

State of Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner
Health Insurance Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
February 21, 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, Ruth Feder, Al Charbonneau, Tammy Lederer

Issuers

Shawn Donahue, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI
Gus Manocchia, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI

State of Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner Staff

Linda Johnson, Jay Garrett, Cory King, Libby Bunzli, Victor Wood

Not in Attendance

Gregory Allen, Hub Brennan, Vivian Weisman, Lisa Tomasso, Bill Schmiedeknect

Minutes

1. Welcome and Review of January 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 January 17, 2017 HIAC meeting were accepted unanimously with one change: Al Charbonneau, erroneously listed as absent, was present.

2. Introduction of New HIAC Members

Commissioner Hittner introduced new Council member Ruth Feder, Director of the Mental Health Association of Rhode Island.

The Commissioner also took a moment to introduce new OHIC staff member Victor Wood, Principal Planning and Program Specialist.

3. RIREACH Consumer Update

No RIREACH representative was present to give an update.

4. Health Reform Update: State Innovation Model

Libby Bunzli updated the Council on the State Innovation Model (SIM) project.

Integration and Alignment: Libby recapped the status of the project to date, which originated with the Statewide Population Health Plan developed by SIM.

Three potential projects were presented to the SIM Steering Committee: a high-risk patient identification project; a tobacco assessment and cessation workforce project; and a statewide BMI data collection project. The steering committee was tasked with prioritizing two of these projects. High-risk patient identification was the first priority, but the steering committee vote for the second priority was tied.

The high-risk patient identification project is beginning with an OHIC working group under the Care Transformation Advisory Committee. The purpose of this project is to enhance primary care practices' care coordination.

Because of the tie vote on the second project, SIM is working to identify supports to implement both the tobacco cessation and BMI data collection projects.

Integrated Population Health Plan: While an early version of a statewide Population Health Plan was submitted in June to meet the Federal SIM grant requirements, the SIM Steering Committee chose to continue to work on a more detailed population health plan. SIM is working with partners at The Providence Plan and Technical Assistance Collaborative to update sections on health focus areas and include more data. A new Maternal and Child health focus area was also added. SIM aims to release an updated and expanded version of the Statewide Population Health Plan in March.

Healthcare Workforce Transformation: Led by Rick Brooks at EOHHS, held another convening on February 3rd which featured a presentation from DLT Director Scott Jensen and a discussion around workforce needs and ways to partner with colleges, universities and training programs to make sure the healthcare workforce has the skills and experience necessary for the evolving healthcare system. They are drafting a report expected to be released in March.

Commissioner Hittner commented that the workforce convening was very well attended and was attracting a lot of interest.

Karl Brother asked if this was an effort focused on training additional healthcare workers coming into the system, or re-training the existing healthcare workforce. Libby said that conversations about both the current and future workforce were ongoing.

Procurement: A patient engagement RFP was closed on February 10. SIM is in the process of reviewing submissions. Another RFP for “electronic clinical quality measurement reporting and feedback system” was issued February 1 and will close March 15.

5. HealthSource RI Report

Zach Sherman, Director of HealthSource RI, presented to the council on enrollment results and the status of the exchange.

Zach showed that Rhode Island had the lowest average benchmark plan in the country this year, saying it would not have been possible without comprehensive Rate Review conducted by OHIC. He pointed out that RI had comprehensive market reforms in place prior to the ACA. Since 2012, the Rate Review process has saved \$220 million in healthcare premiums.

30,667 total enrollments in the individual market as of February 17. 94% of enrollments are paid/confirmed, 79% are renewing customers and 21% are new customers. 69% of enrollees chose a silver plan. 55% of enrollees receive tax credits and cost-sharing reductions, 28% receive the tax credit only, and 17% received no financial assistance. The average enrollee receiving a tax credit saw one equal to approximately 70% of their premium.

Enrollment by carrier was 54% for Neighborhood Health Plan and 46% for Blue Cross.

