

Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) Charter

Name of Advisory Council and Authority

Rhode Island is required by federal law (42 CFR 431.12) to establish a Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) comprised of current and former Medicaid members, their families, and caregivers. This council shall meet on a quarterly basis and in advance of each Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) meeting to ensure BAC member preparation for each MAC meeting. BAC meetings are not required to be open to the public, unless directed by the BAC and if open to the public the date, location and time must be published at least 30 calendar days in advance of the meeting date. For open meetings, the agenda shall include time for public comment and/or disclosure of conflicts of interest. Ad hoc meetings can be scheduled as needed. Meetings can be held in person, virtual, or hybrid but at minimum include a telephone dial in option.

Mission/Purpose

The BAC will advise the State on their experience with the Medicaid program, and/or issues or concerns on policy development and administration of the Medicaid benefit. This shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- Additions and changes to services
- Coordination of care
- Quality of services
- Access to services
- Eligibility, enrollment, and renewal processes
- Member and provider communications by the Medicaid program and its contracted vendors such as Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs)
- Cultural competency, language access, health equity, and disparities and biases in the Medicaid program
- Other issues that impact health outcomes and delivery of medical care services in the Medicaid program.

Council Membership

This Council will be made up of no more than 10-15 members who reflect a diverse constituency of current and former Medicaid members, their families, and caregivers. The State Medicaid Program Director will select individuals to serve on the BAC. All selected members will serve a two-year term unless they resign or fail to meet attendance requirements. Members cannot serve consecutive terms. Council vacancies will be filled by the Medicaid Program Director's established selection process.

The BAC will have one chairperson and one vice chairperson who are elected by the council through a majority vote. This council will have the authority, with approval by the membership, to create sub-committee as needed.

BAC members will receive a stipend for each meeting attended. As well as reasonable accommodations to assist them in participating fully in the BAC. These can include language interpretation (including American Sign Language (ASL)), material translation, closed captioning, or other needs.

Structure and Operating Procedures

The BAC will establish by-laws to govern the structure and operations of the council.

A quorum is not needed for the BAC to meet and conduct business. The BAC will meet quarterly, and meetings will be held in convenient and accessible locations throughout the Rhode Island community with virtual and hybrid options. Written notices and reminders shall be sent to all members at least 30 calendar days in advance of the meeting via email and posted to the EOHHS Department's website.

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

Excused absence: An excused absence is that in which the EOHHS staff person received notification at least two (2) days in advance of the absence. Qualified excused absences shall be determined by the BAC and include reasons such as unexpected personal or family emergencies, planned travel, personal or family illness. Members who have more than two excused absences will receive a letter from the council to gage his or her continued membership and the response either in writing or verbally will be discussed at the next council meeting at which a decision will be made.

Unexcused absence: Council members must contact EOHHS when they will be absent. Failure to provide advance notice of an absence will be considered "unexcused." Members who have more than two unexcused absences in the same calendar year will be in jeopardy of being terminated from the council and have their continued membership voted on by the remaining council members. Members who miss a combined total of four meetings during their two-year term shall be dismissed from the council.

Responsibilities and Expectations

The BAC is responsible for the following:

- Advising EOHHS on issues brought forth by the Medicaid Program Director.
- Soliciting input from other community members and consumers.
- Monitoring and providing feedback on access, quality, and equity of health and social services.

- Informing and providing guidance on the Medicaid Quality Strategy and quality related initiatives and programs.
- Reviewing and providing input on issues raised through grievances and appeals and other ombudsman reports.
- Supporting the promotion of accountability and transparency and development of public education and outreach campaigns.

Stipend Reporting Responsibilities

Due to the stipend being considered taxable income, individual BAC members are responsible for reporting that income when filing their taxes. In addition, BAC members are also responsible for determining if the stipend impacts their eligibility for Medicaid and other means tested programs.

Recommendations can be recorded and made to EOHHS/Medicaid via meeting minutes and/or reports.

Staffing

EOHHS/Medicaid will staff the BAC and assist the council with all planning and preparation including agenda development and posting of meeting minutes, and communication to council members at least 30 calendar days in advance of the scheduled meeting.

Resources

Internal staff resources include the following:

Executive Sponsor: Lissa DiMauro, Associate Director, Medicaid Operations

Staff Support: Damaris Teixeira, Health Program Administrator

Community Agreement and Norms

These are developed and agreed to by members of the BAC.