

Did You Know?

Higher Cost May Not Equal Higher Quality Healthcare

When it comes to healthcare, higher cost may not mean higher quality. A recent Dartmouth Medical School study compared the cost of care for chronically ill Medicare patients in California hospitals. Findings show that care in Los Angeles costs as much as 69 percent more than in Sacramento. Yet LA hospitals produced no better results.

In 2006, the Benefit Board will focus on ways to measure the quality of care PEBB members receive in their medical plans. As costs continue to rise, PEBB and other healthcare purchasers want to know how costs tie to quality outcomes.

An Evolving Process

Measuring healthcare quality is an evolving process. The Office of Oregon Health Policy and Research made a start last year by posting 2004 hospital data on its Web site: www.oregon.gov/DAS/OHPPR/HQ/index.shtml. There you can see how often certain procedures were performed at some of the state's hospitals. (Higher volume may be tied to

better outcomes.) You can also see the death rates for procedures at many hospitals and learn which of them had higher- or lower-than-average rates.

Quality and Chronic Care

The vast majority of PEBB members won't be hospitalized in any given year. So how can the Board know the cost and quality of care it's buying for PEBB members with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, asthma and other chronic conditions? And how can you know the cost and quality of care you're paying for if you have such a condition?

Throughout the year, the Board will work with the plans and other stakeholders to define performance measures. The goal is to allow all of us to compare cost and quality so we can all know the value of our healthcare dollars.

Online Resources

Go online to see other quality efforts:

- www.orpricepoint.org, posted by the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems,

allows consumers to receive basic, facility-specific information about services and charges. (Charges are not the same as costs. Costs are determined by contracts between hospitals and health plans.)

- www.leapfroggroup.org, the Web site for the Leapfrog Group, lets you see how participating Oregon hospitals score on the Group's quality initiatives.
- www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, helps you compare how often hospitals in Oregon provide recommended treatments for certain medical conditions.

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Check Your Benefits

Benefits are an important part of your total compensation. Make sure your selections are correct on your first pay stub or pay statement of 2006. You can also check your benefits online using pebb.benefits, the online benefit management system. Go to www.oregon.gov/das/pebb and select “pebb.benefits” from the menu on the left. Follow the on-screen instructions.

The image shows a sample Oregon State Payroll System pay stub. It is divided into several sections. At the top, it says 'STATE OF OREGON OREGON STATE PAYROLL SYSTEM'. Below this are fields for 'NON', 'EMPLOYEE NAME', 'SOC. SEC. NO.', 'CLASSIFICATION', 'PERIOD ENDING', 'CHECK DATE', and 'PAY NUMBER'. The main body is split into 'EARNINGS' and 'DEDUCTIONS'. The 'EARNINGS' section has columns for 'HOURS', 'RATE', and 'AMOUNT'. The 'DEDUCTIONS' section has columns for 'VENDOR', 'DESCRIPTION', 'CURRENT', 'YTD', and 'EMPLOYER'. Below the main table is a 'YEAR TO DATE INFORMATION' section with columns for 'TAX DEFER INCOME', 'OTHER TAXABLE INCOME', 'FED. TAX WITHHELD', 'STATE TAX WITHHELD', 'SOC. SEC. WITHHELD', 'NUMBER', 'CURRENT', and 'YTD'. Callout boxes with arrows point to specific areas: 'Who is covered and at what amount' points to the 'CLASSIFICATION' field; 'State contribution' points to the 'EMPLOYER' column; 'Type of coverage and/or company' points to the 'VENDOR' column; 'Deductions from this pay period' points to the 'CURRENT' column; and 'Year-to-date deductions' points to the 'YTD' column.

*Sample Oregon State Payroll System pay stub. Look under the **Deductions** heading to check **vendor** and **description** information. Look under **Employee Contribution** and **Employer Contribution** to check for correct amounts.*

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Clues to Pay Codes

The following codes identify PEBB benefit deductions on pay stubs issued through the Oregon State Payroll System. Ages and amounts are examples. (K= maximum benefit in \$1,000s.)

Vendor	Explanation	Description	Explanation
BASIC LIFE	Mandatory employee life insurance	PRETAX/5K	Premium deducted pre-tax
EMP LIFE/40+	Employee life insurance; number = age group	PRETAX/80K	Premium for up to \$45,000 deducted pre-tax
SP/DP LIF40+	Optional spouse or domestic partner life insurance; number = age group	POSTAX/60K	Premium deducted post-tax
DEPNDDT LIFE	Optional dependent life insurance	5K/DEPNDDT	Benefit per dependent; premium deducted post-tax
EMP AD&D	Employee AD&D insurance	POSTAX/100K	Premium deducted post-tax
EMP/DEP AD&D	Employee and dependent AD&D insurance	POSTAX/100K	Premium deducted post-tax
SHORTTERM DIS	Short-term disability insurance, 7-day waiting period	60% BENEFIT	Replaces 60% of salary; premium deducted post-tax
LONGTERM DIS	Long-term disability insurance	180DAY/60% 90DAY/60% 180DAY/66 ^{2/3} % 90DAY/66 ^{2/3} %	Days = waiting periods; percentages = salary replaced; premium deducted post-tax
FSA/DEP CARE	Dependent care flexible spending account	Monthly amount	Amount deposited, deducted pre-tax
FSA/HLTHCARE	Healthcare flexible spending account	Monthly amount*	Amount deposited, deducted pre-tax

*Employees who switched from a PPO to the HMO during Open Enrollment and chose to have the \$250 incentive for a healthcare flexible spending account will see the deposit on the February pay stub.

