

The University of Texas at Austin Staff Council Issue Proposal Form

Submit this form to the Chair of the Issues Committee:
Didi Smith, Natural Sciences Dena's Office, WCH 1.116B G2500

Submit Date: 9/12/03

Proposal #2003-19

Title: Limited Expansion of Sick Leave Pool Uses

UTSC Representative's Name: Johnnie Conley

District: 210.2

Specific Objective: (Required-Outcome Desired-Attach additional sheets if necessary)

Access to the sick leave pool for people who are suffering from pain and/or a debilitating condition and are in need of hospitalization for surgery or treatment. This would be on a case by case basis and with a doctor's input.

Reason(s) for Proposal: (Required-Current Situation-Attach additional sheets if necessary)

Staff member is suffering from a degenerative condition in her knee, which is a chronic disease causing deterioration of the joint cartilage (the softer parts of bones, which cushion their connections to each other) and the formation of new bone (bone spurs) at the margins of the joints. This is a serious condition because the dead areas of bone do not function normally, are weakened, and can collapse. (Note from Didi - Staff member was denied sick leave pool for her surgery & 6 week recovery, as this is not "catastrophic".)

Expected Staff Council Actions: (or explain in Specific Objective)

Investigate & Report

Letter to Human Resources

Letter to President

Public Statement

Recommend

Request

Other: *The committee recommends a UTSC request to HRS redefine the term "a severe condition or combination of conditions" and that a Committee be formed to review& approve/reject the applications along with the University appointed physician.*

Expected University Actions: (or explain in Specific Objective)

None

Statement

Meeting/Forum

Policy Change

Physical Change

Other: (See Attachments)

Documentation/Support for Proposal: (Optional-petitions, letters, surveys, etc.)

None

Documentation/Support Materials are attached.

**The University of Texas at Austin Staff Council
Issue Proposal 2003-19 Documentation/Support Materials**

Per Policy Number 7.F.12 of The Revised Handbook of Operating Procedures for UT Austin & UT System Policy & Procedures Memorandum 8.230 Sick Leave Pool:

"...To provide paid sick leave to eligible employees who have exhausted all other accrued paid leave and lose compensation because either they or their immediate family member(s) have suffered a catastrophic illness or injury...."

Catastrophic illness or injury is defined as: "...a severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family that requires treatment by a licensed practitioner for a prolonged period and that forces the employee to exhaust all leave time earned and therefore results in loss of compensation from the state..."

UT Austin defines a severe condition or combination of conditions as one that will:

1. "Result in death if not treated promptly, or
2. Requires hospitalization for more than 72 consecutive hours, or
3. Causes a person to be legally declared a danger to him or herself or others..."

Through our research, we could not find a definition for "a severe condition or combination of conditions" in the State Legislature or the UT System Policy & Procedures Memorandum.

Faye Godwin, the HRS/Benefits director, informed us that the "severe condition..." definition was devised by the "UT System level" and/or UT legal level. A physician, employed by the University, reviews these cases each week. His decision is final.

~Based on this research, we recommend that communication be started between the UTSC president, Glen Worley, and the AVP of HRS, Kyle Cavanaugh, requesting the following re-definition of the term "a severe condition or combination of conditions":

As one that will:

1. "Result in death if not treated promptly, OR
2. *Requires hospitalization, rehabilitation and/or home convalescence for more than 72 consecutive hours that is the result of a hospital in-patient or out-patient procedure, OR*
3. Causes a person to be legally declared a danger to him or herself or others..."

~The committee also benched marked other universities to review the infrastructure of their Sick Leave Pool programs. Based on our research, the committee recommends that a SLP Committee be formed to review applications for Sick Leave Pool in addition to the University appointed physician who is solely responsible for reviewing and approving requests.

Respectfully,

Sandra Moro Sleeper, Chair, Compensation & Classification Committee