

**BUCKS COUNTY CONSORTIUM MEETING MINUTES**  
**Thursday, May 2, 2024**

**Call to Order:**

A meeting of the Bucks County Consortium was held at 9:20 a.m. at Doylestown Borough on May 2, 2024, and called to order by Consortium President, Becki Marencik.

**Roll Call, Introductions and Community Updates:**

The following Bucks County communities were represented at the meeting:

Jessica Ireland, Bristol Township  
Shawn Curran, Chalfont Borough  
John Larson, Chalfont New Britian Sewer Authority  
Caroline Brinker, Doylestown Borough  
Stephanie Mason, Doylestown Township  
Colleen Pursell, Dublin Borough  
Steve Bradshaw, Langhorne Borough  
Barry Lubber, Lower Makefield Township  
Ashley Casey, Middletown Township  
Mega Bhandary, Middletown Township  
Nick Valla, Middletown Township  
Stephanie Teoli Kuhls, Middletown Township  
Dan Fox, New Britian Township  
Bob Pellegrino, Northampton Township  
Bill Wert, Northampton Township  
Angela Benner, Plumstead Township  
Steve Hicks, Plumstead Township  
Kris Barndt, Quakertown Borough  
Christopher Garges, Solebury Township  
Catherine Cataldi, Solebury Township  
Don Williams, Upper Southampton Township  
Mark Sarson, Upper Southampton Township  
John Ramey, Warminster Township  
Mike Walsh, Warminster Township  
Timothy Hagey, Warminster Township Municipal Authority  
Daulton George, Warminster Township Municipal Authority  
Lee Greenberg, Warrington Township  
Kyle Seckinger, Warwick Township

Becki Marencik, Warwick Township  
Skye Sorresso, Warwick Township  
Stacy Mulholland, Wrightstown Township  
Paula Johnson, Yardley Borough  
Patty Sargent, Yardley Borough

**Sponsors:**

Kathy Markloff, Barry Isett & Associates  
Beth Kaufman, Equitable Advisors  
David Ohman, Univest/Girard Pension Services  
Anna Linn, Univest/Girard Pension Services  
Tracey Carroll, William Penn Bank

**Sponsors Spotlight:**

None.

**Presentation:**

**Contract Negotiations & Healthcare Options During Negotiations**

Ms. Marencik welcomed everyone to the Bucks County Consortium May meeting and introduced the following panelist

**Ryan Cassidy, Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC**

**Email:** [ryancassidy@eckertseammans.com](mailto:ryancassidy@eckertseammans.com)

Ryan Cassidy is chair of the firm-wide Labor and Employment Group. He practices exclusively management-side labor and employment law in both the public and private sector.

Mr. Cassidy discussed the following items and topics in detail:

- Hot issues with Police Negotiations
  - Bold Bargaining Positions
  - Significant FOP Demands and Expectations
    - Wages and Pensions
    - Reversal of recently obtained employer concessions
    - Reversal of new tiers based on date of hire

- Minimal tolerance for concessions of any kind
  - Health care plan design changes
  - Change of plan platforms
  - Deductible and premium sharing increases
- Causes?
- Working backwards from interest arbitration
  
- Hot Issues in Act III Hearings
  - American Rescue Plan Funds
  - Inflation, inflation, inflation
  - Liability Issues
    - Bill of Rights: Automatic dismissal of anonymous or untimely complaints
    - Act 57 – Mental Health
  - Police Officer Recruiting; Starting Rate
  - Treating the other employees better
  
- Trending Act III Hearings
  - Wages
  - Longevity
  - Incrementalism
  - Health care
  - Pensions/Retirement
    - Enhancements
    - DROP vs. other benefits
    - Concessions; New Hire Tier
  
- Obtaining Health Care Concessions (Negotiations)
 

In negotiations

  - Multiple proposals before negotiations commence
  - Potential Q&A session with union
  - Information needed for negotiations
  - Disruption analysis; Rx issues.
  - Effective involvement of DVIT
  - In arbitration
    - Act 111 Arbitrator Perspective
    - Last piece of the puzzle
    - Data expected
  - Effective involvement of DVIT

Lauren Detweiler, Manager of Health Trust Operations (DVHT)  
Steve Fallon, Director - Employee Benefits Practice (Insurance Buyers' Council, Inc.)

Steve Fallon and Lauren Detweiler discussed the following items and topics in detail:

- Medical cost trends
- RX cost trends
- Contract Negotiating Priorities
- Factors Driving HealthCare Costs
  - Medical
  - Continued release of pent-up demand post-Covid
  - Demographics
  - Increased ambulatory spend and frequency
  - Inflation/Increased Provider Reimbursement
  - Provider consolidation continues to drive costs
  - State and federal coverage mandates
  - Pharmacy
  - Increased Anti-Diabetic spend
  - Off-label use for weight loss
  - Increased Specialty Drug spend
  - Fixed/Low member copayments
  -
- Pharmacy Trend and the Erosion of Member Cost
- Challenges
  - Plan design
  - Impact of inflation
  - Expectations and past practices
  - The "limitation of carrots"
- Contract Negotiating Priorities
  - Member engagement
  - The power of consumerism
    - Member share of healthcare costs
    - "Modernize" plan design and address the impact of health care inflation
    - Administrative prerogative Contract Negotiating Priorities

- Contract Negotiating Priorities
  - Member engagement
  - The power of consumerism
  - Member share of healthcare costs
  - “Modernize” plan design and address the impact of health care inflation
  - Administrative prerogative
  
- Strategies
  - High Deductible Health Plan paired with funding vehicle
    - Employee share of deductible
  - “Base and buy-up” plan offering
  - Employee Contributions
    - Dependent tiers
    - Spousal waiver
  - Increase participation in cost containment programs
  - Focus on the future if you anticipate significant turnover in near term
  
- Prioritize Pharmacy Benefits
  - Increase cost share for all tiers
    - Specialty tier
    - Inflation adjustment
  - Change the status quo
    - Formulary
    - Utilization management
    - Biosimilars as alternative to some high-cost specialty drugs
  
- How Can DVT Help: Plan design and premium modeling, pre-negotiation consultation, flexible plan design options, employee education, and cost containment programs.

Ms. Marencik thanked Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Fallon and Ms. Detweiler for their wealth of knowledge and information with the presentation.

**Treasurer's Report and Payment of Bills:**

Upon motion by Angela Benner, seconded by Angela Benner, the Treasurer's Report for April 2024, was unanimously approved.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Upon motion by Bob Pellegrino, seconded by Angela Benner, the April 4, 2024, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

**Adjournment:**

Mrs. Marencik reminded all that the Annual Bucks County Consortium Picnic will be on Friday, June 7, 2024, at the Warwick Brew Farm.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Casey  
Consortium Coordinator