



Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange  
SHOP Advisory Committee  
Special Meeting

Remote Meeting

Tuesday, August 25, 2020

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:**

Grant Ritter (Chair); Pamela Russek; Ellen Skinner; Shelly Sweatt; Christopher McKiernan; Paul Lombardo

**Other Participants:**

Access Health CT (AHCT) Staff: James Michel; John Carbone; Andrea Ravitz; Susan Rich-Bye; Jerome Chisolm; Marcin Olechowski  
Business Partner: Amanda Garner (Mintz + Hoke)

**The Meeting of the SHOP Advisory Committee was called to order at 4:00 p.m.**

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Grant Ritter called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Chair Grant Ritter asked for a moment of silence in memory of the late member of the Committee, Timothy Pusch, who passed away recently. Chair Ritter emphasized that Mr. Pusch was a very active and valuable member of the SHOP Advisory Committee and will be greatly missed.

Roll call for attendance was taken.

**II. Public Comment**

No public comment

### **III. Review and Approval of Minutes**

Chair Grant Ritter requested a motion to approve the June 15, 2020 SHOP Advisory Committee Special Meeting Minutes. Motion was made by Shelly Sweatt and seconded by Pamela Russek. Roll call vote was taken. **Motion passed unanimously.**

### **IV. Statistics 2019 vs. 2020**

John Carbone, Director of SHOP and Product Development, presented the SHOP activity for the two months preceding this meeting and described comparative statistics for the year 2019 and 2020. Mr. Carbone noted that given the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, SHOP had to operate under different conditions. Mr. Carbone provided statistical data on the number of groups, subscribers and members with additional information pertaining to the average group size. Mr. Carbone noted that due to the pandemic, the initial business losses attributed to it from January to April of 2020 were mostly recovered. Mr. Carbone emphasized that AHCT's SHOP team was very engaged in reaching out to SHOP's customers, brokers and other stakeholders reminding them about the existence of the payroll protection program. SHOP adheres to its mission and vision statement of being a trusted advisor. Mr. Carbone stressed that SHOP's work continues to grow in membership in order to provide affordable healthcare coverage for small businesses and their employees. Mr. Carbone pointed out that the public service and promotional campaigns includes handing out masks, social distancing markers and other items that also include the SHOP logo.

Christopher McKiernan provided his words of appreciation for the work of the SHOP staff. Pamela Russek echoed Mr. McKiernan's statement. Ellen Skinner inquired whether the recovered losses were those who re-signed with SHOP or if they were the new customers to the portfolio. Mr. Carbone noted that they were mostly members who were with SHOP before and came back and more information will be provided at the next meeting.

Mr. Carbone provided data on the enrollment numbers by each participating carrier in comparison to various data points. Mr. Carbone presented other data points that included popularity of each specific plan that is currently offered as well as who is covered along with the percentage of enrolled groups by county. Mr. Carbone described membership in the Anthem Stand Alone Dental Plan as well as the efforts that are being made to promote it to grow enrollment numbers.

### **V. 2021 Marketing Campaign**

Amanda Garner, a business partner from Mintz and Hoke, provided the SHOP 2021 Marketing Campaign. Ms. Garner stated that similarly to last year, an integrated strategy approach has been implemented with includes owned media, earned and paid media along with the community outreach. Ms. Garner enumerated efforts that included, but were not limited to, the campaign that was launched in late January with an exclusively digital schedule which ran for six weeks before COVID-19 induced a pause in order to come up with the message that was more situation-appropriate. Ms. Garner stressed that those efforts also included engagement across all tactics that exceeded media benchmarks demonstrating high

As Approved by the SHOP Advisory Committee on October 27, 2020 interest in Access Health CT Small Business. Ms. Garner added that despite the current business climate caused by the pandemic, sessions on the website attributable to paid media increased 77 percent since January. Ms. Garner stated that SHOP is continuously building the brand awareness in communities across the state by being a trusted advisor in the healthcare selection. Ms. Garner went on to describe the SHOP communication goals that include numerous aspects and consist of such elements as being the reliable and unbiased resource for brokers and small businesses in Connecticut, specifically as it relates to the ACA and small business group benefits. Ms. Garner stressed that communication is one of the key factors that assists in providing small businesses in Connecticut with information about important services that are available to them related to the healthcare coverage, which is instrumental in the time of a current pandemic. Ms. Garner added that building relationships with media outlets in Connecticut is equally important. Community outreach is also significant, and it includes a mix of efforts that focus on virtual intimate event activations that share a more one-on-one interaction between small business owners and brokers with AHCT small business. Ms. Garner stated that other avenues consist of owned and paid media. Dr. Ritter inquired whether certain time periods in the year exist when the renewals and sign-ups are coming in at a lower and higher pace respectively. Mr. Carbone noted that the busiest time for renewals and enrollments are during the sixty days before July and sixty days before January. Mr. Carbone stressed that SHOP has noticed that given the current situation, more people are inquiring about plans at other times of the year.

## **VI. Adjournment**

Chair Grant Ritter requested a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Pamela Russek and seconded by Shelly Sweatt. Roll call vote was taken. **Motion passed unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.