

State of Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner
Health Insurance Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2017, 4:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.
State of Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 73-1
Cranston, RI 02920-4407

Attendance

Members

Co-Chair Commissioner Kathleen Hittner, Co-Chair Stephen Boyle, Howard Dulude, Karl Brother, David Feeney, Liz Killian, Lisa Tomasso

Issuers

Lauren Conway, UnitedHealthcare

State of Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner Staff

Linda Johnson, Jay Garrett, Cory King, Libby Bunzli, Cheryl Del Pico

Not in Attendance

Gregory Allen, Hub Brennan, Vivian Weisman, Al Charbonneau, Ruth Feder

Minutes

1. Welcome and Review of December Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Hittner and Stephen Boyle called the meeting to order and welcomed all Health Insurance Advisory Council (HIAC) members and others in attendance.

The minutes from the December 20, 2016 HIAC meeting were accepted unanimously with no changes.

2. Introduction of New HIAC Members

Commissioner Hittner introduced new Council member Lisa Tomasso, Community Relations Manager at The Providence Center. Commissioner Hittner also informed the Council that Ruth Feder, Director of the Mental Health Association of Rhode Island, would join the HIAC at the February meeting.

3. RIREACH Consumer Update

Liz Killian provided a RIREACH update. The call center had 313 new open cases in December. 183 of those involved problems enrolling in either Medicaid or HealthSource RI plans. Computer system changes and related layoffs at DHS continue to contribute to call volume and consumer issues.

Liz also commented that OHIC's attempts to address the issue of surprise billing was a "really great step in the right direction."

4. Health Reform Update: State Innovation Model

Libby Bunzli updated the Council on the State Innovation Model (SIM) project. An evaluation vendor was procured: the Institute for Integrated Health and Innovation at the University of Rhode Island. Another contract was also approved with CTC RI. An RFP for a patient engagement partner was also posted.

Integration and alignment work across state agencies in accordance with SIM's population health plan is ongoing.

Measure alignment – SIM aligned measure sets were worked into OHIC's Regulation 2 during that regulation's last revision. Libby said this would apply to all contracts after July 1, 2017. SIM has convened a workgroup to develop an opioid measure set.

SIM has also established, along with EOHHS, a Healthcare Workforce committee led by Rick Brooks, chair of the Governor's Workforce Board. This group will study needs and strategies to address community health, entry level work force, team-based care and cultural competency and publish a plan at the end of February.

5. OHIC Staffing and Budget Updates

Commissioner Hittner updated the Council on OHIC staffing and budget. After being awarded a CMS grant, OHIC was able to hire 3 staff that had been previously been eliminated in the state budget. The Commissioner requested that the Governor include funding for two additional full time staff in her budget proposal for the coming fiscal year. This request was not supported by budget office.

Regarding Utilization Review (UR), Commissioner Hittner said that the transfer of UR authority from the state Department of Health to OHIC was going to be included as an article in the Governor's budget. If approved by the legislature, it would add two additional full time staff to OHIC.

The Commissioner reiterated her commitment to making sure legislators understand the vital work performed by OHIC. She will continue to advocate for appropriate staffing at OHIC, as the likelihood of future Federal grants awarded under the new administration is low.

6. Health Subcabinet Meetings

At the December, 2016 HIAC meeting, Commissioner Hittner mentioned that Governor Raimondo had formed "subcabinets" of related state agencies. This allows agency leaders to meet with the Governor regularly in smaller groups focused on specific topic areas. The health agency subcabinet includes OHIC,

EOHHS, DOH, DHS, the Department of Elderly Affairs and HealthSource RI. Commissioner Hittner reported on her most recent subcabinet meeting where she was able to present to the Governor and her staff on the work performed by the Office. A major focus of the meeting was preparing to respond to the new Congress' threatened repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

7. OHIC Legislation: Utilization Review, Silent Billing

Jay Garrett updated the council, starting with a bill submitted regarding surprise billing. H5012 would direct OHIC to establish a dispute resolution process, including identifying and selecting dispute resolution entities, establishing fees, regulations and monitoring. OHIC's concern is that the legislation applies not only to commercially insured patients but also uninsured patients which OHIC does not have jurisdiction over.

OHIC recognizes that silent billing is a problem for consumers but also that the number of cases is fairly low. If H5012 were to pass, OHIC would require additional staff and resources to implement it.

Karl Brother commented that the legislation would be a "huge burden" for the Commissioner and already understaffed Office.

8. Market Conduct Examination

OHIC's previously suspended Market Conduct Examination of mental health coverage parity has been re-opened, thanks to the CMS grant awarded to OHIC reported at the last meeting. Also, through the Consumer Protection Grant, OHIC was able to hire another staff: Cheryl Del Pico, previously with the Providence Plan's Health Initiative, started at OHIC on December 12.

Linda Johnson told the Council that it is difficult to answer specific questions due to the closed nature of the Examination. This Market Conduce Examination is focused on Mental/Behavioral Health Parity – including treatment of substance use disorders – to determine if Rhode Island's four major carriers are complying with state and federal parity rules. As part of the Examination, OHIC reviews carriers' policies and procedures, specific cases, meeting notes, and many other documents.

Linda acknowledged that many policymakers are eager for results from the Examination but again reiterated that most of the information is confidential until the exam is completed. She said OHIC would consult with legal counsel to determine if there is any general summary information that can be released sooner. OHIC expects to complete the Examination by the end of 2017.

9. Public Comment

Steve Boyle reported on the annual SBA Economic Summit. The Summit's Healthcare policy committee hosted a breakout session attended by business leaders.

There were no other comments from the public.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Health Insurance Advisory Council will be Tuesday, February 21, 2017 from 4:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. at the State of Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, 1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 73-1, Cranston, RI 02920-4407.