



MNsurance Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 17, 2019, 1 – 3 p.m.

355 Randolph Avenue, Suite 100, St. Paul, MN, Mississippi Conference Room

Participants in attendance: Senator Kathy Sheran – Chair, Peter Benner – Vice-Chair, Chuck Johnson (sitting in for Acting Commissioner Pam Wheelock), Suyapa Miranda, Phil Norrgard

Staff in attendance: Nate Clark, Kari Koob, Morgan Winters, Aaron Sinner

Meeting Topics

Welcome

Senator Kathy Sheran, Board Chair

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Senator Kathy Sheran, board chair.

Senator Sheran read MNsure’s purpose: The purpose of MNsure is to ensure that every Minnesota resident and small business, regardless of health status, can easily find, choose and purchase a health insurance product that they value and does not consume a disproportionate share of their income.

Senator Sheran welcomed Chuck Johnson, who was attending on behalf of Acting Commissioner Pam Wheelock.

Public comment

None.

Administrative items

Senator Kathy Sheran, Board Chair

Approve June 19 meeting minutes

MOTION: Peter Benner moved to approve the draft June 19, 2019 meeting minutes. Phil Norrgard seconded. All were in favor and the minutes were approved.

Health Industry Advisory Committee presentation on recommendations

Joel Ulland, HIAC chair, introduced himself and noted he was the associate vice president of Public Affairs for UCare. Joel [presented recommendations from the Health Industry Advisory](#)

[Committee](#) on several topics. He reported that the committee had recommended that MNsire update its mission statement, continue efforts to create a user-friendly website, and create tools for education related to health care literacy. He also reported on recommendations that MNsire support the efforts the Blue Ribbon Panel, particularly related to financial cliffs when transferring between public and private health coverage, and with modeling of any new health care proposals to understand their impact on these cliffs and people in different circumstances, not just model cases. Finally, Joel reported the committee had recommended MNsire implement a year-round marketing plan and work to coordinate outreach efforts targeted to underserved populations.

Senator Sheran thanked Joel and the advisory committee for sharing their recommendations and perspective. Regarding MNsire's website, she asked Joel if the committee had reviewed any other state-based exchange websites they found particularly effective. Joel reported that the committee had found Connecticut's website to move people more intuitively into the application and enrollment process, while the MNsire website has a lot more information and potential links from the landing page.

Peter asked if the committee had feedback about the eligibility application and the enrollment platform in addition to the public website. Joel reported the overall feedback from the committee was to keep things as simple as possible, understanding MNsire needs to strike a balance and collect enough information to accurately complete an enrollment.

Peter noted the Departments of Commerce and Health often have better expertise for modeling requests than MNsire staff, and that MNsire would likely work with other agencies to provide a shared answer to any modeling requests made to state government by the blue ribbon commission.

Peter noted he appreciated the suggestion that MNsire should increase its marketing efforts outside of open enrollment. He said the agency would need to explore this in light of whether it had the resources to do so while still meeting its open enrollment marketing commitments. He also noted the Department of Health's data suggest most of the uninsured and those who would benefit from marketing outside of open enrollment are eligible for public programs, and so MNsire would want to work with the Department of Human Services to ensure any efforts meet the needs of the public-program-eligible population.

Suyapa Miranda noted MNsire has had internal conversations about increasing its presence throughout the year. She suggested this could be done in conjunction with a push around health insurance literacy. Joel agreed that this connection would make sense.

Phil noted many assister organizations and grantees put in a lot of work during the period outside of open enrollment. He suggested this could be emphasized the next time MNsire conducts a round of grant funding, acknowledging many organizations are already doing a good job with this. Joel agreed any focus in this area should build on the successful work that already exists.

Peter noted that insurance companies (carriers) already grapple with issues of health literacy, with the individual market as well as with public programs populations. He suggested MNSure could look to those carriers for well-established phraseology and successful methods that are already proven to work, rather than reinventing the wheel. Joel agreed that collaborating would make sense, but also noted the importance of MNSure's independent voice and the extra trust it engendered with consumers.

Senator Sheran noted she appreciated the committee's suggestion to reexamine MNSure's mission statement. She commented she would like to review the mission statement in conjunction with MNSure's statutory charge and limitations to determine whether it should be updated.

Compliance Work Group update

Senator Sheran reported that the Compliance Work Group was recommending the [FY2020-2021 Privacy Program Strategic Plan](#) and the [FY2020-2021 Compliance Program Strategic Plan](#) for approval by the full board. She noted one change was that the plans would now cover a two-year rather than one-year period, reflecting MNSure's organizational maturity. She also noted these plans were not a new initiative, but reflected activities MNSure had been undertaking for several years.

Lindsey Millard, privacy manager and legal counsel, reported that this was the second iteration of the Privacy Program Strategic Plan. She noted MNSure had previously conducted the work, but in 2018 was elevated and presented to the MNSure board to illustrate MNSure's commitment to privacy.