Check Your Benefits

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You will have another chance to check your benefit selections in February, when PEBB mails a benefit statement to all members.

If you see an error on any of these materials, contact PEBB. We will help clear up any issues. You can also fill out an appeal form and fax it to PEBB. The form is on the PEBB Web site at www.oregon.gov/das/pebb under “Forms.”

Life, Disability and Long Term Care Insurance

If you requested a higher level of life or disability insurance during Open Enrollment, you were required to submit a medical history statement to the Standard Insurance Company. Your request goes into effect only with Standard’s approval. So, the increase will not show on the benefit statement if it was not

approved prior to mailing. Standard will notify you on approval or denial.

In the same way, when you enroll for long term care insurance after the initial “new hire” period, you must submit an evidence of insurability form to UnumProvident. Your request goes into effect only with the carrier’s approval. So, your enrollment will not show on the benefit statement if it was not approved prior to mailing. UnumProvident will notify you on approval or denial.

Medical Plan Codes	Vendor
KAISER HMO	Kaiser Permanente HMO
KAISER P/T	Kaiser Permanente part-time plan
KAISER ADD	Kaiser Permanente Added Choice POS
KAISER ADDPT	Kaiser Permanente Added Choice POS part-time plan
PROVIDENCE	Providence Choice PPO
REGENCE PPO	Regence BlueCross BlueShield PPO
REG PPO P/T	Regence BlueCross BlueShield part-time plan
SAMARITAN	Samaritan Select PPO
SAMARITAN PT	Samaritan Select PPO part-time plan
VSP	Vision Service Plan (for PPO members)
OPT OUT	Employee opted out of medical coverage

Dental Plan Codes	Vendor
KAISER DENT	Kaiser Permanente
ODS TRD DENT	ODS Traditional plan
ODS PRF DENT	ODS Preferred plan
WILLMT DENT	Willamette Dental plan

Medical & Dental Descriptions	
EMP	Employee only
EMP&SPOUSE	Employee & spouse
EMP&PARTNER	Employee & domestic partner
EMP&CHILDREN	Employee & child or children
EMP&FAMILY	Employee, spouse or domestic partner & children

Look for Communication from Your Plans

All PEBB members who enrolled in a new medical or dental plan for 2006 will receive a new ID card from the plan this month. All members enrolled in a Kaiser Permanente plan

will also receive a new ID card, as will their eligible dependents. All PEBB members enrolled in a medical plan will receive a member handbook from the plan in January.

Group Numbers

Following are the medical group numbers for PEBB plans, beginning January 1, 2006:

Kaiser Permanente HMO:	7029
Kaiser Permanente Added Choice:	14029
Providence Choice:	106528
Regence BlueCross BlueShield:	015101XXX (<i>XXX=first three number of the employee's agency number</i>)
Samaritan Select:	PEBB

If you need to access healthcare services before you receive your ID card or handbook, call the plan to get the information you need before you receive care. See PEBB Resources below.

Public Meetings

The Benefit Board and its subcommittees usually meet monthly. Times and locations are subject to change. For schedules, please check the Meetings section of the PEBB Web site: oregon.gov/das/pebb/meetings.shtml. (Please follow agency policy on use of the Internet at work.)

PEBB Resources

PEBB

www.oregon.gov/das/pebb
Salem: (503) 373-1102
Statewide: (800) 788-0520

BenefitHelp Solutions

(FSA Administrator)
www.benefithelpsolutions.com
(800) 556-2230

Kaiser Permanente

(Medical & Dental Plans)
<http://my.kp.org/nw/pebb>
Portland: (503) 813-2000
Outside Portland: (800) 813-2000
TTY: (800) 735-2900

The ODS Companies

(Dental Plans)
www.theodscompanies.com/pebb
Portland: (503) 265-5680
Outside Portland (877) 277-7280

Providence Choice

(Medical Plan)
www.providence.org/pebb
Portland: (503) 574-6620
Outside Portland: (800) 423-9470

Regence BlueCross BlueShield

(Medical Plans)
www.or.regence.com/pebb
Portland: (503) 220-3849
Outside Portland: (800) 826-9813

Samaritan Select

(Medical Plans)
www.samaritanselect.com
Corvallis area: (541) 768-6900
Outside Corvallis area: (800) 569-4616

The Standard Insurance Company

(Life & Disability Plans)
www.standard.com
Life Benefits (800) 242-1888
Disability Benefits (800) 842-1707

VSP

(Routine Vision Services except Kaiser)
www.vsp.com
(800) 877-7195

Willamette Dental

(Dental Plan)
www.willamettedental.com
Portland: (503) 644-6444, Option 8
Statewide: (800) 460-7644, Option 8

UnumProvident

(Long Term Care Plans)
www.unumprovident.com/enroll/pebb
(800) 227-4165

PEBB Mission

To provide a high quality plan of health and other benefits that are affordable to both the employee and the state.