

**THE TRUSTEE**  
April 2022  
DISTRICT REFUSES TO PAY  
FOR VACCINATIONS

When vaccinations were approved by the CDC, the Ulster County Department of Health (UCDH) established vaccinations sites throughout the county. The vaccinations were advertised as “free”, yet, people were asked for either their Social Security numbers (if they had no health insurance coverage, so Medicaid could be billed) or for their health insurance information. As time went on and the virus became more extensive, the UCDH sites discontinued asking for information and the vaccinations became totally free. As the need for vaccinations exploded, pharmacies, clinics, and providers were granted permission to administer vaccinations. They did request information, such as insurance coverage and, while advertising vaccinations were “free”, actually charged a \$40 fee against the health insurance coverage. Some members chose, for various reasons, to receive their vaccinations from a pharmacy, their doctor, or from a clinic.

Up through June 2021, the Trust was charged for 96 vaccinations received at sites other than those of the UCDH. The KTF contract states: ***“At such time as the Ulster County Health Department declares that the danger exists of any disease reaching epidemic proportions, the District shall, in those diseases for which there is immunizations, provide such immunizations free of charge to the members of the teachers’ unit who request it.”***

This makes the District coverage primary and any other insurance coverage, such as the Trust, secondary. As such, the Trust prepared an invoice that was presented to the Superintendent in July 2021 for payment for the 96 members. No response was forthcoming until the Superintendent was prompted and he responded in a letter dated November 8, 2021. He stated the district, “in collaboration” with the UCDH “held vaccination clinics for several months” last year. Of course, we know the UCDH used the Field House at KHS as one of their sites, but the District did not operate the vaccination program or provide the inoculations. He continued, “the District is not responsible for reimbursing those who decided to seek alternative

vaccination arrangements.” It appears he was taking credit for the UCDH site at the Kate Walton Field House that ended on March 17, 2021.(It is noted only 30 of the 96 invoiced received their shots before March 17.)

Another invoice was sent to the Superintendent on February 1, 2022 presenting a complete list of all Trust member vaccinations for all of 2021. In a letter dated February 8, 2022, the Superintendent, again, reiterated his stance and refused to pay for any Trust vaccinations, stating, “the District did provide both the opportunity and the vaccinations to all members of the Kingston Teachers’ Federation free of charge.” He continues, “the District continues to provide opportunities for vaccinations and boosters to all unit members, free of charge, and at locations that are convenient to our facility and staff. The Kingston City School District is not responsible for payment to those who choose not to take advantage of these opportunities.”

It is the UCDH who provides the free clinics, not the District. Nothing in the contract language mandates where members shall receive their vaccinations. The total District cost to support Trust members who received vaccinations at sites other than the UCDH sites, was .0001% of budget. If it’s not about money, then what is it about? No discussion was invited. Sadly, a legal remedy will cost taxpayers much more.

This represents another action by the Superintendent where health care reimbursements were compromised. The 2018 and 2020 Medicare Part B standard payment to retirees, readily available on the Medicare site, were shorted. The Superintendent was copied on many letters, most sent to Mr. Olsen, his assistant, seeking proper payment to retirees. All the letters were ignored. Full payment was not received until the Trust threatened to withhold a previously agreed to rebate of health insurance premiums. The rebate was to aid in the settlement of contracts in June of 2021. Now, almost a year later, there are still no contracts presented for settlement. If he was waiting for new settlement terms in a new world, he’s got his wish.

There are many words to describe the actions of the Superintendent. What’s your favorite word? Why not share it with a friend?

Covid-19 safety measures have derailed many open meetings, such as the Board of Education. As they reopen, the voices of the affected will be heard. It may be the first time the Board of Education hears the full story.