

# FAQ - ESSB 5940 - District Data Call – Year 3

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Version 02 – Feb 03, 2015

## Notes:

- This is a ‘living’ document. It will be updated throughout the lifecycle of the OIC K-12 School District Data Collection Project. Please check back periodically for updates.
- The OIC K-12 School District Data Collection Project is frequently abbreviated within this document to “the Project”.
- Numbering restarts from 1 within each heading.

## Table of Contents

1. General / Background .....	2
2. Support.....	6
3. Timelines .....	7
4. Security.....	8
5. Date Ranges.....	10
6. Data Submission, Return Spreadsheets, Notifications.....	11
7. Data .....	12
General Data-Related Questions.....	12
8. ShareFile Licensing .....	13
Section 1, District Data Call – annual totals by category, narratives, district info .....	14
Section 2, District Data Call – innovations, health benefit plan features .....	15
Section 3, District Data Call – entities and how much you paid them .....	16
Section 4, District Data Call – medical plans offered within a district .....	18
Section 5, District Data Call – employee groups and medical plans offered to them .....	19
Section 6, District Data Call – medical plans offered to employee groups.....	20
Section 7, District Data Call – census, eligibility, plan selection, contributions.....	20
Section 8, District Data Call .....	21
9. Districts that use WESPaC / WSIPC .....	22
10. Districts that do not Use WESPaC / WSIPC .....	23
11. Error Handling .....	24
12. District Training .....	25

# 1. General / Background

**Q1** Why are we doing this?

**A** The Legislature's goals are outlined in ESSB 5940. The text of the legislation may be found on the Office of the Insurance Commissioner's (OIC's) web site:  
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2011-12/Pdf/Bills/Senate%20Bills/5940-S.E.pdf>

**Q2** Who is the Project Team?

**A** The Project Team is comprised of personnel from Treinen Associates, Inc, an Olympia-based consulting company, sometimes referred to in these FAQ as 'the contractor'.

**Q3** Who does the Project Team consist of?

**A** The Project Team consists of:

- A Client Project Manager with the OIC
- A Contractor Project Manager with Treinen Associates Inc.
- Two Benefits Consultants
- A Business Analyst
- A Technical Manager who does programming, database administration and data analysis
- An Actuary
- Administrative support

**Q4** What will the Project Team do with the data they collect from districts?

**A** After a given school district submits their data, a computer application, which has been custom-built by the Project Team for the Office of the Insurance Commissioner, will automatically perform validations against the submitted data. If the data from a given district passes the validations it will then be...

- Loaded into a secure database
- Validated against data received from carriers. Carrier data is being gathered in a separate and parallel data call.

Subsequently, the collected data from both districts and carriers will form the basis for the 2015 report, and accompanying statistical exhibits, that will be distributed to the OIC, the Governor's Office, the Legislature and the Health Care Authority, and made publically available online.

**Q5** Since you are collecting claims data for our district from our insurance carrier(s), we would like to be able to see and use that claims data. Will we have access to it?

**A** No. The project is not collecting district-specific claims data; rather, as stated in the legislation, data is being collected by health plan. District-specific claims experience is not available from this project.

**Q6** Which parts of ESSB 5940 is this project concerned with?

**A** This project is concerned only with Sections 4 and 5 of the legislation, which have to do with data collection. The contractor carrying out the Project is simply collecting the required data on behalf of the OIC.

**Q7** Will the contractor performing the Data Collection Project draw conclusions from the data that is collected?

**A** In December 2015 the raw data that has been collected will be delivered to the OIC. Additionally, per Section 5(2)(b) of the legislation, the contractor will produce a report and a series of accompanying exhibits containing summary statistics derived from the collected data. The contractor will not be involved in interpreting or drawing conclusions from the collected data.

**Q8** The legislation indicates that some school districts will be rewarded for making progress in terms of the provision of health insurance benefits for district employees. How will this be determined?

**A** The Data Collection Project is concerned only with data collection. Value judgments such as this are outside the scope of the Data Collection Project.

**Q9** Will we have to go through all this again next year?

**A** ESSB 5940 requires that the data be collected over three consecutive years. We are currently in Year 3 of the project. Given the successful outcomes of Years 1 and 2, and the high quality and importance of the collected data, funding may well be provided for data collection to continue into subsequent years. If Year 4 of the Project is indeed funded, you will be contacted in late 2015 as that project year gets under way.

**Q10** How long should this take?

**A** Given the enormous variation in the size of school districts throughout the State of Washington, that is an impossible question to answer. Some have just a handful of employees, others have thousands of employees. There is undoubtedly a correlation between the size of a district, and the amount of time it will take to respond to the data call. However, there is no algorithm available to compute this.

Our best guess, based on reported district experience in Year 1, is that the data call is likely to require somewhere between several hours and several days to complete.

**Q11** What if our district chooses not to participate?

**A** The legislation provides for certain sanctions against school districts that do not comply. These are specified in the legislation. Although the Project Team is not involved in that side of things, we will however make the OIC and OSPI aware of districts that do not comply.

