



# RUTGERS

University Senate

**University Senate**  
**Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee** Response  
to Charge S-2315: University Vision Benefits

**A. Charge**

Charge Number S-2315  
Title University Vision Benefits  
Description *Investigate the policies which currently govern the University’s practice of reimbursing employees for eye exams, glasses and contact lenses, frames, and coatings. Determine if current policies match industry practices. Investigate how many employees actually receive reimbursements, and explore possible recommendations for new policies, plans, or programs related to vision and eye care for Rutgers employees.*

**B. Consultants to this Charge Report**

*Vivian Fernandez*, University Human Resources

**C. Background**

This charge was referred to FPAC in October 2023. Presently, the University has a program for which employees can submit an application to be reimbursed partially for eyeglasses. However, there are a number of items related to such a healthcare visit which the university will not reimburse. Depending upon individual providers, especially larger providers, various promotional commercials and sales events can result in eyeglasses being “free” while other parts of the visit are still provided at a cost potentially exceeding several hundred dollars. In a workplace where a large majority of employees might need eyeglasses of some sort, Rutgers should find more ways to minimize the costs of something which should just be a part of health insurance.

**D. Discussion**

Generally, vision benefits are separate from the regular health insurance plans offered by the university. FPAC member and University Human Resources Director Vivian Fernandez prepared a summary of existing vision benefits as a set of Power Point slides, which are appended to this document. Director Fernandez also prepared examples of alternative vision benefit plans that could provide broader and more comprehensive coverage to employees who require vision care (e.g., corrective lenses). After consideration of existing benefits and the possibility of newer, broader benefit plans, FPAC recommends that the University Senate adopt the following resolution:

*BE IT RESOLVED: The University Senate recommends that University Human Resources assess and explore cost-effective ways to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of benefits coverage for vision services, including but not limited to eye exams; purchases of corrective lenses and frames; and related optometry services.*

# Vision Benefits

FPAC Briefing 11/17/23



# Vision Benefit under State Medical Plans

*All of the medical plans offered under the State Health Benefit Program (SHBP) include coverage for an annual eye exam on an in-network basis.*

- One eye exam per year
- Available to benefit eligible employees and covered dependents
- In-Network benefits only
- Specialist Office Visit copay/coinsurance (Varies based on plan chosen)
- No coverage for eyeglasses or contact lenses
- Covers treatment by an ophthalmologist for diseases of the eye

# Rutgers Vision Care Reimbursement Plan

*Rutgers offers a Vision Reimbursement plan to all benefit eligible employees. The benefit provides reimbursement for glasses or contact lenses.*

- No cost to employee
- Benefit every two years
- Available to employees and eligible dependents
- May utilize any provider
- Maximum reimbursement ranges from \$45 to \$50 based on corrective lens/contact lens type
- No reimbursement for routine eye exam (covered under medical plan)
- No reimbursement for frames

# Rutgers Vision Utilization

Fiscal Year	Relationship	Amount	Number
2022	Self	\$27,820.21	579
	Spouse	\$8,475.00	172
	Child	\$8,278.95	186
	Other	\$50.00	1
	Total	\$44,624.16	938
2023	Self	\$29,744.92	641
	Spouse	\$9,004.77	191
	Child	\$10,729.60	242
	Other	\$45.00	1
	Total	\$49,524.29	1075
2024YTD	Self	\$8,906.89	192
	Spouse	\$3,160.00	68
	Child	\$3,344.50	75
	Other	\$0.00	0
	Total	\$15,411.39	335

# Voluntary Vision Plans Available in the Market

*Voluntary vision benefits can be made available to employees, with convenient payroll deductions.*

## **Sample Benefits Provisions\*:**

- Available to employees and eligible dependents
- May utilize any provider (most have in and out of network benefits)
- Provide coverage for routine eye exams, frames, lenses, contact lenses and discounts on Lasik
- Monthly rates dependent upon plan design chosen but would be discounted based on large group rates.

