

Zionsville Community Schools

Board of School Trustees Meeting “Item for Consideration”

New Business Item 6d • Date: March 10, 2025

Contracted Services Renewal – Ascension St. Vincent Partnership

Category:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Resources, Personnel/Staffing	<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance, Budgeting, Accounting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Board Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities, Transportation, Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Relations	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Type of Board of Trustees Consideration Sought:

Action	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input type="checkbox"/>

Facts of this Matter:

In July 2009 an agreement was adopted between the Board of School Trustees and St. Vincent Health for services promoting school-based health and wellness initiatives such as athletic training and school nursing services. Also included in that partnership were various employee services such as management of the on-site employee clinic, utilization of the Employee Assistance Program, and a competitive narrow network pricing for medical claims. The original agreement was reviewed and adjusted in 2019 and again in 2022 to extend the partnership for an additional three years under a new narrow network and the national Ascension brand (new parent branding of the local St. Vincent Health group).

As the terms of our current contracts with Ascension St. Vincent (ASV) expire in June 2025, the Leadership Team has been actively reviewing our current arrangement with our ASV partners since early 2024. This recommendation provided to you for consideration represents the culmination of many months of meetings and dialogue between the parties, including professional consultation with our benefits advisor in order to identify any needs of the partnership that could be maximized. This thoughtful approach has included careful planning and adjustment for the many shifts in the health care industry that are underway and expected in the coming years. After many months of analysis and negotiations with our partners, the Leadership Team recommends a five-year extension of our partnership for the services provided by ASV.

If approved, the key elements of this ongoing relationship will be as follows:

1. Ascension St. Vincent will be the primary corporate sponsor, within the healthcare system, for our athletic facilities. ASV will be recognized as such throughout our athletic facilities and media.
2. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offered by Ascension St. Vincent will be available to all ZCS employees and eligible family members. The EAP is designed to assist employees and their families in overcoming a wide range of personal problems. EAP offers short-term counseling, workshops, seminars, and a 24 hour crisis phone line to provide professional support and direction toward finding solutions.
3. Ascension St. Vincent will continue to staff and manage the employee health clinic. In 2024, approximately 83% of our benefit eligible employees utilized the employee clinic. The employee health clinic provides access for employees and dependents covered on our health plan for physician services, Pharm D consultation, dietician support, and behavioral health

counseling. The employee clinic also provides screenings for skin cancer, breast cancer, and other high-risk conditions on an annual basis. Aside from these life-saving screenings and flu vaccine administration, in 2024 the employee clinic was scheduled for 4,099 visits by members covered on the health plan. There were 1,417 unique patient visits and 3,423 prescription medications dispensed. It is worth noting that our high-cost claimant members (highest prospective risk) are engaging in our available employee clinic primary care. Due to utilization of hours and trends in referrals, this recommendation includes additional physician hours and services to the clinic operating schedule. Under this proposed partnership, the identified network for health claim charges will remain through Ascension, with Unified Group Services (UGS) serving as the third-party administrator for claim processing and payment.

4. Ascension St. Vincent will operate our school health centers with the appropriate staff. The combination of HCA, EMT, RN, and BSN personnel will provide the appropriate coverage at all nine of our ZCS school nursing centers. This will allow ZCS to continue to accommodate the diverse student needs due to specialized programming (Intense Intervention, Lifeskills, Functional Academics, and Developmental Preschool).
5. St. Vincent Sports Performance will provide a certified strength coach to ZCHS as well as athletic training staff for each of the secondary campuses. Ascension St. Vincent oversight in this area of our operations will facilitate our legal compliance with issues related to athletic physicals, concussion protocol, injury prevention/treatment, and prevention education on heat related illness.
6. Ascension St. Vincent will continue providing student mental health supports to ZCS to be billed monthly.

Objective POSITIVES related to this item or approach:

ZCS employee clinic services expanded significantly upon opening the clinic operations at the SESC building in 2019. Recent third-party analysis specific to the main artery of this partnership (employee clinic/health network) yields cost avoidance since 2019 exceeding \$22,000,000.00 for the employee health fund. Your consideration of extending this relationship will continue this strong savings in the self-funded insurance plan as well as minimize any disruption to the current health services of staff on our health care plan. In addition to the attractive network, this comprehensive approach provides consistency to students from a school nursing and athletic training perspective. Overall, this action provides a significant cost savings and efficiency of operations to the district that cannot be ignored.

Financial Implications related to this item or approach:

Item one represents an annual revenue stream for the school corporation over the length of the agreement. Item two is an effective service available to all employees that until this negotiation has been provided at the same cost to ZCS since the inception of these agreements in 2009. EAP is recommended to continue at a slight increase of four cents per employee per month for access to this support. Item three provides additional physician and therapy hours in the employee clinic to address high utilization and need. While the additional staff hours at the clinic come at a cost, we were able to negotiate a stable network fee for total increase to the ZCS health trust of approximately \$358,493 for these services. Items four and five provide important service to students in an area of our operations that can be highly litigious if not done well. Cost increases of approximately \$110,157 in items four and five reflect necessary staffing certifications for school nursing and athletic training as well as the anticipated three percent (3%) market increase in salary for these professionals. Negotiations resulted in no cost increase to ZCS for item six. Costs depicted here include anticipated maximum pass-through costs for labs, meds, supplies, and hourly billing for staff as influenced by licensure.

Objective NEGATIVES related to this item or approach:

None known at this time.

Opinion/Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Board approve this request at this time in order to allow board counsel the vet the related legal agreements with the Ascension team for implementation of what amounts to a five-year extension of existing services with appropriate growth of the contract due to enrollment and staffing growth.

Suggested Wording for a Motion, if any:

I move to authorize the Leadership Team, along with board counsel, to execute contracts with Ascension St. Vincent Health for the service lines depicted in the recommendation.