It's worth noting that...

(i) School districts' medical insurance carriers will be providing district data because they are required to do so under the law. (In fact the majority of the total data collected will originate from carriers).

(ii) In Year 1 of the OIC K-12 Data Collection Project we had 99.32% compliance from school districts, and in Year 2 we had 100% compliance.

**Q12** Our district is in PEBB. Are we included? Do we have to do this?

**A** Yes. All school districts are required to submit their data. Note that PEBB is considered a carrier for the purposes of this project, and therefore we will also approach PEBB for carrier data (which is very different from, and far more detailed than, district data).

- Q13** What if we are unable to comply with the data call?
- A** The Project Team will, as we have done in past years, work closely with districts that are experiencing difficulties in gathering the required data, or in rendering it into the specified format. We will, as always, do our very best to help districts to comply.
- Q14** The Project Team will again produce a report and exhibits in December, 2015. Who will see them?
- A** As in past years, the December 2015 report and accompanying exhibits will be distributed to the OIC, the Governor’s Office, the Legislature, and the Health Care Authority, and will also be posted to the OIC’s web site. The reports and exhibits from Years 1 and 2 may be viewed here:  
[www.insurance.wa.gov/about-oic/commissioner-reports/index.html](http://www.insurance.wa.gov/about-oic/commissioner-reports/index.html)
- Q15** Is the data collected by the Data Collection Project public information?
- A** No, it is not. In December 2015 the collected data will be delivered by the Project Team to the OIC. Additionally, the 2015 report and exhibits will go to the OIC, the Governor’s Office, the Legislature, and the Health Care Authority. The report and exhibits will also be published on the OIC’s web site. The underlying data, on the other hand, is protected from public disclosure.
- Q16** Will our district be able to see our own data?
- A** A few people in your district will be able to see the data that you submitted to the Project Team, because you will (presumably) keep a copy of what you submitted. The Project Team does not permit districts to see their own data as stored in our secure database.
- Q17** Will our district be able to see data from other districts? Will other districts be able to see our data?
- A** No. The project data that we store is accessible only to the Project Team. No one other than the Project Team will see the data until December, 2015, when it is handed over to the OIC.
- Q18** Does the HCA also report separately on the collected data?
- A** During 2015, the HCA will produce a report based upon two years of collected data. HCA’s report will be submitted to the Legislature and various state agencies. Further details are available within the legislation itself.
- Q19** Does the contractor have authority to collect the required data from school districts?
- A** Yes.  
On December 19, 2014 a letter from the OIC to all school district superintendents was posted on the OIC’s web site. The letter (labelled ‘Dear Superintendents’) was referenced within the Initial Contact memo (relating to Year 3 of the Project) which was sent by the Project Team to all school districts in the State of Washington, also on December 19, 2014. The ‘Dear Superintendents’ letter states: “Treinen Associates, Inc. is again the contactor that will perform the Project work on behalf of the OIC “. This letter may be viewed here:  
[www.insurance.wa.gov/for-insurers/data-calls-reporting/special-data-calls/k-12-health-benefits-data-collection/schools/index3.html](http://www.insurance.wa.gov/for-insurers/data-calls-reporting/special-data-calls/k-12-health-benefits-data-collection/schools/index3.html)

**Q20** Does our school district need to instruct our medical insurance carrier that they must comply with the carrier data call? Do we need to tell our carrier that it's OK to release our district's data to the Project Team?

**A** No, that is not necessary. All the carriers of medical insurance for school district employees within the State of Washington are required as outlined in ESSB 5940 to provide financial, demographic, enrollment and claims data on K-12 districts. The carriers have cooperated fully with the Project Team, and are on track in Year 3 to submit the financial, demographic, enrollment and claims data that is required.

**Q21** Our school district does not have the knowledge or expertise necessary to complete the Data Collection Spreadsheet. What should we do?

**A** Contact your ESD for support. Feel free also to contact the Project Team at [Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com](mailto:Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com).

## 2. Support

For all references to the OIC's web site, please follow this link:

[www.insurance.wa.gov/for-insurers/data-calls-reporting/special-data-calls/k-12-health-benefits-data-collection/schools/index3.html](http://www.insurance.wa.gov/for-insurers/data-calls-reporting/special-data-calls/k-12-health-benefits-data-collection/schools/index3.html)

**Q1** Can I call the Project Team?

**A** If you have a question, or are experiencing difficulties in completing the Data Collection Spreadsheet, please send an email to [Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com](mailto:Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com). Include your name, phone number, and a description of the issue, and we will contact you by email or phone within two working days.

**Q2** I can't open the Data Collection Spreadsheet that was sent out as part of the data call. What should I do?

**A** The document may have become corrupted when being transmitted to you. Download a fresh copy from the OIC's web site.

