

**Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC)
Onboarding Session
Friday, August 22, 2025, 1:00-2:30 p.m. via Teams
Meeting Minutes**

Medicaid staff in attendance:

- Lissa DiMauro, Associate Director, Medicaid Program Operations
- John Bonin, Medicaid Program Deputy Director
- Jerry Fingerut, MD, Medical Director
- Damaris Teixeira, Health Program Administrator, BAC and MAC Administrator

BAC members in attendance*:

- Ascendence Watson
- Alexander Kaplan
- Alexandr Grey
- Jenine Bressner
- Luisa Murillo
- Naiommy Baret
- Sabrina Calvert
- Cristina Amedeo

* Some members in attendance asked to keep their names private.

Welcome and Introductions	Lissa DiMauro, Associate Director, Medicaid Program Operations John Bonin, Medicaid Program Deputy Director Jerry Fingerut, MD, Medical Director Damaris Teixeira, Health Program Administrator, BAC and MAC Administrator

Housekeeping Details	<p>Lissa DiMauro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings will be recorded to facilitate note taking for meeting minutes. • BAC members will need to sign-in at the start of every meeting. • Names of BAC members who requested that their names not be included in public facing documents will be removed. • Confidentiality rules observed: what is said here, stays here. • Going forward materials will be made available to members before meetings when possible, and if not after the meetings. • Any questions should be sent to Damaris Teixeira at damaris.r.teixeira@ohhs.ri.gov.
BAC Member Introductions	<p>Members introduced themselves by sharing their names, where they are from, and answering two questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What brought you to the BAC? • What are your thoughts about what the BAC will be able to accomplish in the future? • Members introduced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ascendence Watson ○ Alexander Kaplan ○ Alexandr Grey ○ Jenine Bressner ○ Luisa Murillo ○ Naiommy Baret ○ Sabrina Calvert ○ Cristina Amedeo <p>* Some members in attendance asked to keep their names private.</p>
BAC and Medicaid Overview	<p>We received many applications for this council, 38 applications, and they were all very good. It was really difficult to make a choice. They all reflected our community in terms of diversity.</p>

Access Rule Information

[Access Final Rule](#) published by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requires states to operate a Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) and a Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC).

In Rhode Island, the MAC and the BAC are replacing the current Medicaid Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC) and the Medicaid Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC).

As mandated by the Access Final Rule two BAC members will need to represent the council at Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) meetings.

Lissa shared information contained in the [Rhode Island Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council \(BAC\) Guide](#).

Purpose and Role of the BAC

The BAC can advise RI Medicaid on issue about and opportunities for the program. BAC members can work with Medicaid staff in an advisory role to discuss a wide range of topics, as well as provide input about other ways Medicaid can improve the health of members. The BAC can advise on, among other things, the following:

- Additions and changes to services.
- Coordination of care.
- Access to services.
- Eligibility, enrollment, and renewal processes.
- Cultural awareness, language access, and health equity in the Medicaid program.

Structure, Operations, Expectations, and Responsibilities

Meetings

The BAC meets four times a year. Meetings are not required to be open to the public, unless directed by the BAC.

Attendance

Attendance is a requirement of BAC membership, unless excused, and is key for the council to conduct business.

Member Selection

Members are selected by the Medicaid Program Director and serve a two-year term.

Stipends

BAC members will get a \$75 stipend per meeting. These are considered taxable income need to be reported when filing taxes. **Note: Members who wish to receive this stipend need to submit a completed Form W-9 to Damaris Teixeira as soon as possible.**

This stipend may impact your eligibility for Medicaid and other means tested programs. Stipends are considered taxable income, and it is your responsibility to report all compensation when you file your taxes. In addition, BAC members are also responsible for determining if the stipend impacts their eligibility for Medicaid and other means tested programs.

You can review the [Federal Poverty Level \(FPL\) Guidelines and Eligibility Information webpage](#) for details. It will help you find out if this stipend would put your income over the amount used to determine your Medicaid eligibility or other benefits you may receive that are impacted by your income, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). You can also choose to not receive a stipend or to have the amount reduced.

Steps to follow to receive a stipend

You'll need to complete the following steps to allow Medicaid to process and issue your stipend:

1. Submit a Form W-9

This form includes your taxpayer identification number (usually your Social Security number).

- You can find the W-9 [online here](#).
- Once completed, return it to Damaris Teixeira.

2. Set Up Direct Deposit (Optional)

If you'd like your stipend to go directly into your checking or savings account, fill out the **State of Rhode Island Vendor ACH Enrollment Form**.

