

## **April 27, 2018 SPECIAL PEBP BOARD MEETING NOTES**

Accusations flew from both sides during an April 27 meeting of the Public Employees' Benefits Program (PEBP) Board where they decided to abandon plans, at least for now, to move toward a hospital pilot program with Saint Mary's and Carson Tahoe Health. Discussion began last November and was approved at a March 22 board meeting. PEBP Executive Officer Damon Haycock recommended the board suspend the pilot program due to new information and concerns over added risk to the Hometown Health PPO network contract, the cost analysis of replacing the Hometown Health PPO network, and the reasonable offer from Hometown Health received April 16 placing cost controls with Renown. Additionally, the Saint Mary's contract will be removed from consideration by the Nevada Board of Examiners (which was to occur May 8) and finally, cancel the contract with Saint Mary's. The Board voted 9-1 on the recommendation which also sees PEBP accepting Hometown Health's PPO network amendment proposal to include the Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO) population and cost controls on Renown's annual rate increases; and, revisit the Medicare-plus pilot concept at a later date, likely once the current contract with Hometown Health is about to expire in the spring of 2021.

All of the above action came at the conclusion of the special PEBP meeting, but not before a lot of mudslinging took place, primarily from a group of Saint Mary proponents wearing peel and stick badges proclaiming "Support Choice for Healthcare". There were 21 people who spoke during public comment on the issue, some calling Hometown Health bullies, others questioning the quality of care offered at Renown/Hometown Health. One person proclaimed he wasn't there to argue about what hospital is better, but wondered why the agency was discussing this issue for a third time and alluded to the "bully threats", saying it was time to stand up and stop the larger businesses from flexing their muscle to force the board to change its vote.

In the end, logic won out, since PEBP will begin Open Enrollment for the next plan year on Monday, April 30, so not only logic, but time ran out for any change for choice in the Northern Nevada market.

Haycock, and the board, thanked everyone who turned out for this meeting, which was a repeat of a meeting that was originally scheduled to be held April 20, but was adjourned with no action then when Saint Mary's objected that they weren't properly noticed about the April 20 meeting, claiming the potential issue of open meeting violations. Immediately PEBP, under the gun, issued the proper notice to Saint Mary's of a rescheduled meeting set for April 27. The April 27 meeting drew more guests than the April 20 meeting, forcing the agency to open an overflow room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the PEBP building in Carson City.

Applause rang out during the meeting several times when someone spoke against what they called Renown/Hometown Health holding PEBP hostage. The meeting also had to be stopped for 15 minutes to confer with Hometown Health representatives about yet another potential cost issue with their April 16 proposal but it was eventually resolved. Haycock assured the group he wouldn't stop trying to bring the pilot program forward, but again, it won't be able to happen for at least a year or two. A couple of board members also expressed concern about the agency granting contracts only to have to pull them back. They also complained about being up against the time crunch too often too, and recommended Request for Proposals (RFP's) be prepared in advance of contracts about to expire, or before any contracts are extended.

The next regular PEBP Board Meeting will be May 24.