**Q3** The Data Collection Spreadsheet opens but the import macro does not work. What should I do?

**A** Ensure that macros are enabled. You must be using Excel 2007 or later to allow the macros to operate. You may be able to do this yourself. If not, ask for help from your district's local IT support team. Data can also be manually copied into the workbook sheets from individual data files that are exported from a database.

To enable macros:

- Click the Microsoft Office Button, and then click Excel Options.
- Click Trust Center, click Trust Center Settings, and then click Macro Settings.
- Click the options that you want.

Please note that the import macros only work in Excel 2007 or later versions. The spreadsheet can be viewed in Excel 2003, but the import macros will not work. If you are using Excel 2003, please save the .xlsm Data Collection Spreadsheet as an .xls document, and copy and paste the data in the .CSV files into the appropriate tab in the workbook (ensuring that you do not copy or over-write the column headings).

**Q4** The Data Call Instructions came through in the Data Call email, but the Data Collection Spreadsheet did not. What should I do?

**A** The document may have been blocked or 'quarantined' by the IT security measures that are in place within your district. Since the spreadsheet contains macros (executable code) this may be seen as a red flag by your district's network security software. Follow up with your local IT support team, or download a fresh copy of the document from the OIC's web site.

**Q5** The Data Collection Spreadsheet came through in the Data Call email, but the Data Call Instructions did not. What should I do?

**A** The document may have been blocked or 'quarantined' by the IT security measures that are in place within your district. Follow up with your local IT support team, or download a fresh copy of the document from the OIC's web site.

**Q6** No attachments came through on the data call email. What should I do?

**A** The documents may have been blocked or 'quarantined' by the IT security measures that are in place within your district. Follow up with your local IT support team, or download a fresh copy of the documents from the OIC's web site.

**Q7** The attachments came through on the data call email, but they are garbled. What should I do?

**A** The documents may have become corrupted when being transmitted to you. Download fresh copies from the OIC's web site.

**Q8** We need help. How can we get help?

**A** Please send an email to [Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com](mailto:Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com) with your name, phone number, and a description of the issue, and we will contact you by email or phone within two working days.

**Q9** Is there some kind of training or orientation available?

**A** The Project Team will provide on-demand training in the form of a pre-recorded webinar which will be available on the OIC's web site in mid-February, 2015. Start by taking this training.

If you have further questions that are not answered by the webinar, please feel free to ask for help by sending an email to [Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com](mailto:Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com).

**Q10** Will the Project Team meet with individual districts?

**A** No. In Year 3 of the Project the Project Team will not meet with individual school districts.

### 3. Timelines

**Q1** By when should my district submit our project data?

**A** The deadline is May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

**Q2** Can we get an extension? What if my district is unable to submit our data by May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015?

**A** If a district is unable to submit its project data by the deadline, the Project Team will work closely with district personnel to help them resolve issues that are impeding their progress towards compliance with the data call.

**If you feel that you may experience difficulties complying with the Data Call, please do not wait until the 11<sup>th</sup> hour (i.e. the last two weeks of May, 2015) to ask for help. Contact us sooner rather than later, so that we can find the time necessary to give you the help you need.**

## 4. Security

**Q1** Is the Data Collection Project's database secure?

**A** Yes. It resides in a very secure environment. Access to the data is protected by several layers of security, each of them highly restricted and password protected.

**Q2** We want our data to be secure. Should we submit an encrypted and password-protected spreadsheet by email?

**A** Absolutely not, because:

(i) Year 3 of the OIC K-12 Health Benefits Data Collection Project does not use e-mail as the data transport mechanism. Instead, like Year 2, ShareFile will be used for this purpose. Please see the Instructions document for more details about this service.

(ii) ShareFile uses robust encryption for all data (in-flight and at-rest). This encryption is built-in. Do not encrypt or password-protect the data you submit via ShareFile. If you do so we will not be able to process your data and will therefore need you to resubmit.

**Q3** Does the data we have to report contain PHI (Protected Health Information)?

**A** No. The Project Team has been very careful to design the data collection in such a way that no PHI is gathered or stored. The data is summary data, and the employee census data in Section 7 does not include employee name or social security number. All data has been de-identified.

**Q4** Is the data you will collect from school districts governed by HIPAA regulations?

**A** No. PHI excludes employment records held by a covered entity in its role as an employer. Information collected from districts for the K-12 Data Collection Project is also de-identified.

**Q5** Is the data you will collect from carriers governed by HIPAA regulations?

**A** Yes. Health plans provided by Insurance companies are "covered entities" under HIPAA and subject to its rules. However the information provided by carriers is de-identified and is therefore permissible under HIPAA.

**Q6** Is the data collected as part of the Data Collection Project public information?

**A** No. In December 2015 the collected data, along with the 2015 report and exhibits, will be delivered by the Project Team to the OIC. The collected data is exempt from public disclosure. The 2015 report and exhibits will be delivered to the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the Health Care Authority, but the underlying data from which they are derived will not be included.