Phil noted the document still contained some references to an annual approval process and asked if it should be changed to biannual. Lindsey agreed.

MOTION: Phil moved to approve the Privacy Program Strategic Plan for fiscal year 2020-2021 as written and presented. Suyapa seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

John Nyanjom, director of compliance and program integrity, reported that this was the fifth iteration of the Compliance Program Strategic Plan. He commented the document would also be updated to remove any references to an annual approval process and instead reference a biannual process.

Senator Sheran noted MNSure puts a great deal of effort into assessing its business practices for risk, meaning the risk that MNSure does not meet its obligations and mission. She noted it is important to identify these risks so MNSure can determine how to reduce it, whether through partnerships or resources or improved expertise. She noted it was important for her as a board member to understand the results of those risk assessments so that the board could equip the organization as needed to address those risks.

MOTION: Peter moved to approve the Compliance Program Strategic Plan for fiscal year 2020-2021 as written and presented. Suyapa seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

Fiscal Year 2020 budget

Kari Koob, CFO

Phil reported that the Finance Work Group had worked with Kari Koob, CFO, and staff to review the preliminary fiscal year 2020 budget the board had adopted in March and to evaluate changes for the final fiscal year 2020 budget. He noted the legislative session had added policy certainty, with reinsurance renewed for an additional two years and an \$8 million appropriation to MNsure to offset MNsure's losses caused by that program. He noted those losses occur over three fiscal years, so MNsure will budget prudently to ensure those resources last until the reinsurance program sunsets.

Kari presented updated [premium withhold revenue projections](#). She noted they had been adjusted to reflect the continuation of reinsurance. Additionally, to take a conservative budgeting approach, MNsure projected FY20 premiums lower than initial rate filings.

Next, Kari presented MNsure's [FY20 budget](#). She noted the FY19 column reflected estimated actual revenues and expenditures. Kari noted that going into FY20, MNsure has undertaken several cost-saving measures, including a move to new office space, not backfilling a number of vacant positions, and kicking off the resolution review team to mitigate appeals. At the same time, state payrolls and benefit costs are increasing.

Kari also noted that since the March board meeting, MNsure has gotten a better understanding of its ongoing METS costs, and with the GetInsured project prepared for go-live, had moved some funding from IT development to IT operations. Additionally, MNsure was working with MNIT to obtain a better understanding of those operations costs, which had previously been inflated due to the inclusion of bills for functionality and services benefitting solely public programs. However, those updates were not complete in time for preparation of the FY20 budget document.

MOTION: Phil moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget as presented and recommended for approval by the Finance Work Group. Suyapa seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

CEO report

Nate Clark, CEO

Nate Clark, CEO, thanked Kari and the Finance Work Group for their work putting together the FY20 budget.

Senator Sheran asked what it meant to move GetInsured spending to IT operations and out of IT development. Nate explained that once GetInsured functionality was no longer being built out but instead a part of the system, MNsure funding toward it would be considered maintenance and operations rather than development.

Nate reported that since November 1 and as of end of day July 14, MNsure had enrolled over 533,000 Minnesotans. This includes over 135,000 QHP sign-ups, over 270,000 Medical Assistance applicants and nearly 58,000 MinnesotaCare sign-ups.

Nate also reported that as of May 2019, Minnesotans had received \$115 million in tax credits available only through MNsure. Nate noted MNsure was on track to help Minnesotans save over \$225 million in 2019.

Next, Nate reported that the Department of Commerce released preliminary rate filings the previous week. Current on-exchange insurance carriers range from a 4.8% increase to a 1.35% decrease. Additionally, PreferredOne has filed preliminary on-exchange plans. While that is a business decision that could change when rates are finalized, MNsure will work with them to prepare for a successful open enrollment period.

Nate noted that MNsure remains confident in the progress made toward the GetInsured release. He also noted that Greg Poehling of MNIT would be reporting on the IT update and technical status, while Morgan Winters, senior director of business operations, would report on the benefits of the new system to MNsure and to Minnesotans.

Senator Sheran asked if the board would need to take any action related to a go/no-go decision on MNsure. Nate reported it was considered an operational decision within his delegated authority as CEO, and so the board's role was to give guidance on the matter.

IT and Executive Steering Committee update

Greg Poehling, MNIT

Greg presented slide 11 of the [slide deck](#).

Greg reported that the GetInsured project continues to progress for inclusion in the fall release on September 21. He noted the project had moved from red to yellow status and that MNsure had begun testing passive renewals functionality. MNsure is setting the priority for working on defects, and several defects had been submitted, tested and resolved. Greg noted MNIT quality assurance had completed integration testing and begun project regression testing, and that MNsure would be working with GetInsured for defect testing and fixes.

Greg reported the final go/no-go decision on the project would be made the following week, with a halt to contingency planning if a go decision was reached and the code merged with the rest of the fall release. He noted that if the decision were a no-go, MNIT would stand up the marketplace as it had done over the past few years, using Connecture infrastructure, while continuing work on GetInsured for a release sometime after open enrollment.

