

Subject: Expanding Benefits Access – Improving Health Equity

Dear Colleagues,

We heard you! With input from employees, management, and labor representatives, the City of Seattle made some important equity changes to employee health benefits in 2022. These changes include expanding access to the Employee Assistance Program, increasing gender-affirming treatments coverage, and infertility coverage.

- 1. Expanded Access to the EAP:** As of January 1, all temporary employees (on average 1,600) have access to the full Resources for Living Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Over 52% of temporary City workers are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). This change means **all** City employees and their household members now have a professional resource to contact when things are tough. Interested? See the [EAP page](#), or call Resources for Living at **1 (888) 272-7252; 1 (888) 879-8274** (TTY).

On February 1, the City added TalkSpace, a digital counseling service, which complements EAP counseling. While an EAP counselor can be accessed by telephone, video, or in-person, we've heard from employees that finding a counselor can be difficult, especially for those who identify as BIPOC and LGBTQIA. TalkSpace is a digital-only solution with over 4,400 therapists, 40% of whom identify as a race other than White, and 35% who have LGBTQIA counseling experience. To access TalkSpace, see the [flyer](#). For both EAP changes, see the [infographic](#).

- 2. Expanded Gender-Affirming Care Services:** In response to the recent Senate Bill 5313, the City added more gender-affirming care services on January 1, 2022, for employees and family members seeking transgender health care. For an overview of the added benefits check out the [infographic](#). For specific coverage questions, call the customer service number on the back of your medical card.
- 3. Expanded Access to Infertility Services:** Starting January 1, the definition of infertility was removed from the Aetna and Kaiser Most* medical plans to remove barriers for some queer families and people who would like to become pregnant. The City also added coverage for advanced reproductive technologies and increased the lifetime benefit maximum from \$10,000 to \$20,000. For more information on what's changed, see the [infographic](#).

We continue to evolve City benefits to best serve employees and family members with equitable and inclusive plans and coverages. Thank you for your support. To share your thoughts about your benefits, please contact your union representative or [department benefits representative](#), or send an email to the Benefits Unit (benefits.unit@seattle.gov).

* Employees have "Most" coverage if they are not on one of the following benefit programs: Local 77 I.B.E.W., Seattle Police Officers' Guild, or Fire Fighters Local 27.