

State of Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner
Health Insurance Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
June 27, 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 Steve Boyle, Howard Dulude, Al Charbonneau, Liz Killian, Vivian Weisman, Karl Brother, Ruth Feder, David Katseff

Issuers

Liz McClaine, Neighborhood Health Plan of RI
Lauren Conway, United Healthcare

State of Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner Staff

Linda Johnson, Jay Garrett, Cory King, Libby Bunzli, Maria Casale, Cheryl Del Pico, Victor Wood, Alyssa Metivier, Marti Rosenberg

Not in Attendance

Gregory Allen, Hub Brennan, Bill Schmiedeknecht, David Feeney, Lisa Tomasso

Minutes

1. Welcome and Review of May 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 May 16, 2017 HIAC meeting were accepted unanimously with no changes.

2. RIREACH Consumer Update

Liz Killian from RIPIN updated the Council on RIREACH consumer assistance activities. RIREACH handled approximately 3219 total calls, both incoming and outgoing, in May, including 244 new cases.

Consumers are still having issues with Medicaid enrollment and disenrollment as well as accessing other social services such as SNAP benefits due to ongoing problems with the UHIP computer system. RIREACH is continuing to work with DHS staff to resolve consumer complaints.

3. Legislative Session Update

Commissioner Hittner updated the council on legislative activities related to OHIC, reporting that budget Article V, which would move utilization review responsibilities along with two FTEs from the Department of Health to OHIC. The Commissioner also reported that a version of the RI House of Representatives budget had included a cut of 1 FTE and approximately \$147,000. However, this was amended before the House passed the budget, and the amount of funding requested by the Governor's office was fully restored.

Karl Brother asked if the newsletter and other outreach efforts on the part of OHIC had been helpful, and the Commissioner responded that she felt they had.

A brief discussion regarding some other healthcare legislation ensued, with Council members inquiring about the status of Senator Miller's Market Stabilization and Consumer Protection bill (S831) and Representative Ruggiero's bill to direct the Department of Administration to seek a waiver from CMS to allow sole proprietors to purchase insurance on the small group market. Both bills passed their chamber of origin but were awaiting action in the other chamber.

Cory King reported that OHIC has initiated preliminary conversations with CMS regarding a sole proprietor waiver.

5. 2017 Form and Rate Review Process

While small group and individual market rates have been filed by all major carriers, preliminary actuarial analysis was still underway, according to Cory King. Cory told the council he expected to be able to share the requested small group and individual market rates by the end of the week and that OHIC would notify the council as soon as the rate filings were available.

David Katseff asked if, based on the large group rate requests published by OHIC in May being the range of 9.8-11.9% increase, Cory could "give us a feel" as to where the small group and individual rates would come in at. Cory declined to comment on amounts of requested rates, but said that the timeline for form and rate approval was still expected to be on track, with a public comment meeting to be held on July 18 at the Public Utilities Commission and final rate approvals set by August 1.

6. US Senate Health Care Legislation Update

Mark Gray from DataSpark updated the Council on the status of efforts in Washington to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Senate Republicans had been dealt a blow earlier that afternoon when it was announced that a vote to begin debate on their version of a repeal bill – the "Better Care Reconciliation Act" – would be postponed until after the July 4 recess.

A CBO report released the previous day said that under the Senate bill, the number of uninsured Americans would increase by 22 million by the end of 2026. This includes an estimated 15 million who would lose Medicaid coverage.

7. Commissioner's Remarks

Commissioner Hittner took a few moments to address the Council and members of the public, as this would be her last HIAC meeting as Commissioner due to her retirement.

Commissioner Hittner said her time in the Office has been "a terrific pleasure," and that in her four years as Commissioner the Office has accomplished a great deal. She said she was very proud of her team, praising them for her hard work and dedication, and saying she hoped she had served well as a mentor to them. Dr. Hittner said she hoped she had served well in her role as Commissioner, and that she was confident she was leaving incoming Commissioner Marie Ganim with a great team.

8. Public Comment

Council members and several members of the public praised Commissioner Hittner's performance, thanked her for her dedicated service, and congratulated her on her retirement.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Health Insurance Advisory Council will be Tuesday, September 19, 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.