



# Health Equity, Outreach and Consumer Experience Advisory Committee Special Meeting

## Draft Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 2, 2023  
Remote

**Members Present:** Theodore Doolittle (Chair); Cecelia Woods, Deborah Polun; Sheldon Toubman; Kevin Galvin (Stakeholder Chair); Karen Siegel; Giselle Carlotta-McDonald; Leslie Greer; Holly Hackett; Gerard O’Sullivan (Subject Matter Expert)

**Access Health CT (AHCT):** James Michel; Susan Rich-Bye; Rebekah McLearn; Ezio Sabatino; John Carbone; Tammy Hendricks; Glenn Jurgen

**Other Participants:** Deputy Commissioner Peter Hadler, Department of Social Services (DSS); Morgan Leary, Public Assistance Consultant Division of Program Oversight & Grant Administration, Medical Eligibility Unit (DSS)

### A. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Theodore Doolittle called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Roll call for attendance was taken.

### B. Public Comment

No public comment was submitted.

### C. Review and Approval of Minutes

Chair Theodore Doolittle requested a motion to approve the February 23, 2023 Health Equity, Outreach and Consumer Experience Advisory Committee Special Meeting Minutes. Motion was made by Cecelia Woods and seconded by Deborah Polun.

Sheldon Toubman offered a friendly amendment to clarify the minutes to reflect that a request was made at the prior meeting for a representative from the Department of Social Services speak to the Medicaid Unwinding. Roll call vote was taken. ***Motion passed unanimously.***

### D. Medicaid Unwinding Update – DSS/Access Health CT

Chair Theodore Doolittle expressed his words of appreciation to Mr. Peter Hadler, Deputy Commissioner from the Department of Social Services (DSS) for participation in the meeting.

James Michel, Chief Executive Officer, introduced the topic and expressed his appreciation to the members of the Committee for providing their feedback on the proposed Medicaid Unwinding outreach campaign.

Rebekah McLearn, Director of Technical Operations and Analytics provided more detailed information on the Medicaid Unwinding activities. She noted that AHCT instituted a 120-day Special Enrollment Period (SEP) for individuals from the date that their Medicaid coverage ended.

Ms. McLearn provided the statistical and operational data that was available as of April 27, 2023. Ms. McLearn stated that 17.8 percent of households impacted by the Unwinding have manually updated their applications since November 1, 2022, and she provided statistical Medicaid Unwind data on the number of individuals currently enrolled in the Covered CT Program and Qualified Health Plans (QHP) as well as those who were re-enrolled in Medicaid.

Ms. McLearn discussed the operations of the call center and its extended hours for consumers to obtain assistance. A brief discussion ensued around the number of individuals who have been impacted by the Medicaid Unwinding.

Tammy Hendricks, Director of Health Equity and Outreach, provided the Medicaid Unwinding Update from the health equity and outreach perspective. New developments include hiring additional call center representatives to provide enrollment assistance in the field as well as enrollment fair planning. There are over 500 Brokers and 130 Certified Application Counselors (CACs) to assist consumers throughout Connecticut with in-person enrollment.

A brief discussion followed regarding the linguistic make-up of the newly hired call center representatives as well as the possible feedback from consumers who had to manually update their applications. Mr. Michel stressed that at the end of the application process, consumers are asked to provide their feedback on the process and this data is being gathered and will be shared with the Committee when it becomes available.

Peter Hadler, Department of Social Services Deputy Commissioner, provided the Public Health Emergency (PHE) Unwinding Update. Mr. Hadler provided background information on four major areas, which included the continuous enrollment provision during the PHE, Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023, COVID-19 testing and treatment as well as the PHE Unwinding itself.

Mr. Hadler paid particular attention to the PHE Unwinding and noted that Connecticut has staggered renewals for individuals who had coverage extended pursuant to the continuous enrollment provision over a 12-month policy period running from April 2023 to March 2024. He presented the PHE Unwinding communications campaigns, which include a variety of elements with the aim of informing Connecticut residents about the process. Specific outreach efforts were also directed to community partners and State Agency Commissioners and all those undertakings are ongoing for the successful implementation of the PHE Unwinding.

