



# HEALTH MATTERS



## A MONTHLY REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE CITY OF CARMEL EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN

June 30 Balance	\$653,770		Dec 31, 2010 Balance	\$642,220
Total Revenues	\$1,231,658		Jan - Jul Revenues	\$6,281,414
Employer Premiums	1,016,393		Jan - Jul Expenses	\$5,730,265
Employee Premiums	181,183		July 31, 2011 Balance	\$1,193,369
Other Revenues	34,082			
Total Expenses	\$692,059		YTD Gain/(Loss)	\$551,149
Week 1 Claims	100,719			
Week 2 Claims	38,913			
Week 3 Claims	225,495			
Week 4 Claims	95,827			
Rx Claims	142,239			
Adoption Claims	686			
Fixed Costs—Premiums	69,102			
Fixed Costs--Fees	19,078			
Monthly Gain/(Loss)	\$539,599			
July 31 Balance	\$1,193,369			

Note: Revenue was boosted considerably by the third payroll in July. At the same time, claims were somewhat lower than average. For the first time this year, the escrow balance (the money we use to pay claims) exceeds \$1 million.

### \$10 Million: What Can We Do About It?

Plan expenses are expected to exceed \$10 million in 2011. That's a 77% increase in the past five years. Fixed costs account for about 10% of expenses, the largest part of which pays for stop-loss insurance (to protect our plan from catastrophic claims). The remaining 90% is claims. What is driving rising claims costs? A partial list includes:

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|---|--|
| New diagnostic and treatment technology             | Increased preventive/diagnostic activity |
| Government mandates and regulation                  | Chronic disease                          |
| Prescription drugs (cost, frequency of use, demand) | Aging population                         |
| Media driven demand for new/expensive treatment     | Litigation and risk management           |

As individual consumers, we have little control over some of these factors. So what can we do? The most effective way to reduce the overall cost of healthcare is to decrease our need for healthcare.

Healthy lifestyle choices are the best way to get a handle on healthcare expenditures. According to Kaiser Health News ([www.kaiserhealthnews.com](http://www.kaiserhealthnews.com)), largely preventable and highly manageable chronic diseases account for 75 cents of every dollar we spend on health care in the U.S. In

contrast, we spend less than 5 cents on prevention, even though the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have estimated that 80 percent of heart disease and type-2 diabetes, and 40 percent of cancers, could be prevented by doing three things: exercising more, eating better and avoiding tobacco.

So make a commitment to your personal health and wellness. Whether or not you are currently participating in the City's Wellness Program, plan to join us in 2012. Watch for more information.

### Mining Your Inner Moron: Why Multitasking is Such a Waste

(by Joanne Cantor, PhD, as reported in Psychology Today May 29, 2010, edited for length)

You may think you can multitask. It's true that you can walk and chew gum at the same time, but the reason is that these two tasks don't require your attention. Tasks that involve language processing or decision making need your focus, and when you try to do two such tasks at the same time you end up switching your attention back and forth.

One reason multitasking (or task-switching) is so hard is that it calls upon working memory—a brain resource that's extremely limited. Every time you switch to the other task, it's hard to hold that first task in memory so it's there when you come back. If it's not there, you lose your train of thought. Constantly answering the question, "now where was I?" is a big waste of time and energy.



If you want to feel a hint of the stress and energy expended in task-switching, try the Stroop Test. In this test, pictured at left, you need to ignore what the letters say, and instead quickly call out the color of the letters each word is written in. For each word, you have to switch from word-reading mode to color-identifying mode, and this is both inefficient and taxing.

If you swear by multitasking and think you can do it as well or better than single-tasking, the research has bad news for you: Performing two tasks at once, instead of sequentially, multiplies trouble. Multitasking hurts in terms of speed, accuracy, quality of output and energy consumption. In essence, **when you're multitasking, you're dimming your bulb, de-powering your brain.** You're better off single-tasking. So try single-tasking one thing you usually multitask. You'll be amazed at how much more easily and quickly you get it done, and with much better quality than you expected.

### Eat This (2010 Edition, by David Zinczenko) Not That!

*At home:*

V8 V-Fusion Light Strawberry Banana Drink 8 oz = 50 calories 0 g fat, 10 g sugars
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Minute Maid Fruit Punch 8 oz = 120 calories 0 g fat, 31 g sugars
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*"Punch," "drink," "ade" and "cocktail" are industry terms for sugar water.*

*Eating out:*

KFC Grilled Chicken Breast 220 calories 7 g fat (2 g saturated), 730 mg sodium
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KFC Extra Crispy Chicken Breast 510 calories 33 g fat (7 g saturated), 1010 mg sodium
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*"Extra crispy" means extra breading and extra time in the deep fryer.*