**Q7** Will our district be able to see our own data?

**A** A few people in your district will be able to see the data that you submitted to the Project Team, because you will (presumably) keep a copy of what you submitted. The Project Team has no plans to permit districts to see their data as stored in our secure database.

**Q8** Will our district be able to see data from other districts? Will other districts be able to see our data?

**A** No. The collected project data that we store is accessible only to the Project Team. No one other than the Project Team will see the data until December, 2015, when it is handed over to the OIC.

## 5. Date Ranges

**Q1** I'm confused about dates – how come several different time-spans are used for different Sections of the school district data call?

**A** ESSB 5940 specifies that the data should be collected by calendar year, which for Year 3 of the Project means 2014. Unfortunately, for most districts, this aligns neither with the School Year, nor the Fiscal Year, nor the Plan Year. After discussion with the OIC, the following approach has been agreed:

- 1) We will use calendar year 2014 for:
  - narratives describing various efforts, achievements & progress (Section 1, rows 14 – 20)
  - Innovative Features of Health Plans (Section 2).
- 2) For yearly totals by category (Section 1) we use School Fiscal Year 2013-2014. The Project Team will then compute calendar year totals.
- 3) For yearly totals by payee / entity (Section 3) we will use Fiscal Year 2013-2014. The Project Team will then compute calendar year totals.
- 4) Medical plans (Section 4) should be reported on a calendar year basis. So if medical plans in the current plan year are different from those of the prior plan year (i.e. if in the fall of 2014 you added or deleted or changed the array of plans that you offer your employees) then report all of them. In other words, report all plans offered in the 2013-2014 plan year, AND all plans offered in the 2014-2015 plan year if they are different.
- 5) For employee census data (Section 7) we use a 'snapshot date' of October 1, 2014. Any person who was a school district employee (as defined by the OSPIs Employee Handbook) on that date should be reported. Any person who was not a school district employee on that date should not be reported.

The approach to date ranges outlined here may at first glance appear complicated, but it is intended to make things as simple as possible for school districts. One of our top priorities, in designing the time-span aspects of this data call, has been to minimize the burden on school districts.

Note also that the reporting we get from carriers is far more detailed and extensive than district reporting. For example, we require monthly enrollment and premium (and claims) data from carriers, but not from districts. This is in order to minimize the administrative burden on districts, being conscious that district personnel already have more than enough to do.

## 6. Data Submission, Return Spreadsheets, Notifications

**Q1** Is e-mail being used for data submission in Year 3?

**A** No. In Year 3 we are again using ShareFile as the data transport mechanism. You can correspond with the Project Team using [Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com](mailto:Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com) but this email address is NOT to be used for data submission.

**Q2** What is ShareFile?

**A** ShareFile is a cloud-based file sharing and storage service built for business. In Year 3 of the Project ShareFile will be used as the data transport mechanism. See the District Instructions for a detailed discussion of ShareFile and how to use it.

**Q3** Is ShareFile secure?

**A** Yes. If you have concerns about the data security arrangements of ShareFile, please see [www.sharefile.com/industries/business/security.aspx](http://www.sharefile.com/industries/business/security.aspx).

**Q4** Is there any other way to move data between districts and the Project Team?

**A** No. All data you submit (or resubmit) will move via ShareFile, and return spreadsheets (containing errors and/or warnings) will be posted to your ShareFile page by the Project Team. You will then download the return spreadsheet, make any necessary corrections, verify your data using Check My Spreadsheet, rename the spreadsheet appropriately, and then resubmit (using ShareFile, of course).

**Q5** What do I do if I was not notified about my district's ShareFile account?

**A** Send an email to the Project Team ([Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com](mailto:Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com)). We will give you access to your district's ShareFile account. If someone in your district already has access to ShareFile, they will have sufficient administrative privileges (for your district only) to set you up. If they are unable to do so, please contact the project team at [Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com](mailto:Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com).

**Q6** What do I do if I forget my password?

**A** Send an email to the Project Team ([Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com](mailto:Y3DataCallTeam@treinen.com)). We will reset your password. You will then need to log on and change it again.

**Q7** How do I find out how to use ShareFile to upload, download and submit data?

**A** See the District Instructions for a detailed discussion of ShareFile and how to use it.

## 7. Data

### General Data-Related Questions

**Q1** Are dental and vision benefits included in the data collection project?

**A** We are asking only for your total expenditures with respect to dental and vision coverage, where these are purchased separately from medical coverage. Annual total spend by entity (including dental and vision carriers) is reported in Section 3; annual totals by category are then automatically calculated by the Check My Spreadsheet function and displayed in Section 1.

If your dental and/or vision benefits are bundled with medical benefits, please report the total (bundled) yearly amount in column E of Section 3. Then, in column F (Premium\_Type) you should characterize the total annual premium \$ amount as one of the following:

- medical, or
- medical + vision, or
- medical + dental, or
- medical + vision + dental

Please do not report...

