

State of Connecticut

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Council on Medical Assistance Program Oversight

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Chairs: Sen. Terry Gerratana and Rep. Catherine Abercrombie

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, April 10, 2015

9:30 AM in Room 1E of the LOB

I. The meeting was called to order at 9:36 PM by the Chair, Representative Abercrombie.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and announced that Sen. Gerratana, the Co-Chair, would be late due to a Judiciary Meeting the evening before.

Introductions were made by Council Members and agency personnel.

II. Kate McEvoy of the Department of Social Services (DSS) introduced her colleges who would be giving a presentation on the Department's eligibility and enrollment; which included an update on ConneCT. The presentation consisted of three parts, including the past state of DSS, the current state and the future state. (See Attachment)

http://cga.ct.gov/med/council/2015/0410/20150410ATTACH_DSS%20Presentation%20.pdf

Rep. Abercrombie thanked DSS for their presentation, expressing her pleasure with the direction the Department is heading. She questioned the hiring of a consultant and what the status was.

Roderick Bremby, The Commissioner of DSS, explained the Department's dedication to always improving itself. He explained a conflict in Terracore that needed advisement. The Commissioner discussed the reduction in functionality and relationship to reduction in wait times.

Deb Polun, of CHCACT, requested more information on the Lifeline negotiations.

DSS explained how the program currently works and the programming that needs to be done moving forward.

Mary Alice Lee of CT Voices for Children offered a comment to DSS.

Commissioner Bremby expressed appreciation of the comment and added the DSS was working on being more personable with the people it serves.

Sylvia Kelly shared her pleasure with DSS's presentation.

Jane McNicol, present on behalf of Kristen Hatcher, asked several questions about document processing, Terracore and households served.

DSS responded that many documents sit in a Queue and processing can be as simple as verification. Though Terracore is only related to SNAP, benefit centers answer all calls. DSS does not have a set target of households, though the more served the better. The Commissioner added that they are just getting started.

Matthew Barrett of The CT Association of Health Care facilities asked a question about eligibility and reapplications.

DSS responded that they had specific people to handle reapplications and that while there was an increase in the beginning, things have leveled out.

Kathy Yacavone of SWCHC, asked if the Impact and Online rollouts were together or separate and for a better understanding of redetermination and reenrollment.

DSS explained that they hoped both would begin being implemented in 2016 and that Impact was there priority. Kristen Douty explained the reenrollment process and verification of eligibility.

Stephen Frayne of CHA asked a question pertaining to wait time and customer service.

DSS responded that Terracore was in the assessment phase and once completed would provide better information on processing and wait times.

Rev. Bonita Grubbs expressed pleasure that wait times had dropped but added they needed to drop more.

DSS added that Terracore's report would help to make improvements.

Jeffery Walter asked for a definition of timeliness and questioned process improvement of completed vs. not completed applications. He stressed the need for focus on online resources.

DSS explained the time frame established by the Federal Government and agreed with a focus on online applications. They added however, that some populations need phone or in person options and that Terracore will help the Department see where it needs improvements.

Rep. Srinivasan asked for clarification on the wait time slide of the presentation.

Rep. Johnson thanked DSS for their presentation and the information provided.

Mary Alice Lee offered a recommendation to DSS and Access Health.

Rep. Abercrombie requested a presentation from Access Health CT on enrollment.

Deb Polun agreed with Rep. Abercrombie and the existence of a disconnect between Access Health and DSS. She questioned staffing levels.

DSS responded that its current staffing level is around 215, though the number fluctuates. There are around 300 physical agents that can staff the benefit centers, but DSS is limited by space and contractual obligations. The ideal number of staff would be all 300 agents.

Kristin Douty of DSS, explained the process of Medicaid enrollment.

Discussion followed between Council Members, Xerox, DSS and Access Health CT as to issues facing information processing and auto-renewal. Steve MacKinnon of Xerox added that being accurate and vetting information prevents further issues in the future.

Jesse White-Frese asked, as a provider, how to best prepare people to deal with DSS as efficiently and effectively as possible.

DSS explained the necessary documentation to apply for Medical Assistance and distinguished between in-person, over the phone and online applications.

Mary Alice Lee questioned the information process and why Xerox had to do research.

Discussion followed between Council Members, Xerox, DSS and Access Health CT as to the accuracy of information and defects in the technical design of the processing system.

Rep. Abercrombie reiterated a request for a presentation from Access Health CT adding she would talk to Sen. Gerratana. She thanked the Council for their questions.

III. Deb Polun and Ellen Andrews, on behalf of the Complex Care Committee, offered the Committee's recommendations on the Dually Eligible Pilot Program. They explained that in the Governor's budget, funding for the program had been removed. The removal of such funding would halt progress and make past work wasteful. The program could lead to cost savings and better health care to those dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. They asked for a consensus of support from the council. (See Attachment)

<http://cga.ct.gov/med/mh-meetings.asp?sYear=2015>

Sen. Gerratana opened the floor to questions and comments.

Ellen Andrews added details about the funding of the program.

Matthew Barrett offered his opinion on the 3 day hospital stay requirement and how better coordination could lead to significant savings.

DSS explained that they are working with CMS on the impact of expenses.

Ellen Andrews added they believed the program could lead to massive savings. She explained that kit was not a done deal and that there were a lot of challenges ahead.

Jesse White-Frese requested clarification on the justification of the statement.

Mag Morelli offered her support of the recommendation, and expressed frustration with the Budget.

Stephen Frayne concurred and asked the committee give its support.

Sen. Gerratana added the recommendation seemed to have the full support of the council. She talked about the restoration and the budget.

Rep. Abercrombie added that Human Services was taking a significant hit in the Governor's budget and that the process was on going and difficult. She requested that members contact their State Legislators and express their concerns with the budget.

Sen. Gerratana stated a letter would be drafted and sent to legislative leadership on behalf of MAPOC, expressing the council's recommendation on the Dually Eligible Pilot Program.

IV. No Committee Updates were presented.

V. Kathy Yacavone offered a brief follow up on proposed eligibility cuts.

Sen. Gerratana and Rep. Abercrombie welcomed the new Council Clerk, Rich Eighme.

Kate McEvoy shared DSS's pleasure in the work and continuation of work the Department would do with the new Clerk.

Rep. Abercrombie shared the reported absentees of Council members.

The next meeting will be held on Friday, May 8, 2015 at 9:30 AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 AM.

Richard Eighme
Council Clerk

