

9-13-05

Status of UNC Health Care Initiative

September 6, 2005

- In July 2004, the President appointed a task force to recommend improvements to health care benefits offered to UNC's faculty and staff.
- Based on feedback from employees gained through a survey and open meetings on every campus, the task force concluded that the highest priorities are to provide more affordable coverage for dependents, access to primary care with lower out of pocket costs, more emphasis on wellness, and more opportunity to choose a plan that meets the needs of particular employees and their families.
- Working with a health care actuary, the task force developed a model for a health plan that was responsive to these needs expressed by UNC's faculty and staff.
- With the approval of the Board of Governors, legislation was introduced in the House and Senate to authorize the University to implement this model.
- Unfortunately, the General Assembly adjourned without enacting the legislation.
- The legislation will be eligible for consideration in the 2006 Session of the General Assembly. The interim time will be used to gather data to demonstrate that allowing the University to have a separate pilot health care plan will not disadvantage the State employees remaining in the State plan and to educate legislators about the importance of this problem.
- The State Health Plan has a new director, and UNC representatives have had several meetings with him to discuss ways that the State Health Plan ought to be improved to meet the needs of UNC's faculty and staff. He has pledged to try to make many of our proposed changes for all State employees. Although it is regrettable that the General Assembly increased dependent health care premiums for the upcoming year, the legislature did give the State Health Plan the authority to implement alternative health plan options, and the director has committed to provide at least one alternate plan by the July 2006.
- The UNC Office of the President will maintain its Health Initiative website (<http://www.northcarolina.edu/content.php/hr/benefits/hcinitiative.htm>) where employees may post comments and receive up to date health benefit information. The UNC Office of the President will continue to work with the State Health Plan and the legislature to obtain improved health care benefits that meet the needs of UNC's faculty and staff.