- Dental or Vision plans (in Section 4)
- Which Dental or Vision plans are offered to employee groups (in Section 5 or 6)
- Which Dental or Vision plans are selected by individual employees (in Section 7)

**Q2** Are Short or Long Term Disability benefits included in the data collection project?

**A** No, these types of coverage are not included in the project.

**Q3** Can I paste data into the Data Collection Spreadsheet?

**A** Yes, but please be careful that the column headers are not changed by doing so. If you change the column headers by over-writing them, your data cannot be processed and you will subsequently need to correct this and resubmit.

**Q4** I do not understand the term 'supplemental insurance'. Can you please define it?

**A** This is a term we use in this project to designate various types of medical insurance that are specifically excluded from the terms "health plan" or "health benefit plan" under the Revised Code of Washington.

These specific exclusions encompass, amongst other things, accident only coverage, specified disease or illness-triggered fixed payment insurance, hospital confinement fixed payment insurance, or other fixed payment insurance offered as an independent, non-coordinated benefit.

**Q5** Our district offers supplemental insurance from Aflac – employees are free to purchase this or not. There is no cost to the district. We simply deduct the monthly premium amount from payroll, and pass the premium to the carrier. How should we report this?

**A** The data collection Project Team is collecting **summary data only** with respect to supplemental coverage. So in Section 3, please...

- identify each vendor of supplemental insurance on its own row
- within those rows, in the Entity\_Type\_Role column, select 'Supplemental' from the drop-down.
- report the total paid to each vendor of supplemental insurance under Non\_Premium\_Fees\_Paid.

In subsequent Sections, please...

- do not report the individual plans from these vendors of supplemental insurance (in Section 4)
- do not specify which supplemental plans are offered to which groups (in Sections 5 or 6)
- do not indicate which supplemental plans individual employees purchase, or the cost (to the employee or district) of doing so (in Section 7).

## 8. ShareFile Licensing

**Q1** Do we have to buy ShareFile in order to use it to submit data?

**A** No. The Project Team has a license, paid for out of project funds, which allows all school districts in the State of Washington to submit their data and receive return files without having to buy individual licenses.

**Q2** Do we have to download ShareFile?

**A** No. ShareFile is entirely web-based. You do not have to download anything in order to be able to use it for the purposes of this project.

**Q3** Can we use ShareFile for other purposes that are not related to the OIC K-12 Health Benefits Data Collection Project?

**A** If you have a separate ShareFile license you may use your other ShareFile account for other purposes. However you may only use the ShareFile account that we have set up for you for purposes related to the OIC K-12 Health Benefits Data Collection Project.

## Section 1, District Data Call – annual totals by category, narratives, district info

**Q1** Why are some cells greyed-out?

**A** The grey areas denote cells that school districts should not change. Some of them will contain values that are calculated by the Check My Spreadsheet macro (based on input in Section 3).

**Cells that require your input have a white background.**

**Q2** Why is cell C2 (district/county code) greyed out?

**A** In cell C3 you now select your district from a drop-down list of all the school districts. Based on your selection, cell C2 is automatically populated for you.

**Q3** Are some narratives in Section 1 more important than others?

**A** All of them are important. However cell C5 (“Describe progress on affordability for full family coverage in line with the target 3:1 ratio as specified in ESSB 5940”) is of particular interest to legislators and other major project stakeholders. Please make sure that you supply some narrative that answers this question.

**Q4** Is it OK if we get help from our carriers in supplying the narratives required within Section 1?

**A** We cannot stop districts from asking their carriers for help in supplying narratives. However what ends up happening is that many districts supply similar or identical narratives that originate from carriers. This obviously defeats the purpose of asking districts to supply the narratives within Section 1.

For this reason we strongly urge school districts to answer the narrative-type questions within Section 1 in their own words.

**Q5** 9C appears to be almost the same question as 5C. Is there a difference? Which one should we answer?

**A** They are in fact very similar and one of these questions will go away in Year 4 of the project (if there is a Year 4). Feel free to use the same answer in 5C and 9C.

## Section 2, District Data Call – innovations, health benefit plan features

**Q1** Do you ask the same questions of the carriers as of the districts, in terms of innovative features?

**A** No. The questions we ask carriers about the innovative features of the plans they offer are more numerous and detailed.

**Q2** What if we don't know if a particular innovative feature is offered to my district? Should we indicate 'Don't know' (D)?

**A** While it is acceptable to answer as 'Don't know', we encourage districts to contact their carriers to understand innovation features that are offered and also to better utilize these features.

**Q3** What if a particular innovative feature is offered under only some but not all carrier plans?

**A** Respond Yes (Y) if the innovative feature is offered under **any** plans offered to district employees.  
Respond No (N) if the innovative feature is not available under any plan offered to district employees.

## Section 3, District Data Call – entities and how much you paid them

**Q1** We offer plans sponsored by WEA (Washington Education Association) to our employees. Which entities should we report in Section 3 and what are their roles?