Mr. Hadler emphasized that based on the preliminary data, the communications campaigns have been successful. Some integral components of the communications

campaigns are still being developed for implementation and information on the upcoming steps in those efforts was conveyed to the Committee.

Close cooperation between DSS and AHCT is very important with a combined communications campaign leveraging AHCT's marketing and outreach experience. This cooperation also includes exploring mass media, social media, community outreach events and direct communication options as well as highlighting unwinding information and HUSKY renewal pathways on the AHCT website.

Mr. Hadler reported on the DSS Readiness Status with three major areas which include staffing and training, business systems and communications. Sheldon Toubman asked which agency performs the ex-parte review for the Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) groups and sends correspondence to them. Mr. Hadler explained the standard process for this scenario and indicated that the correspondence is generated and processed through the DSS and AHCT's shared operations with Conduit.

Mr. Hadler and Morgan Leary summarized other circumstances, such as processes for HUSKY C consumers. A brief discussion followed regarding MAGI and Medicaid eligibility, efforts to reduce confusion with multiple Medicaid renewal dates, Medicaid Unwinding community engagements and developing the most effective messaging forms.

#### **E. Consumer Journey**

Tammy Hendricks, Director of Health Equity and Outreach, reviewed the typical customer journey. Ms. Hendricks noted that this Agenda item was created in response to the Committee's request. She told the Committee that the outreach team usually interacts with customers in three ways, which includes in-person and virtual monthly Healthy Chats, events and enrollment fairs.

*Sheldon Toubman left at 2:00 p.m.*

Ms. Hendricks added that once the consumer receives initial assistance and is enrolled, the Marketing Team becomes involved to keep them updated through various means of communication. Ms. Hendricks added that the data analytics team tracks the enrollment data.

Rebeca McLearn, Director of Technical Operations and Analytics noted that data collected is also sent back to the Marketing and Outreach Teams as well as DSS to assist with the efforts for consumer targeting purposes. Ms. McLearn stressed that the technical operations team has a limited amount of information that is shared. Various ways for the consumers to obtain information from AHCT were explained. Other topics of discussion also included providing consumers with reliable contact information and proper coordination efforts between AHCT and DSS on consumer-related issues.

*Kevin Galvin left at 2:06 p.m.*

Ms. Hendricks presented the consumer outreach statistics. She stressed that for the in-person events, AHCT held 78 sponsored events, had three regional planning meetings and 79 visits to community partners. In addition, information about presentations and upcoming fairs was conveyed.

## **F. Broker Academy Update**

Tammy Hendricks, Director of Health Equity and Outreach, provided a summary of the work for the second year of the Broker Academy. She stated that 38 students were accepted for the program and the application deadline has been extended. The steps to facilitate the process as well as other statistical data regarding the gender and ethnicities of the applicants was discussed.

## **G. Medicaid Unwinding Ad Campaign Materials Follow-Up**

Ezio Sabatino, Interim Director of Marketing, presented information about the messaging and the Committee feedback pertaining to the framing of the Medicaid Unwinding messaging and approach. He stressed that messaging should emphasize that everyone should have the protection of health insurance coverage and as Medicaid unwinds, it is imperative to make sure that people do not lose coverage. He remarked that this information should be stated clearly, directly, and calmly without causing panic or fear.

Mr. Sabatino thanked members of the Committee for submitting their comments and suggestions about messaging and noted that not all of them could be applied due to the strict timeline but will be considered in the future. He presented sample executions of the Medicaid Unwinding messaging through various means of communication. Detailed responses to the Committee's suggestions will be addressed separately in writing. Key facts about the messaging and its successful implementation were reviewed. Brief conversation followed about placing materials at convenience stores around Connecticut as well as distributing it to members of the Connecticut General Assembly and the Governor's Office.

## **H. Future Agenda Items**

James Michel, CEO, provided possible future agenda items including Medicaid Unwinding developments as well as any changes that could be made to the marketing and outreach materials. Mr. Michel encouraged members to contact the Chair if any specific agenda items should be considered.

## **I. Adjournment**

Chair Theodore Doolittle requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was made by Cecelia Woods and was seconded by Deborah Polun. Roll call vote was ordered. **Motion passed unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.