

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON HEALTH INSURANCE SAVINGS
MINUTES: MARCH 2, 2010**

HEALTH INSURANCE SAVINGS

MEMBERS: Co-Chairs: J. Myers, L. Williams; Legislators: J. Testa, A. Williams, K. Jenkins

IN ATTENDANCE: **CE:** K. Delgado; **BOL:** S. Bass, A. Reasoner;
GUESTS: C. Baedrel, S. Breidbart, T. Cawty, M. Watar, E. Warren, L. Houlacher, C. Bugga (Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield)

With a quorum present, the Special Committee on Health Insurance Savings was called to order at 4:12 p.m.

The Committee invited Mark Watar and his colleagues to explain the benefits of health coverage through Empire Blue Cross/ Blue Shield.

Mr. Watar discussed why Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield (EBC/BS) health coverage is the best option for Westchester County. He stated that on a five point scale, EBC/BS has a satisfaction rate exceeding 90%. EBC/BS allows “you to administer what you have”, and they are the most efficient and most experienced option. Mr. Watar suggested that there could be reduction costs in the tens of millions to the county. Then, additional figures about EBC/BS are given including the 800,000 nationwide provider locations and 5,800 nationwide hospitals, of those 80,000 providers and 200 hospitals being local.

Tom Cawty then discussed the cost benefits of EBC/BS. He explained that when looking at lowering costs there are three issues to focus on. They are unit cost, keeping people in the network, and utilization management.

Chris Bugga then further explains the idea of utilization of the network, and how doing so lowers overall unit cost. Mr. Bugga then proceeds to inform the committee that there is accessibility throughout the county and the world with the same in-network rates.

Mrs. Baedrel explains the use of medical management by EBC/BS. Medical management is EBC/BS’s way of helping a patient, collaborating with doctors and hospitals to hopefully avoid readmission after discharge.

Scott Breidbart said the focus of EBC/BS is two-fold. The first priority is ensuring that costs don't go up any faster than can be controlled, and the second part being the care of their members is the best.

Mr. Watar concluded by discussing preventative care, and how EBC/BS wants their patients to have no boundaries, meaning that no referrals are needed to see a specialist.

(Testa, A. Williams) Move to adjourn the Committee on Health Insurance Savings. Motion approved 4-0. The Committee on Health Insurance Savings adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE FOR REVIEW UPON REQUEST