

Medicaid and Exchange Advisory Committee Meeting: 10/25/2021

Committee Members Present

✓	Jessa Barnard	✓	Yacouba Jacob Bogre	✓	Kelly Dougherty
✓	Lisa Draper	✓	Mike Fisher	✓	Devon Green
✓	Dale Hackett	✓	Rebecca Heintz	✓	Sharon Henault
✓	Zachary Hozid	✓	Gladys Konstantin	✓	Joan Lavoie
✓	Erin Maguire	✓	Mary Kate Mohlman	✓	Kirsten Murphy
✓	Jamie Rainville		John Schultz	✓	Sarah Teel
✓	Julie Tessler	✓	Jason Williams		

Other Attendees Present

✓	Nissa James	✓	Adaline Strumolo	✓	Sandi Hoffman
✓	Bard Hill	✓	Zachary Goss	✓	Sean Sheehan
✓	Scott Cerreta	✓	Rebecca Copans	✓	Sarah Peterson
✓	Sven Lindholm	✓	Betty Morse	✓	Rebecca Copans
✓	Brendan Beaudoin	✓	Shannon Mead	✓	Brendan Hogan
✓	Erika Wolffing	✓	Spenser Wepler	✓	Molly Sweeney
✓	Matt Dawson	✓	Sebastian Arduengo	✓	Emily Brown
✓	Elizabeth Boody				

Agenda

- **Supporting Documents:** Posted to <https://dvha.vermont.gov/advisory-boards/medicaid-and-exchange-advisory-committee/agendas-and-materials>
 Advisory Committee 10_25_21 Agenda.pdf
 Advisory Committee PPT 10_25_2021.pdf
- **Convene**
 Co-chairs Devon Green and Erin Maguire chaired the meeting and called the meeting to order.
- **Roll Call, Approval of Minutes, and Quorum**
 Zack Goss, Health Care Training and Communication Manager (DVHA), completed the roll call. During roll call, members also voted to approve the September 2021 meeting minutes. One correction was made to the minutes noting that member J. Williams should be marked present for the September meeting. There was no further discussion, and the September 2021 meeting minutes were approved.
- **Budget Priorities Letter Follow Up and Committee Discussion**
 Devon Green and Erin Maguire, Co-chairs

Members provided feedback to the Co-chairs for final revisions to the budget priorities letter that will be sent to Acting Commissioner Strumolo. Given that some of the feedback focuses on areas that are outside of DVHA's jurisdiction/responsibilities, other Commissioners at the Agency of Human Services will be copied. Committee discussion focused on Long-Term Care and Home- and Community-Based Services, building appropriate infrastructure to ensure care is being delivered appropriately and avoid institutionalization, including adequate workforce, the important of physical, mental, and oral health, fair reimbursement to ensure the sustainability of health care providers and practices across the health care spectrum, sufficient Medicaid rates to support provider entities in offering competitive wages, and support for the Health Equity Advisory Commission.

- **Open Enrollment Update and Committee Discussion**

Molly Sweeney, Health Access Enrollment and Eligibility Unit Director (DVHA)

Sean Sheehan, Senior Policy and Implementation Analyst (DVHA)

Zack Goss, Health Care Training and Communication Manager (DVHA)

DVHA presented the 2022 Open Enrollment timeline and reviewed important dates. The Director highlighted the extended hours for the Customer Support Center and that beginning with the premium payments for 2022 health and dental insurance, customers of the State's health insurance marketplace, Vermont Health Connect, will pay their insurers directly (i.e., Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont, MVP Health Care® and Northeast Delta Dental) instead of the paying the State of Vermont.

The enhanced 2022 Open Enrollment communication strategy was presented; this year's Open Enrollment communication work focuses on the continued opportunity for expanded subsidies under the federal American Rescue Plan Act and the premium processing transition (described above). The Department has planned to host and co-host several virtual health insurance town halls and is promoting a virtual toolkit on its website to share this information as broadly as possible with Vermonters.

Please view Advisory Committee PPT 10_25_2021.pdf slides 4-15 for more details.

Vermont's Essential Health Benefits Benchmark Plan Analysis & Stakeholder Engagement

Emily Brown, Director, Rate and Forms, Department of Financial Regulation

Sebastian Arduengo, Assistant General Counsel, Department of Financial Regulation

The Department of Financial Regulation presented on the current analysis and stakeholder engagement underway to evaluate Vermont's Essential Health Benefits Benchmark Plan, adopted 2012/2013. In 2019, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services opened up the process for states to change their benchmark plan. This allows states to study other benefits they may be interested in; Vermont has been looking at its set of benefits and will need to decide whether to recommend changes to the benchmark plan. Currently, hearing aid, durable medical equipment, and vision benefits are being analyzed, as well as fertility care and 2 primary care visits with no cost-sharing. There has also been discussion of a food prescription benefit, whether mental health and substance use disorder are covered appropriately, and prescription drug reform. One of the goals of the analysis is to ensure alignment of the benchmark plan with the State's goals

for health care. Actuarial analysis of the current plan will determine if there is space to add additional benefits (i.e., the generosity test). Often, adding a benefit incurs an increased cost so there could be an impact to Vermont taxpayers depending on the recommendation. Services are included for coverage for all health plans through Vermont's health insurance marketplace. The Department of Financial Regulation has a legislative requirement to report on its analysis and recommendations on or before January of 2022.

- **Commissioner's Office Update**

Addie Strumolo, Acting Commissioner (DVHA)

Sandi Hoffman, Deputy Commissioner (DVHA)

Nissa James, Health Care Director (DVHA)

Acting Commissioner Strumolo reported that the Department will restart financial verifications for the "new to Medicaid" population; this will not affect existing Medicaid members. The Acting Commissioner discussed the extension of the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (until January 2022) and reported that the Department has a full plate as it plans for unwinding the public health emergency flexibilities, engages in the 1115 waiver renegotiation process, manages Open Enrollment, and continues advocacy for the American Rescue Plan Act expanded subsidies to continue, etc. An 1115 waiver renegotiation update is planned for the November meeting. Finally, DVHA's Medical Director will be transitioning to the Department of Corrections so the Department will begin recruiting for that position.

- **Public Comment**

No public comment

- **Final Committee Discussion:** Next Meeting is November 22, 2021 from 10AM – 12PM. There is no meeting in December.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.

Additional about the Department's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency may be located here: <https://dvha.vermont.gov/covid-19>