



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

## Draft Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 6, 2024  
Remote

**Members Present:** Sean King (Chair); Deborah Polun; Leslie Greer; Giselle Caroltta-McDonald; Gerard O’Sullivan (Subject Matter Expert – SME)

**Access Health CT (AHCT):** Susan Rich-Bye; Rebekah McLearn; Tammy Hendricks; Caroline Ruwet; Holly Zwick; Glenn Jurgen; Marcin Olechowski

### Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Sean King, Acting Healthcare Advocate, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Roll call for attendance was taken.

#### A. Public Comment

No public comment was submitted.

#### B. Review and Approval of Minutes

A motion was requested to approve the February 7, 2024, Health Equity, Outreach and Consumer Experience Advisory Committee Special Meeting Minutes. Motion was made by Deborah Polun and seconded by Sean King. Roll call vote was ordered. **Motion passed unanimously.**

#### C. Surveys

Caroline Ruwet, Director of Marketing, presented information on surveys. The Leaver Survey was conducted to understand more about the population leaving the HUSKY Health program as a result of Medicaid Unwinding – and to make recommendations about how to reduce gaps in coverage. The research methodology was reviewed, and key findings were outlined. Finding number one concluded that most consumers no longer eligible for HUSKY Health have other coverage, usually through a job or partner.

A smaller population moved out of state and was not asked to participate in the remainder of the survey questions since they would not be eligible to enroll in a Qualified Health Program through Access Health CT (AHCT) or other options within the state. Less than a third of the total population surveyed were uninsured. The second key finding indicated that messages from AHCT or other state agencies are effective at encouraging

consumers to look at healthcare coverage options. Cost was noted by consumers as the largest barrier for the uninsured.

Affordability, awareness and health literacy were cited as the most important recommendations. Brief discussion around the results of the Leaver Survey as well as any potential strategy that might have been utilized to educate consumers about their coverage options. Several efforts are currently underway to address health literacy to make sure that consumers can make informed decisions about their choices.

Ms. Ruwet continued with information about the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Survey. AHCT is in the process of conducting a qualitative and quantitative survey to better understand the impact of the ACA on the health and well-being of Connecticut residents. Findings will be presented at a later date.

#### **D. Broker Academy**

Tammy Hendricks, Director of Health Equity and Outreach, presented the Broker Academy Update. The Broker Academy is in its third year and the program continues to grow. Eighty students were accepted at the beginning of May. Additional details such as information related with program readiness were provided. The classes were held in two venues, at Capital Community College, where 53 students participated and at Norwalk Community College, where 23 students were enrolled. The in-person trainings were held from June 3 to June 5. A review day took place on June 6 and on June 7 students took the in-person State Exam. Some students opted to take the State Exam at home or at the testing location.

Demographical as well as geographical statistics of the class were examined. All students passed the class examination and at the time of this meeting, 23 students have passed the state exam. The mentorship program is scheduled to start later this month.

Sean King inquired about the broker support system for students who are yet to take the state exam. Ms. Hendricks emphasized that those students who have passed the exam and are in the mentorship program, are assisted by the Broker Support Team. Those who are yet to take the exam are assisted by the Health Equity and Outreach Team.

Brief conversation followed about efforts to motivate students who graduated from the Broker Academy last year who failed or did not take the state exam. The Health Equity and Outreach Team is continuously working on it.

#### **E. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals**

Susan Rich-Bye, Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs, provided an update on the new eligibility for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. Beginning November 1, 2024, consumers with DACA recipient status will now be able to enroll in a Qualified Health Plan (QHP). The AHCT online application will be ready and those who qualify will be able to enroll online, in person or over the phone. DACA recipients will only be able to enroll in a QHP and not in Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Ms. Hendricks outlined AHCT's DACA Outreach which included information on targeted areas, partnering with immigrant advocacy groups, presentations, and multilingual flyers as well as additional efforts during the Open Enrollment (OE) period.

#### **F. Community Outreach**

Ms. Hendricks outlined Community Outreach Efforts for the upcoming OE 12. AHCT will hold OE fairs in the following locations: Hartford, Stamford, Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury, New Britain, Norwalk, Meriden, Danbury and East Hartford. These are high need areas in the state. Presentations and meetings for consumers and community partners will also be taking place. Twenty-four enrollment fairs are currently planned; they will be typically held after work hours or on the weekends. Over six hundred and fifty certified brokers will be able to recommend a plan that best works for AHCT's consumers; 228 Certified Application Counselors (CACs) can also assist through the application process. The number of CACs has increased 25 percent in comparison to a previous OE.

The Annual Community Conference will be held in October in Waterbury. Details about the Conference will be shared with the Committee once they are finalized. Ms. Hendricks also provided statistical data on the Community Outreach events as well as information about the Expanded Navigator Program.

#### **G. Strategic Initiatives**

Ms. Hendricks provided information on the ongoing strategic initiatives at AHCT. AHCT aims to improve customer access to health insurance with three key projects: the "10 Clicks" project to streamline the application process and consumer experience; explore call center vendor options; and, through a new platform to make insurance more affordable for small businesses. These initiatives are essential for enhancing the customer experience and expanding coverage access. Brief discussion took place around the call center vendor selection process.

#### **H. Adjournment**

Chair Sean King requested a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Deborah Polun and seconded by Sean King. Roll call vote was taken. **Motion passed unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 11:52 a.m.