Resolution to Fix the Tobacco Surcharge Enrollment Process

- 1. WHEREAS, the current benefits enrollment system applies a \$100/month tobacco user surcharge to all covered employees and their dependents by default, meaning that nonsmoking workers—in a state where 84% of people do not smoke¹—must explicitly opt out, or else pay a substantial penalty; and,
- 2. WHEREAS, even if an employee indicates that they and their dependents do not smoke, they are automatically reclassified as smokers the following year; and,
- 3. WHEREAS, the Franklin College Faculty Senate is aware, after very limited outreach by United Campus Workers of Georgia (UCWGA), of no fewer than a dozen nonsmoking employees who have paid fees in the hundreds or thousands of dollars, and of these, several who have have failed to recoup their lost wages in the appeals process; and,
- 4. WHEREAS, it is impossible for OneUSG Connect to distinguish between smokers and employees who are classified as smokers in error, or to determine how many employees are misclassified and paying the surcharge unknowingly; and
- 5. WHEREAS, Karen Elliot, Associate Vice-Chancellor for Total Rewards, in response to the October 5th, 2021 Resolution regarding Tobacco Surcharge Errors and Refunds, offered no justification for the "opt-out" system; and
- 6. WHEREAS, a simple technical solution can resolve this issue permanently, while still requiring smokers to pay the surcharge;
- 7. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that OneUSG Connect introduce a mandatory yes/no selection for tobacco use, rather than automatically enrolling all covered employees and their dependents as smokers.

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https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Smoking/state/GA