**A** Medical coverage sponsored by WEA is underwritten by Premera, which is the carrier. You need only one entry (i.e. row).

**In the** Entity\_Code field you may put some variant of 'WEA' (or indeed anything you like).

Report 'Premera' in the Entity\_Name field even if you pay WEA (or AON) for your coverage.

Select 'Medical Ins Carrier' in the dropdown under Entity\_Type\_Role.

Use the Premiums\_Paid field to report the premiums you paid for this coverage.

**Q2** We have a broker (or a benefits advisor) but we do not pay them directly. They are paid by the carrier. Should we report them as an entity we do business with?

**A** No. If you don't pay the broker (or advisor) then there is no need to report them.

**Q3** AON provides administration services for our coverage under Premera that is sponsored by WEA. How should we report AON?

**A** If you don't pay a TPA (Third Party Administrator) then there is no need to report them.

**Q4** Should we report vendors of supplemental insurance in Section 3?

**A** Yes. However vendors of supplemental insurance are not considered carriers for the purposes of this project; so, report the total amounts paid to each (vendor of supplemental insurance) in the Non\_Premium\_Fees\_Paid column.

Note that no further reporting in subsequent sections is required with respect to vendors of supplemental coverage. In other words, we are collecting summary data only about such vendors, and there is no need in subsequent Sections to list the plans they provide or who has signed up for them.

**Q5** We just write a single check to PEBB, which includes everything: medical premiums, dental, vision, LTD, supplemental premiums 'Retiree Carve Out' etc. Should we report these separately ?

**A** Yes. Please do **not** report the bundled total that you pay to PEBB. Please break out the amounts, and enter each one in a separate row.

**Q6** Our district's medical premiums include dental coverage. How do we handle this?

**A** If your dental benefits are not purchased separately, i.e. if they are bundled with your medical benefits, then...

(i) Report the bundled premium

(ii) In the Premium\_Type column select 'Medical and Dental' from the dropdown.

**Q7** Our district's payment to HCA for coverage under PEBB includes the 'retiree carve out' or 'retiree subsidy'. Should we subtract the 'retiree carve out' from the premiums we report?

**A** Yes. Please report medical premiums separately from the 'retiree carve out' even if you make a consolidated payment to HCA that encompasses both the coverage under PEBB and the carveout.

- Q8** Our district's premiums do not include the 'retiree carve out' or 'retiree subsidy'. How should we report it?
- A** In Section 3 of the data call create an entry (i.e. a row) for the entity to which the 'retiree carve out' is paid; enter the total amount paid to that entity in the Non\_Premium\_Fees\_Paid field; select 'HCA (Carveout)' from the dropdown in the Entity\_Type\_Role column.
- Q9** Should COBRA payments be reported?
- A** Definitely not.  
Per RCW 48.43.005(26) "health plan" or "health benefit plan" means any policy, contract, or agreement offered by a health carrier to provide, arrange, reimburse, or pay for health care services except the following: Plans deemed by the OIC to have a short-term limited purpose or duration are excluded as a "health plan" or "health benefit plan."  
The OIC representative on this project has deemed that COBRA is in this category.
- Q10** Should payments to HSAs (Health Savings Accounts) be reported?
- A** No. HSAs are considered to be the employee's money until funds are actually used to pay health-related expenses. As such, payments into HSAs are not reportable as premiums or fees.
- Q11** Should payments to FSAs (Flexible Spending Accounts) be reported?
- A** No. FSAs are considered to be the employee's money until funds are actually used, and may be used for purposes other than health-related expenses. As such, payments into FSAs are not reportable as premiums or fees.
- Q12** Should payments to VEBAs (Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Associations) be reported?
- A** No. Payments into health reimbursement accounts such as VEBAs are not reportable as premiums or fees.
- Q13** Should payments to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) be reported?
- A** No. EAPs cover a wide array of non-medical services, and the cost of any medical services which may be covered cannot be ascertained. Therefore, do not report payments to EAPs.

## Section 4, District Data Call – medical plans offered within a district

**Q1** Which plans should we report in Section 4?

**A** You should report medical plans only. Do not include any plans which provide any of the following types of coverage: supplemental, vision only, dental only, short term disability, long term disability. Additionally, do not report COBRA payments or payments to HSAs, FSAs, VEBA accounts or EAPs. In section 4 you should only list medical plans.

**Q2** Are retiree plans included?

**A** No. Retiree plans are not included and should not be listed in Section 4.

**Q3** Are supplemental medical benefit plans listed here?

**A** No. Supplemental medical is tracked only at a summary level in Sections 1 and 3. Individual plans that are supplemental in nature should **not** be identified in Section 4.

## Section 5, District Data Call – employee groups and medical plans offered to them

**Q1** What is an ‘employee group’?

An ‘employee group’, for the purposes of this project, is a group of employees that is offered a particular array of medical benefit plans.

