



Health Equity, Outreach and Consumer Experience Advisory Committee Special Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 23, 2025
Remote

Members Present: Sean King (Chair); Deborah Polun; Giselle Carlotta-McDonald; Sheldon Toubman; Gerard O'Sullivan (Subject Matter Expert – SME)

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

A. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Sean King, Acting Healthcare Advocate, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Roll call for attendance was taken. Chair noted that Giselle Carlotta-McDonald will be resigning from the Committee and the AHCT Board of Directors will be considering a replacement. Mr. King expressed his words of appreciation for Ms. Carlotta-McDonald's service on the Committee. Mr. King also noted that Ms. Holly Hackett stepped down from the Committee and thanked her for her input.

B. Public Comment

No public comment was submitted.

C. Review and Approval of Minutes

A motion was requested to approve the August 6, 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. Sheldon Toubman abstained. **Motion passed.**

D. Broker Academy Update

Tammy Hendricks, Director of Health Equity and Outreach, presented the Broker Academy Update. The Broker Academy is preparing for the fourth year of its operations. The recruitment has started with the applications opening on March 1, 2025. Applicants will have one month to apply. The Broker Academy will accept up to 100 students with 2 class locations. Program Readiness will start in May with class review days on June 7 and June 8. Classes will be held over the weekend. There will be additional time added to the mentorship.

E. Community Outreach Update

Ms. Hendricks provided the Community Outreach Update. AHCT hosted or attended 174 outreach events, 324 onsite visits to community partners and conducted 80 virtual presentations. Two hundred and twenty-eight Certified Application Counselors (CACs), a 25 percent increase since 2023, assisted consumers in enrolling; 46 organizations were also a part of it. AHCT also held 24 Enrollment Fairs. Deborah Polun expressed her words of appreciation to the team for making it easy for the health center staff to get certified every year. Ms. Hendricks praised the Community Health Centers for their crucial assistance in reaching consumers.

Sean King asked for the comparison between the OE 11 and OE 12 for the number of enrollees that came directly from the outreach events. This information was not readily available and will be provided at a later date.

F. Open Enrollment 2025 Update

Kathryn Hearn, Associate Director of the Enterprise Project Management Office, presented the 2025 Open Enrollment (OE) Update.

Ms. Hearn stated that OE 12 has yielded an approximate 88 percent retention rate from last OE for households enrolled in Qualified Health Plans (QHP). The call center received 194,000 calls, which is 27 percent less than during OE 11; the number of chats also decreased. Consumer self-service on the AHCT's enrollment portal increased.

AHCT projections for OE 12 were reviewed. A record number of people enrolled in a QHP – 151,151, of which 41,165 were in the Covered Connecticut program.

Covered Connecticut enrollment saw over a 50.3 percent increase when compared with OE 11. Acquisition of those not enrolled in a QHP as of 10/31/2024 decreased slightly by less than 4 percent.

Dental enrollment increased by over 26 percent and was over 17,756. James Michel, Chief Executive Officer, noted that a thorough analysis of the recently concluded OE will be undertaken. AHCT, with the approval of its Board of Directors, utilized reserve funds to provide marketing and outreach during the Medicaid Unwinding period to make sure that consumers did not have the gap in coverage. AHCT cooperated closely with the Department of Social Services (DSS) in this successful implementation. During the January Board of Directors meeting, the results of these efforts were outlined.

Sheldon Toubman expressed his concern about the potential cuts for HUSKY A Adult eligibility and inquired about whether AHCT was working with DSS to reach out to those individuals who might be affected by this change. Mr. Michel stated that AHCT and DSS work collaboratively; nearly all of these individuals are currently in the Temporary Medical Assistance (TMA), and they are being tracked. DSS and AHCT work to make sure that all of those who currently are in TMA are aware of their situation to encourage them to take action to maintain medical coverage. Susan Rich-Bye, Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs, added that consumers will have 90 days from the day their TMA ends to enroll in medical insurance coverage.

G. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Susan Rich-Bye, Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs, provided information on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Rule. The Final Rule was issued in 2024 updating Lawful Presence status for exchange programs. During the last OE, 117 DACA recipients enrolled in a QHP, 107 of them received Financial Assistance (FA). Outreach and marketing events pertaining to this new eligibility was summarized. A lawsuit challenging the final DACA Rule was discussed, including the preliminary injunction and stay that was granted applying only to the Plaintiff states. Connecticut is one of the Defendant states and the stay does not apply here at this time.

H. Strategic Initiatives

James Michel, Chief Executive Officer, summarized strategic initiatives that are being undertaken. The call center vendor has been selected – while the contract is being negotiated, the name will not be released until the contract is finalized. The Individual Health Coverage Reimbursement Arrangement (ICHRA) and Ten Clicks initiatives were briefly summarized. More updates will be provided as the Exchange implements them.

I. Future Agenda Items

Mr. Michel briefly described future agenda items which included the strategic initiatives and a plan to expand the health equity and outreach team to provide more community in-person assistance.

Sheldon Toubman raised the possibility of inviting a DSS representative to the next meeting of the Committee. Brief discussion also followed about communication efforts on the risk of the expiration of the enhanced FA for the QHP consumers in 2026. A full update on the communication strategy will be provided at the next meeting.

J. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was requested. Motion was made by Deborah Polun and was seconded by Sean King. Roll call vote was ordered. **Motion passed unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.