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## **Claims up, insurance premium hike possible for city workers**

*By Jerry Gunn*

GAINESVILLE - Gainesville City Council heard a proposal Thursday to hold insurance costs down for city workers but premiums could increase by 30 percent next year if the number of claims is not reduced.



Joan Sheffield

Health insurance claims are up and as a result Human Resources Director Joan Sheffield presented a plan from a new company which includes a \$750 deductible that would be re-imbursed.

"If anyone spends over \$300 in the course of the plan year they will be re-imbursed dollar for dollar," Sheffield said.

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Bryan Shuler

Sheffield said the plan, from Consumers Life Insurance Company, has less co-pays and more benefits that employees requested. She added that in the coming year the city wants to hold claims cost down by encouraging employees not to overuse the plan.

City Manager Bryan Shuler told council members that unless health claims are held down, the city could face a 30 percent hike in health insurance costs next year.

"The day of reckoning, so to speak, is coming, financially, so we have to step up our efforts to address our health care costs," Shuler said.