Greg reported MNIT had scheduled performance testing for early September, which would ensure that consumers would have the best experience possible when shopping through MNsure during open enrollment. MNIT would be testing processing times that consumers would experience.

Phil asked if this was the final go/no-go decision related to GetInsured. Greg noted that after the following week's decision, there would be a final go/no-go decision in September related to deployment of the full fall release.

Phil asked if it would be necessary to train MNsure assisters and partners on the new system. Morgan reported that MNsure had a high-level training plan mapped out and had already begun some training for carriers as well as brokers and navigators.

Phil asked if there were any resource savings as result of disengaging with Connecture. Greg noted those would be realized primarily on the business side, and that on the IT side, MNIT would need to maintain the Connecture infrastructure for an additional year to produce 1095-A forms before shutting off the old system. Nate noted there would be some savings in ongoing IT operations costs once Connecture was fully sunset.

Reported that the fall and winter releases had the same scope as previously reported and remained on track.

Senator Sheran asked if any of the defect work in either release would increase the accuracy of eligibility determinations. Morgan explained that these defects were primarily related to MNsure's ability to automatically process renewals for individuals who had come into the system via a special enrollment period. These fixes would allow the system to automatically ensure coverage would continue for the following year.

GetInsured update

Morgan Winters, Senior Director of Business Operations

Morgan reported that MNsure expected to realize several benefits via the implementation of the GetInsured shopping and enrollment platform, including reductions in call volume due to self-service functionality, streamlined operational processes and improvements to the overall consumer experience. He noted that streamlined operational processes would allow MNsure to become more operationally efficient and thus allow MNsure to reallocate staff to other areas, such as life event change processing.

Morgan reported that MNsure's biggest single area of work outside of answering phone calls was its manual enrollment process, which was used to enroll people initially, to update enrollments, to change plans, and to update carriers on changes. He noted MNsure currently processed about 70,000 manual enrollment transactions per year, taking 20,000 staff hours. The new GetInsured functionality would eliminate this manual work. Some casework might still be involved in some cases, but hours spent processing manual enrollments would go away.

Phil asked if MNsure had a projection for how much these additional resources would reduce the life event change processing backlog. Nate reported MNsure had not developed a reliable estimate on that front, but believed it would make a substantial difference.

Peter asked if the 70,000 manual enrollment transactions were all private plan enrollees. Morgan confirmed that they were.

Morgan reported that MNsure currently had a 10-day service level agreement with insurance carriers for transmitting transactions. With GetInsured, every transaction would be transmitted to carriers the day it occurs.

Morgan noted that currently, consumers must call their insurance carrier in addition to MNsure to report on a mailing address that is different from a physical address. With GetInsured, this issue will no longer be present. Additionally, MNsure will be launching a secure online inbox that will provide consumers with a larger amount of information in their dashboard.

Chuck asked if the secure online inbox would allow MNsure to send less paper mail and instead use electronic notices. Morgan noted that federal regulation requires hard copies of certain notices be mailed, and assisters encourage a hard copy mailing of certain other notices, but MNsure does have flexibility with several notice types as to whether to mail physically or only electronically.

Morgan reported the updated dashboard would make several items possible for consumers that previously required a phone call. These include a clear display of enrollment confirmation and enrollment history, online termination of coverage, online adjustment of a consumer's tax credit amount, and some improved ability for consumers to report account changes.

Phil asked if assisters would be able to help consumers with this new dashboard functionality. Morgan said they would, which underscored why MNsure would be putting extra efforts into training assisters on the new system in the fall.

Senator Sheran asked why it was important for consumers to be able to adjust their tax credit amount down from their maximum amount. Morgan noted that for people with variable income and not much confidence in their projected annual income, the ability to set the amount lower would allow them to anticipate an increase in income. He also noted this would only change the advanced amount of the tax credit, and that consumers would collect the full amount they were entitled to receive at tax time.

Morgan reported that additional improvements from the GetInsured release would include an improved agent-of-record transmission process that would send broker-agent-of-record documentation to carriers as part of the enrollment file, features that allow a MNsure caseworker to directly access a consumer's view within the system, and 1095-A process improvements.

Phil asked if consumers would have the same access to a consumer's view. Morgan explained that this access would be for MNsure caseworkers, but not for assisters, though other enhancements would address some of the most common issues assisters face in helping consumers from afar.

New business

Senator Kathy Sheran, Board Chair

Peter reported that the federal government had very recently announced changes to what high deductible health plans can cover as preventive services prior to reaching the deductible. He asked MNsure to have conversations with the Department of Commerce and with insurance carriers to see whether these regulatory changes could be incorporated for plan year 2020.

Nate said MNsure would have conversations with the Department of Commerce and with individual market carriers to determine whether any changes would be made in light of this recent guidance, given preliminary rates had already been filed.

Adjourn

Senator Sheran moved to adjourn. There were no objections, and the meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.