## **Sample Benefits Costs\*:**

- |                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| – <b>Employee Only</b>         | \$5.68-\$11.38  |
| – <b>Employee + Spouse</b>     | \$11.37-\$22.75 |
| – <b>Employee + Child(ren)</b> | \$12.17-\$24.34 |
| – <b>Employee + Family</b>     | \$19-\$38.91    |

*\* Benefits and costs are subject to underwriting which considers both the employee population and plan design.*

# Sample Marketplace Vision Plans

	Lens Crafters		EyeMed <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Exam Services</b>	\$0		\$0 - \$10 <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Retinal Screening</b>	up to \$39		up to \$39	
<b>Lenses</b>	Covered in full		\$25	
<b>Lens Enhancements<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Single Vision</b>	<b>Multifocal</b>	<b>Single Vision</b>	<b>Multifocal</b>
<b>Anti Reflective Coating</b>	\$41	\$41	\$45	\$45
<b>Polycarbonate-Adult</b>	\$35	\$35	\$40	\$40
<b>Polycarbonate-Children</b>	Covered in full	Covered in full	\$40	\$40
<b>Standard Progressive</b>	N/A	Covered in full	N/A	\$80
<b>Photocromic</b>	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75
<b>Scratch-resistant coating</b>	\$17	\$17	\$15	\$15
<b>Frame Allowance</b>	\$150 (20% off amount above allowance)		\$150-\$200 <sup>2</sup> (20% off balance over allowance)	
<b>Additional Frame</b>	40% off when utilizing same VSP provider who performed exam  20% off unlimited additional pairs of glasses from any VSP provider		40% off retail: Member pays 100% of balance over \$50-\$100 <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Contact Lenses</b>				
<b>Fitting and evaluation</b>	up to \$60		up to \$40	
<b>Lens Allowance</b>	\$150 in lieu of frames and lenses		\$150 in lieu of frames and lenses	
<b>Laser Surgery Benefit</b>	avg 15-20% off		15% off	
<b>MONTHLY RATES*</b>				
<b>Employee Only</b>	\$5.68-\$11.38		\$6.06-\$6.66	
<b>Employee + Spouse</b>	\$11.37-\$22.75		\$11.51-\$12.65	
<b>Employee + Child(ren)</b>	\$12.17-\$24.34		\$12.12-\$13.32	
<b>Employee + Family</b>	\$19-\$38.91		\$17.82-\$19.58	
* Rate is based on plan design chosen. Plan options could provide for frames every 12 or 24 month. Other design options include increased allowance amounts and/or provisions to purchase a second pair of glasses in one plan year OR frames and contact lenses.				
<sup>1</sup> Using an EyeMed PLUS Provider provides an additional discount or allowance amount on top of the in network benefit				
<sup>2</sup> \$0 copay if using a PLUS provider				
<sup>3</sup> Enhancements to Progressive Premium Lenses may be available at an additional cost				

# Vision Benefit Options Comparison

## SHBP

- Included in employee medical plan contribution
- Employees and dependents are eligible
- Annual eye exam covered
- No coverage for lenses/frames or contact lenses
- In-network benefits ONLY

## Rutgers Vision Plan

- No employee contribution
- Employees and dependents are eligible
- Annual eye exam not covered
- Provides reimbursement for lenses or contact lenses (once in a 2-year period)
- No provider network. May utilize any provider.

## Voluntary Vision Plans

- Employee contribution required
- Employees and dependents are eligible
- Annual eye exam covered
- Provides coverage for frames and lenses and/or contact lenses
- In and out of network benefits





# Additional Option for Out-of-Pocket Vision Related Costs

## Medical Flexible Spending Account

# Flexible Spending Accounts

*Employees may utilize a medical Flexible Spending Account (FSA) to put aside funds on a pretax basis via payroll deduction.*

- Flexible Spending Accounts can be used for all copayments and out of pocket expenses under the State Health Medical Plans and the Rutgers Vision Care Reimbursement Plan
- The full amount of the medical FSA election is available to the employee on their effective date
- Employee does not need to be enrolled in a medical plan to utilize an FSA.
- FSA funds can be used for any (non cosmetic) vision related out of pocket costs incurred by the employee or their tax dependents.
- Benefit available annually provided the employee enrolls each year

# Questions