For example, in some districts, bus drivers, teachers, janitors and administrators are offered different assortments of medical plans. In other districts, every employee is offered the same plans.

For our purposes, a group of certificated employees OR a group of classified employees that is offered the same array of medical plans is an employee group.

**Q2** What employee groups must be listed? Must we list all employee groups?

**A** At least two groups at a minimum must be reported – classified and certificated. Beyond that, employee groups that are offered different arrays of medical plans must be listed separately.

Note that employee groups that are later referenced in Sections 5, 6, 7 or 8 must be identified in Section 5.

**Q3** If some of our classified employees have the same medical plans offered to them but are offered different non-medical plans, should they be considered as one employee group?

**A** Yes. This project is not tracking non-medical plans. They can be reported as a single group.

**Q4** Can we list groups separately (for example by bargaining unit) even if they have the same medical benefit plans offered?

**A** Yes. You do not have to consolidate groups just because they have the same medical plans offered to them. Identify whatever employee groups make sense to you, so long as you accurately identify the plans that are offered to them, and as long as you report classified employees separately from certificated employees.

**Q5** Do I have to use Plan\_Codes\_Offered in Section 5? This seems redundant with Section 6.

**A** Column E in Section 5 allows you to list the medical plans that are offered to employee groups (each plan code is separated by a comma). Alternatively you can use Section 6 to identify which plans are offered to which groups.

Districts that populate the Data Collection Spreadsheet manually generally find column F of Section 5 easier to work with than Section 6.

**Q6** **If I use column E (Plan\_Codes\_Offered) column in Section 5 should I also use Section 6?**

**A** No. You may use either column E of Section 5 or else Section 6 to associate medical plans to employee groups.

If you are in a WSIPC district, and insurance arrangements for your employees are managed using Insurance Tracking (a module within the WESPaC software provided by WSIPC), then Section 6 will be populated by the WSIPC extract. In Section 5 you will still have to identify your employee groups,

but the association of plans to groups will be done in Section 6.

However, if your insurance arrangements are not managed using Insurance Tracking then it may be easier to use Column E (Plan\_Codes\_Offered) in Section 5 to associate plans to employee groups, in which case you can entirely ignore Section 6.

## Section 6, District Data Call – medical plans offered to employee groups

**Q1** If I identify plan codes offered to groups in Section 5, must I use Section 6 also?

**A** No. You may either use Column E of Section 5, or else use Section 6 to associate medical plans to employee groups.

If all plans are identified for all groups in Column E of Section 5, then Section 6 may be left blank.

If all plans are identified for all groups in Section 6, you still need to identify the groups, and whether each group is classified or certificated, in Section 5.

## Section 7, District Data Call – census, eligibility, plan selection, contributions

**Q1** If an employee is eligible but chooses to not purchase coverage are their dependents considered to be 'eligible dependents'?

**A** No. The employee's dependents cannot be eligible because the employee is not covered. There is no requirement in this case to report dependent information because dependents are not eligible if there is no employee coverage.

We do not ask districts to report the dependents of ineligible employees for the very same reason.

**Q2** Should spouses be included as dependents in Sections 7 & 8?

**A** If the employee is benefits-eligible, and if the employee chooses to buy medical coverage through the district, then the employee's spouse is considered to be an eligible dependent for purposes of Sections 7 & 8.

**Q3** Both spouses work at the district; both are fully benefit-eligible. Spouse B is covered under the benefits of spouse A. Spouse B therefore elects not to purchase medical coverage. B is obviously reported as a dependent of A.

The question is... Should A also be reported as a dependent of B?

**A** No. Spouse B should be reported as eligible, but no plan is associated with B since he or she has chosen not to purchase insurance through the district. This being so, B's dependents are not eligible and should not be reported.

**Q4** Why are you not able to acquire dependent information from either AON or Premera?

**A** We do get covered dependent information from Premera. However the legislation requires districts to also report on eligible but uncovered dependents. This is a group of people that carriers know nothing about, precisely because they are not covered.

To say the same thing another way, carriers only know about the people they cover, and do not

know about dependents that are eligible for coverage but are not covered. School districts, on the other hand, are required by the legislation to report the age and gender of eligible but uncovered dependents.

**Q5** We do not have any information on eligible but uncovered dependents. What should we do?

**A** Data on covered and uncovered dependents is required, so districts should...

- report it if they have it, or
- make best efforts to get it.

If districts have no time or resources to get data on covered or uncovered dependents, or any means of getting it, that should not stop them from submitting the rest of their data.

If no dependent data is submitted by a particular district, the data collection Project Team will assume that it is unavailable in that district.

An automatic warning message will be generated and sent to the submitting district if no dependent data is submitted. Whether or not a district takes action on the basis of this warning message (or any other warning message) is up to the district. Warning messages will not prevent submitted data (which is free of actual errors) from being accepted and loaded.

