign for this new tool going forward.

**Other News**

On May 18th, 2016, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued an update to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regulations that will make more workers eligible for overtime pay. By December 1, 2016, workers across the country who make less than $47,475 per year will begin being paid for all the hours they work and earning overtime pay when they work over 40 hours. Although a hold was put on the final deadline, the University proceeded to implement the change to all applicable employees.