

August 22, 2006

Mayor Gary Becker  
and the Common Council  
City of Racine  
Racine, Wisconsin

Dear Mayor Becker and Members of the Common Council:

The Racine Wellness Committee has recently reviewed the Health Benefits provided by the City of Racine. As you know, our mission is to provide preventive Health Care suggestions rather than traditional reactive Health Care treatment at much higher costs. The City has commissioned several studies by the Bowers group and others in the past few years to attempt to get a handle on rising health care costs.

In review of their studies and recommendations, and in review of some actual cases in the City of Racine, we, the Wellness Committee, feel strongly that one of the benefits provided for in the City Health Benefits package is lagging behind the industry standard. The particular benefit deals with Breast Cancer screenings and mammograms.

According to the Center for Disease Control (Department of Health and Human Services), a mammogram is the best available method to detect breast cancer in its earliest and most treatable stage, that being 1 to 4 years prior to a lump being felt.

The American Cancer Society and the Center for Disease Control recommend yearly mammograms starting at age 40 and continuing as long as the woman is in good health.

Bowers recommends that mammograms for females 40 and over should be included as a preventative benefit.

The City's current policy is that once a woman reaches age 45, the City will pay for one mammogram. Between age 45 and 49 the City will cover the cost every 2 years. At age 50 and beyond, the City will cover the annual cost of a mammogram. Early detection of this preventable disease is crucial to keeping our employees and their spouses healthy, keeping our long-term health costs under control, and making a positive impact by using preventative methods to control costs and save lives. Several employees and their spouses in the City in just the past 5 years have faced single mastectomies, double mastectomies, and even death due to breast cancer.

We feel that by changing the current policy, we can make a positive impact on the well being of our City families and, at the same time, reduce costs for the City in dealing with expensive cancer remediation efforts. As the old saying goes, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”.

We hope you will strongly consider recommending a change in the current benefits policy for the health and well being of all parties involved in this health care battle.

Sincerely,

Keith Haas  
Wellness Committee Member