## Section 8, District Data Call

**Q1** Why is there a Section 8 if the same information is asked for in columns P, Q R and S of Section 7?

**A** Section 8 is designed to be used as an output file layout by a program that extracts dependent data from a database of some kind. A few districts have databases containing dependent data, and this Section would be used by them.

Columns P, Q R and S of Section 7, on the other hand, are designed to be used by districts that do not have databases containing dependent data. These districts may prefer to supply dependent data (if they have such data) using the last four columns of Section 7.

**Q2** **Why are dates of birth for dependents asked for in Section 8, but only ages in Section 7?**

**A** The optional dependents columns in Section on 7 are designed to capture the minimum requirements as requested by the legislation, which are age, gender and coverage status for each dependent. The ages of dependents listed in Section 7 should be the ages as of the 'snapshot date', which is 10/1/2014. In subsequent years, these values will need to be incremented.

In Section 8, on the other hand, dates of birth are consistent values which will remain constant, allowing age to be computed automatically at any time.

## 9. Districts that use WESPaC / WSIPC

**Q1** Do we have to pay extra money to WSIPC for use of the extract they have built for their constituent school districts during the current Data Collection Project?

**A** No.

**Q2** My district does not use the Insurance Tracking module. Can we still use the WSIPC extract?

**A** Yes. However the WSIPC extract provides less data (and less accurate data) for districts that do not use the Insurance Tracking module than for districts that do use it.

For this reason, districts that do not currently use the Insurance Tracking module may wish to consider starting to use it, in order to facilitate future data collection projects that have to do with insurance benefits for district employees.

**Q3** I mistakenly deleted or corrupted our .CSV files from the WSIPC extract. What should I do.

**A** You can, in Year 3, run the WSIPC extract on demand. Once you have extracted data (in the form of .CSV files), you should make backups before you do anything else.

**Q4** The data we got from the WSIPC extract is not complete. Where is the rest of it?

**A** WSIPC can extract a lot of the data that is required, but not all of it. Some of the data needs to be provided by school districts, particularly the narrative data in Section 1, and the Innovative Health Plan Features in Section 2.

**Q5** The data we got from the WSIPC extract does not seem right. What should we do?

**A** Contact WSIPC, and keep the Project Team informed, using the Project Team's email, which is [Y3DataCallTeam@Treinen.com](mailto:Y3DataCallTeam@Treinen.com). We need to know if there are issues with the WSIPC extract.

## 10. Districts that do not Use WESPaC / WSIPC

**Q1** My district does not use WESPaC (software supplied by WSIPC); we use a completely different software package for functions such as Payroll, Finance and Employee Benefit Management. What should we do?

**A** You should either

(i) Populate the Data Collection Spreadsheet manually

or

(ii) build a custom utility or extract program that will extract the required data from your computer system, then load the extracted data into the Data Collection Spreadsheet, then validate the extracted data, then fill in the gaps, such as narrative data fields.

If your district writes a custom extract:

- Please see the Data Call Instructions for the eight output file specifications you should build to
- .CSV templates for the eight Sections are available on the OIC web site
- You may wish to seek assistance from the vendor of whatever software your district uses

## 11. Error Handling

**Q1** We have received notification that our prior submission contained errors. What should we do?

**A** You should retrieve the return spreadsheet (which identifies all the errors) from ShareFile, make any needed corrections, change the file name, and resubmit your data via ShareFile.

**Q2** You sent us an email indicating that there were errors in our submission, and that we should retrieve the return spreadsheet from ShareFile. Will we need a password to open the return spreadsheet?

**A** No. Since we are using ShareFile in Year 3 of the data collection project, passwords are not needed. ShareFile encrypts all data that is 'in flight' and 'at rest'.

Do not use encryption or password protection in any file that you submit. This will cause your spreadsheet to be rejected and you will then need to resubmit.

**Q3** Will you accept data that has errors or is incomplete?

**A** If there are any errors, the submitted data will be rejected in its entirety.

If there are warnings (meaning that the imperfections detected in the data are not so severe as to stop the data from being loaded to the Project Team's secure database) then the data will be accepted and loaded to our database. You may wish to take action on the warnings, but do not have to do so.

**Q4** How will we know if there was a problem with the data we submitted?

If imperfections are detected in the data submitted by a district, then our data load process will automatically send to you, via ShareFile, the same spreadsheet that your district submitted, but with an indication in the Status column of what was in error or caused a warning to be issued.

If your district's data is rejected due to errors, please correct them and then re-submit the spreadsheet with the version number incremented.

If your district's data generates only warnings, but no outright errors, then it is up to you whether or not you make changes and resubmit. Despite the warnings, your data will be accepted and loaded to our database.

## 12. District Training

**Q1** Will there be any live, in-person, training sessions or webinar-based orientation session?

**A** No. In Year 3 we have no budget for in-person meetings or live webinars.

However, we do plan to create a pre-recorded district training webinar and post it to the OIC's web site. Look for that in mid-February, 2015.

Beyond that, we will provide support to individual districts on an as-needed basis.