In the small employer market, 631 employers have enrolled and paid, covering 5,052 lives. Employers have a 93% renewal rate, and 92% of employers opted for the Full Choice model.

In 2016, roughly \$84 million in tax credits came into Rhode Island. Commissioner Hittner pointed out that some state legislators were asking about replacing the ACA on a state level, but given the amount of money involved in subsidies, this would be very difficult.

Howard Dulude asked what the operating budget for HealthSource RI was and Zach replied it was approximately \$10 million, with \$7 million coming from health insurance premium assessments and \$3 million a general budget appropriation. Howard commented that was “still fairly expensive for the number of enrollees.” Cory King, Karl Brother and Steve Boyle pointed out that Rhode Island would not have seen any savings if it had switched to a federally facilitated marketplace and would have lost the added value of full employee choice and having a local health insurance resource.

Steve asked Zach what the impact of replacing the ACA’s advance tax credit with a reimbursement. He replied that the move would have “serious coverage implications” as many HealthSource RI customers simply do not have the financial means to pay the cost of insurance up front and wait for a tax refund – they will instead go uninsured.

6. Legislative Update

Commissioner Hittner reported that State Senator Miller has introduced a package of 14 bills which came out of the recent series of hearings on mental health parity held by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

The Commissioner also updated the council on a recent hearing where she testified before the House Finance Committee on the budget article that would move Utilization Review (UR) responsibilities from the Department of Health to OHIC. Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, Director of the RI Department of Health, also testified in support.

Al Charbonneau inquired as to whether OHIC supports another piece of legislation, recently introduced, that would mandate minimum lengths of stay for inpatient mental health services. The Commissioner said OHIC has some concerns, saying the bill could lend itself to some abuse and that it wasn't necessarily an issue of parity, since it went beyond anything comparable for medical services. Al expressed that the bill runs counter to efforts by OHIC, HIAC and others.

7. Commissioner's Visit to Massachusetts Provider Price Variation Commission

Commissioner Hittner, Cory King and Libby Bunzli presented to a Massachusetts commission studying provider price variation. The Commissioner was invited to talk about Rhode Island efforts around price variation. The multi-stakeholder committee is charged with submitting a report to the Governor of Massachusetts.

The Commissioner said she and OHIC staff were "very well received" and that it was a good discussion. The Massachusetts commission was very interested in OHIC's approach. The Massachusetts Office of Health and Human Services' general council also followed up with OHIC after the meeting for more information.

8. Commissioner's Report on PBN Healthcare Summit

Commissioner Hittner participated in a panel discussion at the Providence Business News' annual Health Care Summit on February 16. The summit explored changes to health care policy in light of a potential repeal of the Affordable Care Act. Al Charbonneau, who was also on the panel, said that over 300 people attended.

9. Care Transformation and Alternative Payment Methodologies Workplans

Cory King and Libby Bunzli presented on the annual workplans from the Care Transformation and Alternative Payment Methodologies committees.

4 sub-groups to these committees have been formed. Under Care Transformation, there is a new working group for outreach and engagement of small practices that have not yet transitioned to PCMH. The plan is to identify the barriers these practices face in attaining the PCMH designation and devise solutions to help small primary care practices overcome them.

Also under care transformation is a new working group focused on sharing research and best practices in the area of identifying high-risk (and often more costly) patients within primary care practices.

Meanwhile, under Alternative Payment Methodologies, there is a new working group focused on alternative payment models for primary care, and another charged with engaging specialists on alternative payment models for episodes of care.

10. Public Comment

Melissa Travis from HealthSource RI's SHOP exchange reported on the healthcare breakout session from the SBA's annual Economic Summit on January 9. She mentioned two recommendations: 1.) ask the Governor to put healthcare for the business community back into the strategic plan and 2.) require an "impact statement" to the business community when healthcare legislation is introduced.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Health Insurance Advisory Council will be Tuesday, March 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.