

State of Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner
Health Insurance Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
March 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, Howard Dulude, Lisa Tomasso, David Feeney, Vivian Weisman, Karl Brother, Ruth Feder, Al Charbonneau, Sam Salganik, Hub Brennan

Issuers

Megan Dennan, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI
Stacey Paterno, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI
Carolyn Rush, Neighborhood Health Plan of RI
Stephen Farrell, United Healthcare

State of Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner Staff

Linda Johnson, Libby Bunzli, Victor Wood, Cheryl Del Pico

Not in Attendance

Stephen Boyle, Gregory Allen, Bill Schmiedeknecht, Tammy Lederer, Pat Mattingly

Minutes

1. Welcome and Review of February Meeting Minutes

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

The minutes from the February 21, 2017 HIAC meeting were accepted unanimously with no changes.

2. RIREACH Consumer Update

Sam Salganik from RIPIN provided the council with a RIREACH update. RIREACH handled 3300 calls in February and 250 new cases. Sam reported that HSRI and DHS had announced a new partnership which would allow HSRI call center employees to handle some aspects of Medicaid enrollment, which they

previously had not been able to do. This is an attempt to address the backlog of applications due to the rollout of the UHIP system.

4. Health Reform Update: State Innovation Model

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

Integration and Alignment: 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 Steering Committee decided to take on both the BMI and tobacco projects in a way that will not overtax limited staff time and resources. SIM will be involved in the initial stages of the tobacco cessation project, then hand off the lead to DOH and BHDDH. Conversely, DOH and RI KidsCount will lead on the BMI project initially, and once there is a better idea of the policy landscape, SIM will take more of a leadership role.

Integrated Population Health Plan: A new version of the plan will be released at the end of March for review and public comment.

Child Psych Access: 50 providers have received psychiatric consult services for pediatric patients since this program began in December. Bradley Hospital is providing these psychiatric services to primary care pediatricians with behavioral health patients, allowing them to get an immediate consult with a psychiatrist rather than making a referral to the patient, who might have to wait several weeks before being seen by a behavioral health professional. This program is meant to help address the shortage of pediatric psychiatrists in Rhode Island.

5. Legislative Update

Mark Gray from DataSpark updated the Council on some bills OHIC is monitoring at the General Assembly, including a few bills that would establish coverage mandates. Council member Hub Brennan remarked that legislating such mandates was “over the top” of the “data driven research” and OHIC’s multi-stakeholder approach to health insurance policy. Commenting that it “flies in the face of what we do here to reduce costs,” Hub asked if OHIC takes positions on these types of bills.

Commissioner Hittner replied that OHIC does speak to the bills that it feels are in conflict with the goals of increased access and affordability, but acknowledged that state legislators are hearing from their constituents and are trying to protect them.

Council member Lisa Tomasso, a former State Representative, agreed with the Commissioner and said that legislators often receive phone calls from their constituents who are fighting with their health insurer over coverage. Many of these consumers, having talked to everyone they can and still not seen a

resolution, eventually contact their legislator. Lisa said the work being done by OHIC is commendable, but that many consumers do not know enough about the Office's function.

6. Affordability Standards

There was a report to the council on the committees convened under the Affordability Standards and their working groups.

The Primary Care Alternative Payment workgroup is reviewing existing primary care alternative payment methodologies, ultimately working to design a model that works in Rhode Island. The group seems to be moving toward a version of a capitation model. The next meeting of this group is April 21.

The Small Practice Engagement workgroup is working with health plans and ACOs, determining which small practices have been approached to transition to a PCMH and assess the status of practices willingness and ability to achieve a PCMH designation.

A workgroup on engaging specialists around bundled payment models heard a presentation from Horizon Blue Cross on their approach to episode-based payments. This workgroup is looking at orthopedic procedures, maternity, and cardiac health services as potential episodes. The next meeting is to be determined as data is collected from the plans.

The High-Risk Patient Identification workgroup did not meet this month as it is awaiting research.

7. OHIC Newsletter

Commissioner Hittner told the council that State Senator Lou DiPalma recommended OHIC publish a newsletter about the work being done by the Office. The Commissioner liked this idea and the first issue of the monthly newsletter was published in February. The Council reviewed the February and March newsletters and offered positive feedback. Council members were encouraged to submit their ideas for newsletter articles to OHIC.

8. American Health Care Act

Mark Gray presented a summary of the American Health Care Act (AHCA), the Republicans' plan to replace Obamacare. The legislation as it stood at the time of this meeting would make many changes to the premium subsidy structure and Medicaid.

Council members reacted mostly negatively to the AHCA, citing concerns that the bill would harm both access and affordability to health insurance. Karl Brother and Sam Salganik both acknowledged the difficulty of planning for the state-level impacts of a major Congressional overhaul of the health law without knowing exactly what the changes would be, but other council members agreed it was important for OHIC, other state health agencies and the General Assembly to be prepared.

9. HIAC Quarterly Meeting – May 16

Commissioner Hittner informed the council that OHIC will be holding quarterly public meetings throughout the state to better engage consumers, and that the May HIAC meeting would take place at Blackstone Valley Community Health Care in Pawtucket. Health care consumers would be encouraged to attend and bring their comments and concerns for the Commissioner and the Council. Purchasers of health plans for small businesses in particular will be encouraged to attend as the meeting will focus on the impact of health insurance costs on employers.

Hub commented that in the past these quarterly public meetings have been very successful, and he suggested making a connection to the manufacturing sector, in particular, with a future meeting being held on a factory floor.

10. Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Health Insurance Advisory Council will be Tuesday, April 18, 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.