

HEALTH INSURANCE FUND

This fund in previous years was used to account for the provision of medical insurance and workers compensation insurance. However, the County shifted to a self-insured program for workers compensation insurance in FY 2011, and those revenues and expenses are now accounted for in a separate fund, the Workers Compensation Insurance Fund. The previous Health Benefits Fund was renamed the Health Insurance Fund. It accounts for only the health insurance revenues and expenditures.

The County changed from a premium-based health insurance plan in FY 2009 to a self-insured plan. This is a medical insurance plan in which the County takes on some aspects of self-insurance. A TPA (Third Party Administrator) is hired to administer the plan, such as employee enrollment and claims processing. In this case, the County uses Blue Cross/Blue Shield of NC. Then, the County pays directly all legitimate claims from medical providers. To protect from major losses, specific stop loss re-insurance is purchased. This protects the County from any claim exceeding \$100,000.

The employer share of health insurance has been budgeted within each department or agency. Those funds will be expensed, and the money transferred to this fund as a revenue source. The employee share of medical insurance is payroll deducted. It also is transferred into this fund. Then, the expenditures listed above will be paid from this fund. If claims are less than estimated, any fund balance will remain in this fund as a cushion against a bad-claims year. You will see that listed in the budget as Reserve for Excess Claims.

The County offers employees the opportunity to payroll deduct into a FSA (Flexible Spending Account) to cover their medical and childcare expenses. The advantage to the employee is that they don't have to pay federal or state income tax on this money. The advantage to the County is it doesn't have to pay FICA taxes on this money. Beginning July 1, 2008, the County provided debit cards for this program, which are a more convenient, efficient way to use and account for this money. The savings in FICA taxes offset the cost of this feature.

In FY 2010, the County began offering a Health Savings Account (HSA) option. The primary differences in an HSA and an FSA are that the HSA belongs to the employee, not the employer, and is therefore not forfeited if unused at the end of each year. Any remaining balance stays in the employee's account to offset medical expenses for the next year. The County paid \$500 into each HSA established. Again, with this option, there was no increase in the employee or the County's premiums.

For the next several years, the county and employees both faced several increases of insurance premiums and changes in the plans to offset rising healthcare costs. The county has seen an 18% increase in health insurance coverage over the past five years. Over that same period, Lincoln County employees have seen a 5% increase and marked increases, including deductibles.

While the pause from health insurance increases in FY 16 was good news, we knew that the long-term upward trend would prevail. Medical insurance will continue to increase well above the normal rate of inflation. This is evident for FY 17; more usage by employees and their dependents is driving this upward cost, as well as medical inflation.

Due to the projected 13% increase over FY 16, staff worked with Mark III to recommend the following changes to the Healthcare Plan: Emergency Room visits and Radiology will now require co-insurance and deductible. It was also recommended that all new hires as of July 1, 2016 would only be offered HSA as their insurance coverage. It was also recommended that the county offer a weight incentive of \$250.00. Finally, in an effort to deflect the rising cost of health insurance to the employee, staff recommended using a portion of the Health Fund Balance to absorb \$538,000.00 of the increase and the county to absorb the other \$145,000.00.

Clearly, the County cannot absorb double-digit increases in the future and will likely have to make more drastic decisions in future years. The plan benefits and percentages of premiums paid, co-pays, and deductibles will have to be reviewed annually to determine how best to counterbalance the increases to a manageable level.

LINCOLN COUNTY HEALTH INSURANCE FUND

FISCAL YEAR 2017

ACCOUNT	DESCRIPTION	FY 2015 ACTUAL	FY 2016 BUDGET	FY 2016 THRU 2/29/16	FY 2017 REQUESTED	FY 2017 RECOMMENDED
	REVENUES					
80-0000-00-00-36800-	Health Premiums Employer	(5,991,783)	(5,966,000)	(5,018,225)	(5,966,000)	(5,966,000)
80-0000-00-00-36801-	Health Premiums Employee	(1,057,466)	(1,127,795)	(872,582)	(1,127,795)	(1,127,795)
80-0000-00-00-36802-	Flex Revenues	(5,102)	(150,000)	-	(150,000)	(150,000)
80-0000-00-00-37000-	Interest Revenue	(10,121)	(8,000)	(5,527)	(8,000)	(8,000)
80-0000-00-00-38190-	Miscellaneous Revenues	-	-	(1,488)	-	-
	TOTAL REVENUES	(7,064,472)	(7,251,795)	(5,897,822)	(7,251,795)	(7,251,795)
	EXPENSES					
80-4000-51-00-56199-	Miscellaneous	54,218	734,795	19,200	734,795	734,795
80-4000-51-00-56501-	Administrative Fees	989,242	860,000	995,059	1,020,000	1,020,000
80-4000-51-00-56502-	Flex Account Fees	130,625	157,000	-	150,000	150,000
80-4000-51-00-56503-	Claims	6,372,255	5,500,000	4,945,007	5,347,000	5,347,000
80-4000-51-00-56504-	Flex Account Expenses	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL EXPENSES	7,546,340	7,251,795	5,959,266	7,251,795	7,251,795

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