

Medicaid and Exchange Advisory Committee Meeting: 06/28/2021

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	✓	Helen Labun
✓	Joan Lavoie	✓	Erin Maguire		Gustavo Mercado Muniz
✓	Kirsten Murphy	✓	Jamie Rainville		John Schultz
✓	Sarah Teel	✓	Julie Tessler	✓	Jason Williams

Other Attendees Present

✓	Nissa James	✓	Adaline Strumolo	✓	Sandi Hoffman
✓	Alicia Cooper	✓	Zachary Goss	✓	Sean Sheehan
✓	Scott Cerreta	✓	Victoria Jarvis	✓	Shayla Livingston
✓	Nieko Lavery	✓	Bard Hill	✓	Sarah Peterson
✓	Josette Luarte	✓	Betty Morse	✓	Brendan Hogan
✓	Sebastian Arduengo	✓	Shannon Mead	✓	Kelsey Thornton
✓	Sue Aranoff	✓	Cynthia Seivwright	✓	Molly Sweeney
✓	Barb Prine				

Agenda

- **Supporting Documents:** Posted to <https://dvha.vermont.gov/advisory-boards/medicaid-and-exchange-advisory-committee/agendas-and-materials>
Advisory Committee 6_28_21 Agenda.pdf
Advisory Committee PPT 6_28_2021.pdf
- **Convene**
Devon Green, Co-Chair, 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, and determined a quorum was not present. The requirement for a quorum was met later in the meeting; thus, a motion to approve the May 2021 meeting minutes was made, seconded, the Chair stated the question to approve the May 2021 meeting meetings to the Committee, and upon no discussion, the Chair put the motion to a vote. The May 2021 meeting minutes were approved.

- **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Communication Toolkit and Virtual Town Halls Feedback**

Zack Goss, Health Care Training and Communication Manager (DVHA) and Sean Sheehan, Senior Policy and Implementation Analyst (DVHA)

DVHA staff reviewed the proposed plan and methods for communicating the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) changes and impact to the general public. Staff reviewed a “Communication Toolkit” that will be publicly available including informational flyers, social media posts, videos, and articles. The Committee was also given an opportunity to provide content feedback. DVHA staff also shared that the Department will be hosting “Virtual Town Hall Meetings” and using paid media to promote this messaging that many Vermonters can save money on their health insurance.

Committee members provided feedback that included: the importance of ensuring accessibility (e.g., through closed captioning for videos, interpretation services for the virtual Town Hall meetings, having communications posted in a format that allows people to use a zoom in function to see the communications in a larger format, etc.), mechanisms to make the message grab Vermonters’ attention, incorporating a request for people to re-share when communications are shared via Facebook and/or Twitter, potential for the use of Front Porch Forum, and really focusing on the fact these changes will save Vermonters money by reducing their cost of having health insurance. A sample message was offered for consideration: “You can save money on health insurance. There are new rules that make health insurance cheaper for Vermonters. Click here to see what you can save.” Committee members also emphasized the importance of establishing that the communications are from a credible/trusted source (e.g., directing recipients to a website that ends in “.gov”) and offering videos for people who cannot read.

For more information, please see Advisory Committee PPT 6_28_2021.pdf slides 3-12.

- **Home- and Community-Based Services: Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) 10% Increase Opportunity**

Wendy Trafton, Deputy Director, Health Care Reform, Office of Health Care Reform (Agency of Human Services)

Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 offered states the opportunity to enhance, expand, and strengthen Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) under the Medicaid program. State Medicaid programs were required to submit a spending plan and proposal to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for review and approval. Vermont submitted an initial spending plan, indicating Vermont’s intention to update the initial plan following more robust stakeholder engagement that could not be completed given the fast turnaround time required by the due date for spending plan submission. An overview of the process and plan was provided for the Medicaid and Exchange Advisory Committee; this was followed by Committee discussion and feedback to the Agency of Human Services.

Committee members provided feedback, including whether it is necessary for structural changes to be incorporated into the renegotiation of the Section 1115 Demonstration waiver to ensure Medicaid members receive the services they are entitled to receive, the potential impact of an anticipated state budget deficit

and existing/new workforce issues on the Plan/its implementation, and concerns regarding the use of local agencies to hire the workforce needed to deliver the care (i.e., it was stated that allowing local agencies to select the wage and benefits for these staff often limits the ability to hire competent staff when compared to having the process be independent from the local agencies). Further Committee discussion centered around whether money can be shifted between categories detailed within the Plan, if “approved” activities refers to CMS approval of activities, and how much flexibility Vermont will have to amend its Plan. The Deputy Director of Health Care Reform indicated that the Plan was submitted early in order to get the increased Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) as soon as possible, the categories were given by CMS but were not an exhaustive list, and that the public comments received through August 16, 2021 will be very helpful for the Agency of Human Services in its planning as there are opportunities to modify the initial Plan as submitted.

For more information, please see Advisory Committee PPT 6_28_2021.pdf slides 13-18. More information may also be found in these links:

- [Home- and Community-Based Services Opportunity Survey](#) (survey closed June 3, 2021).
- [Vermont’s Proposal to Enhance, Expand, and Strengthen HCBS under the Medicaid program.](#)
- [Vermont’s Home- and Community-Based Services Initial Spending Plan](#) (Public comment period open through August 16, 2021).

○ **Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment Program: Premium Processing Project, Draft Communications for Committee Feedback**

Nissa James, Health Care Director (DVHA), presented the final drafts of communications developed for the Premium Processing project following feedback from the Committee. Members were invited to submit any final feedback to Nissa.James@Vermont.gov before July 7, 2021. The Department will then invite Blue Cross, MVP®, and Northeast Delta Dental to choose the final version of the communications for the “awareness” set and the “immediate attention” set.

For more information, please see Advisory Committee PPT 6_28_2021.pdf slides 19-22.

○ **Commissioner’s Update**

The Commissioner’s update was shortened given time constraints. Addie Strumolo, Acting Commissioner (DVHA), provided an update for the Committee on the leadership transition, and the most recent enrollment numbers for the Medicaid program as submitted to the Vermont Legislature under the Medicaid Program Enrollment and Expenditures Quarterly Report (i.e., 201,121 enrolled as of March 2021, compared to 176,498 enrolled as of March 2020). Nissa James, Health Care Director (DVHA), requested time on July’s meeting agenda to discuss implementation of the requirements under Act 48 (H.430) of 2021 for state fiscal year 2022 given the time constraints of June’s meeting and the need to still offer time for public comment.

○ **Public Comment**

A member of the public requested a breakdown of the proposed use of the Home- and Community-Based Services Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) 10% increase in order to provide meaningful

public comment and requested information about how people who want to learn more can do so given the complexity of the Plan as released. The Deputy Director, Health Care Reform stated understanding of the concern, explained limitations based on the requirements of the process established by the Center for Medicaid and Medicaid Services (CMS) process for spending plan submission, and indicated that more robust stakeholder engagement was planned for the future. It was suggested that the Agency of Human Services plan to attend a future Medicaid and Exchange Advisory Committee meeting to a) provide an overview/summary of the public comments received on the Spending Plan, and b) to continue to keep the Committee informed about upcoming opportunities for stakeholder participation and for awareness of new developments.

- **Final Committee Discussion: Next Meeting is July 26, 2021 from 10AM – 12PM.**

- **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:03pm.

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