



Consumer and Small Employer Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

- > **date:** January 13, 2015
- > **building:** MNsure Office, 81 East 7th Street, Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55101
- > **time:** 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
- > **members in attendance:** Jin Lee Palen – Chair, John Freeman – Vice Chair, Abdimalik Ahmed, Angela Williams (via phone), Bentley Graves, Bob Robbins, Claudette Moran (via phone), David Hilden, Edward McDonald (via phone), Gladys Chuy (via phone), Hussein Sheikh, Jama Mohamod (via phone), Julia Johnson (via phone), Kathryn Duevel – Board Member; Aaron Sinner – Board and Federal Relations Policy Specialist, Debby Dill – Board and Federal Relations Coordinator
- > **members unable to attend:** Joan Carchedi, Mary Ellen Becker, Remi Douah, Valerie Jensen

topics

Call to Order

Jin Lee Palen, Committee Chair

The meeting was called to order at 1:11 p.m. by Jin Lee Palen, committee chair.

Committee Update: Approval of December Meeting Minutes

Jin Lee Palen, Committee Chair

Motion: David Hilden moved to approve the draft December meeting minutes. Bentley Graves seconded. All voted in favor, and the minutes were approved.

Board Update

Kathryn Duevel, Board Liaison

Kathryn Duevel said that a large portion of the meeting would be dedicated to the Market Development Workgroup with MNsure Board Chair Brian Beutner later in the meeting.

Kathryn gave a recap of the January 7 board meeting. The next board meeting will be January 28 instead of January 21 so that the Finance Work Group can adjust the three year financial plan based on the grant supplement received from CCIIO. Enrollments are going strong and on track. The 834 reporting has improved, as MNsure is sending the data in an alternative format to the plans.

There was some discussion about communication between consumers, plan providers, and MNsure. Kathryn stated that individuals who had applied for coverage and paid on time would be covered on January 1, 2015, even if they had not received an insurance card. Because of the deadline extension, many medical cards were not mailed out until the first or second week of January.

Staff Update

Aaron Sinner, Board and Federal Relations Policy Specialist

No updates.

Discussion of Dissent – Recommendation on Plan Affordability

Bentley Graves, Committee Member

Gladys Chuy voiced strong concerns about the fact the John Freeman and other members of the advisory committee spent many hours working on the recommendation, and then new members had the option of voting on it or to author a dissent. Jinny stated that she had been approached by another member asking about this. Jinny asked everyone how the committee felt they should approach this process.

David Hilden said that he does not see a problem with new members voting, but feels that it should be noted to the board how many members supported the dissent. This would clearly indicate to the board the position of the majority of advisory committee members.

After further discussion a motion was filed.

Motion: David Hilden moved that the committee move forward with the majority [QHP Affordability Recommendation](#) and the [dissenting opinion](#), including a vote total. Bentley Graves seconded. All voted in favor, and the motion was approved.

Jinny indicated the committee would have a discussion at the next meeting to determine a uniform policy on dissenting opinions.

Public Comment

Vicki Chouinard, a retired consumer, expressed her frustration with the MNsure website. She said that the website should more clearly confirm that an individual has made a purchase. She also expressed her frustration that she needed to notify BlueCross BlueShield seven days in advance to cancel her old policy.

The committee thanked Vicki for her comments and for making the time to attend the meeting.

Premium Rate Certification Process

Alyssa Von Ruden, Department of Commerce

Alyssa Von Ruden presented on the health insurance plan certification process. The primary role of Commerce is to examine the rates and forms associated with a health insurance product, and the Health Department examines networks. Reviews are done concurrently. The federal government has guidelines that each carrier must follow. Commerce's job is to be sure all federal requirements are met, as well as any requirements of state law. The plans decide on their premium rates using various formulas, and Commerce approves the rates and plans if they meet all requirements.

Committee members asked questions about MNsure setting its own requirements for what can be offered

on the exchange. Alyssa explained that MNSure can set requirements, but they do not affect plans offered outside of MNSure.

Brian Beutner, MNSure Board Chair, pointed out that MNSure can prescribe a rule governing plans sold on the exchange, but the rulemaking process is lengthy. Carriers are already working on plans to be sold on the exchange for next year, when open enrollment is proposed to begin October 1.

All thanked Alyssa for her time and expertise.

Market Development Work Group

Brian Beutner, MNSure Board Chair, Kathryn Duevel, MNSure Board Member & Committee Liaison

Kathryn introduced Brian to the advisory committee. Brian gave an overview of the creation of the Market Development Work Group which consists of himself, Kathryn Duevel and Thompson Aderinkomi. The work group was formed to examine what can be done long-term to achieve the broader objectives set forth in the MNSure enabling statute. The work group has conducted many meetings so far and will continue to do so into the first week of February.

Brian asked committee members to think about what MNSure can do to encourage the objectives of the statute.

Ideas and suggestions discussed by the committee included:

- Out-of-pocket costs can be prohibitive to the point where consumer education can't make a difference.
- The board could find a way to influence the benchmark plan—the second lowest-cost silver plan—which determines access to and the size of advanced premium tax credits. This could be done through more stringent requirements for silver plans only, or requirements that target only low premium plans.
- A committee member reported that Connecticut designated its silver standard plan as its lowest-cost silver plan.
- The board could study which consumers at which incomes purchase which plans and use this information to inform the extent to which consumers are purchasing plans based on premium affordability or based on expected overall costs.
- Many consumers treat their plans as catastrophic coverage. They need stronger education to inform them of the care that doesn't require a copay.
- Offering additional plans that include a small number of free doctor visits per year.
- Premium support from other sources, such as county and local governments, to help individuals afford plans at higher metal levels than they otherwise could.
- Take better advantage of healthcare homes.
- Sliding fees, with the state subsidizing procedures that are unaffordable to consumers, even with their insurance.
- Decoupling enrollment in SHOP from the small employer tax credits.
- Incorporating Essential Community Provider (ECP) provisions into commercial plans, and mandating more than just offering an ECP a contract.
- Raising MinnesotaCare and Medical Assistance income limits for individuals in the programs compared to individuals enrolling in programs, so that if an enrolled individual's income increases,

- he or she doesn't need to immediately leave the program.
- Adding a public program grace period, such as 6 months before coverage ends, after individuals' income increases.
 - Fixing the gap in coverage created when individuals' incomes increase and they leave Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare.
 - Prorating deductibles and maximum out-of-pocket expenses for individuals enrolling in coverage beginning later than January 1, including those leaving MinnesotaCare.
 - Increasing website functionality with improved plan comparison tools.

Jinny asked about the work group's timeline, because the advisory committee would like to have a formal recommendation to submit to the board. Brian informed the committee that after it finishes meeting with constituency groups, the Market Development Work Group would meet to compile a list of items to present to the board. They would like to do this at either the February or March board meeting.

Brian thanked everyone for their input.

Jinny asked the committee to start thinking about how to formally present recommendations to the board. Jinny then asked for volunteers to write up a summary on the topics they would like to present. She would like everyone to bring a few bullet points to next month's meeting to discuss.

Wrap-up and adjourn

[Jin Lee Palen, Committee Chair](#)

Bentley moved to adjourn. David seconded. There were no objections, and the meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.