- This form is [online here](#).
- Follow the instructions on the form to submit it. Please note this form should not be sent to Damaris.

3. Sign in at Meetings

- Be sure to sign in at every BAC and/or MAC meeting you attend.

BAC Leadership and Representation at MAC

- BAC members can select one chairperson and two vice chairpersons through a majority vote. **Note: BAC members should be prepared to discuss this at the next meeting on September 22, 2025.**
- In addition, members of the BAC will represent the council at Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) meetings as follows:
 - From the period of July 9, 2025-July 9, 2026, 10% of the MAC membership will be BAC members. **For this period the BAC will have 2 representatives serve on the MAC. BAC members interested in this opportunity need to send an email to Damaris by September 2, 2025, sharing information about why they think they would a good fit for this role.**
 - From the period of July 10, 2026-July 10, 2027, 20% of the MAC membership will be BAC members.
 - And thereafter 25% of MAC members must come from the BAC.

The MAC is a group of up to 25 people who represent advocates, clinicians and administrators, community partners, and state, local or community-based organizations. The MAC also includes

	<p>representatives from other state agencies that serve Medicaid beneficiaries, as ex-officio, non-voting members. These include, the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH), the Department of Health (RIDOH), and Health Source RI.</p> <p>BAC Member Conduct and Norms Lissa shared information contained in the Rhode Island Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) Guide.</p> <p>Medicaid Overview Lissa shared information contained in the Rhode Island Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) Guide.</p>
<p>Questions and Discussion</p>	<p>Question Do DHS offices have computers that the public can use and/or is there anything on the website regarding use of free computers in the community?</p> <p>Response There is nothing on the website to direct people to publicly available computers. Public computers would be a concern since they are not secure and, if applying for benefits, the applicant must enter many personal and financial details. We would suggest that the individual can either contact HSRI and schedule a phone or in-person appointment, go onto the healthyrhode.ri.gov website, or complete a DHS 2 paper app.</p> <p>Question What advancements have been made as far as making the eligibility systems phone friendly?</p> <p>Response There is an app available on smart phones that allows people to apply online as well as submit documentation, check status, see notices, etc. Once someone has applied, they are provided access to their own customer portal.</p>

	<p>Question What percentage of the entire population are MAGI eligible?</p> <p>Response Approximately 85% of the Medicaid population of 304,000 individuals (August 2025) are MAGI eligible.</p> <p>Question With the online portal, sometimes it is confusing when you upload documents. Often, the system knocks you off and it is difficult to get back into your application.</p> <p>Response If an individual is having an issue with the online portal, they can contact HSRI for assistance at 1-855-840-4774.</p> <p>Question Will the BAC be involved in creating user friendly communication to Medicaid members?</p> <p>Response If this is a topic the committee chooses to work on, we will identify a means to connect with the team at the state who are involved with member communications..</p>
<p>Resources</p>	<p>Rhode Island Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) Guide RI BAC Guide 8.22.25.pdf Conflict of Interest Policy and Form Conflict of interest form BAC MAC 8.22.25.pdf Form W-9 Sub Form W-9 (Rev State of Rhode Island Vendor ACH Enrollment Form Microsoft Word - ACH Enrollment Form Revision3 May 2021 PK Reviewed</p>
<p>Action Items</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We're looking for two members to represent the BAC at Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) meetings. If you're interested, please send a separate email to damaris.r.teixeira@ohhs.ri.gov listing the reasons why you would like to take on this role, your expectations for the MAC, and

	<p>any relevant experience you think would be helpful for us to know about. The deadline to let us know is Tuesday, September 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let us know your top 3 topics or areas of interest you would like the BAC to focus on as a group during upcoming meetings. Send a separate email to damaris.r.teixeira@ohhs.ri.gov with your suggestions by Tuesday, September 9. The top 5 topics or areas of interest identified by the group will be shared at the next meeting. (All suggestions will also be shared.) • Be prepared to discuss the idea of selecting one BAC chair and/or two vice-chairs at the next BAC meeting. • Reminder: For those members interested in receiving the \$75 stipend for each meeting attended, please be sure to complete the Form W-9 process already described as soon as possible.
<p>Next Steps: Meeting Dates</p>	<p>Meeting Schedule: Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) 2025-2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday, September 22, 2025, 1-2:30 p.m. via Teams • Tuesday, December 16, 2025, 1-2:30 p.m. via Teams • Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 1-2:30 p.m. via Teams • Tuesday, June 16, 2026, 1-2:30 p.m. via Teams <p>Meeting invitations will be sent out soon.</p>