

**Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC)
Quarter 1 Meeting
Tuesday, December 16, 2025, 1-2:30 p.m., via Teams
Meeting Minutes**

Medicaid and State staff in attendance:

- Lissa DiMauro, Associate Director, Medicaid Program Operations
- Jerry Fingerut, MD, Medical Director, Medicaid
- Kim Brito, Director, Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Rose Leandre, Associate Director DHS Medical Services, Medicaid & LTSS Programs Eligibility & Operations
- Debbie Morales, Assistant Director, Medicaid Program Administration
- Damaris Teixeira, Health Program Administrator, BAC and MAC Administrator
- Stephanie Menders, EOHHS Chief Public Affairs Officer

BAC members in attendance*:

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

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

<p>Welcome and Introductions</p>	<p>Cristina Amedeo, BAC Chair Naiommy Baret, BAC Vice-Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting chairs welcomed members and introduced the agenda. • Members were asked to reflect on one word that brought them joy in 2025. Members shared words such as, family, community, kindness, resilience, and hope.
<p>Housekeeping Details BAC Meeting Conduct and Norms Conflict of Interest Disclosure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminder about housekeeping needs for BAC meetings to run effectively. • BAC member conduct and norms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uphold confidentiality ○ All voices need to be heard. Step up, and step back. ○ Disagree without being disagreeable ○ Listen to understand ○ Be present at BAC meetings and participate ○ Stay focused and follow-up ○ Disclose any potential conflicts of interest • Any questions should be sent to Damaris Teixeira at damaris.r.teixeira@ohhs.ri.gov.
<p>Approval of Meeting Minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes from the September 22, 2025, meeting minutes were reviewed. • A motion to approve was made and seconded. • No objections were raised. • Outcome: Minutes were approved.
<p>New Business Process of Amending BAC Bylaws BAC Post-Meeting Survey Annual MAC Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members were reminded of BAC bylaws and that they may be amended through a formal vote of the BAC. Members can submit suggestions to amend the bylaws to Damaris Teixeira on an ongoing basis. • A new BAC Post-Meeting Survey will be sent to members after each meeting starting on December 16, 2025. The goal of the surveys is to collect member feedback to help the State improve the BAC in the future.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members were reminded of reporting requirements. An annual report is due July 9, 2026, the report must include a summary of the BAC's work and outcomes in four areas: activities, topics covered, recommendations, and the State's responses to those recommendations.
<p>Process for BAC to Work on Selected Top Topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On November 25, 2025, BAC chairs sent out a follow-up survey requesting they prioritize topics from a list of 15 (previously selected by BAC). Six (6) members responded out of 14. The top priority areas identified were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve communication with members. Simplify eligibility and access. Promote preventive care and service utilization. After a brief discussion, members shared lived experiences and systemic challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty accessing services via call centers and portals. Lack of case management and long-term service support. Confusion and frustration over unclear benefit notices. Difficulty finding providers who accept Medicaid. Barriers due to disability, technology, or language limitations. Inconsistent information received from state staff. Suggestions made by members included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated caseworkers for long-term care participants. Simplified notices and improved communication materials. Short videos and multi-language educational materials. Centralized and easily navigable directory of providers. Transparency in what services and medications are covered. Medicaid and DHS staff acknowledged systemic issues and outlined steps in progress. Additionally, they identified opportunities where BAC members could assist:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DHS will be testing a redesigned member benefit decision notice (BDN), it is expected in early 2026. One of the goals is to create a simplified, user-friendly first page explaining key information. ○ DHS pointed to existing documents (e.g., Best Way to Reach Us, What Happens Next, and the Application Receipt Letter (LTSS focused)) and asked BAC members to review them to provide feedback. ○ Cristina Amedeo also pointed to an Apply for DHS Services video available online, and asked members to review it and provide feedback. Apply for DHS Benefits RI Department of Human Services ○ These resources were sent to members in an email on December 18, 2025 with a request for feedback due to Damaris Teixeira on Friday, January 9, 2026. (A reminder email was sent to members on January 5, 2026.)
<p>Discussion of Potential Subcommittees and Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The council agreed that meaningful progress requires focused work between quarterly meetings. To that end, BAC chairs Cristina Amedeo and Naiommy Baret proposed forming targeted subcommittees to develop recommendations aligned with the top priorities identified. Potential subcommittees (names are not final): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication & Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on user-friendly and easy to understand communications to ensure members have what they need. 2. Access & Navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on strategies to simplify eligibility and processes by finding ways to improve access to the portal and website. 3. Preventive Care & Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on how to help members understand and use preventive care, assist members in finding Medicaid enrolled providers, and clarify services covered.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members will be invited to indicate which subcommittee they would like to be a part of after the New Year. • Subcommittees to meet independently between quarterly meetings and present findings to the full group. Stipends are not available for subcommittee, off-cycle, meetings. Subcommittee members need to report all discussions, actions, and suggestions brought forward to the BAC. • A tracking system will be established to monitor topics, recommendations, and agency responses.
<p>Action Items and Next Steps</p>	<p>Immediate Action Item</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share BAC Post-Meeting Survey link to members to gather feedback on this meeting. <p>Next</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the following documents with BAC for review and feedback by Friday, January 9, 2026: • Best Ways to Reach Us – a DHS customer resource guide that outlines the best ways to complete actions, answers general questions, and provides a list of community partners who can assist. • What Happens Next – a DHS resource that explains what happens after individuals apply for benefits. • Application Receipt Letter – a DHS letter sent to individuals after they apply for Medicaid Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS). • Apply for DHS Services Video – a DHS video that explains how to navigate the application process through the Customer Portal. <p>After New Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaris will distribute to BAC members a follow-up communication outlining the proposed subcommittees, as well as collect member interest via survey or email for subcommittee participation. • BAC chairs and Medicaid staff will establish subcommittees based on survey results and set meeting schedules, meetings should begin prior to the next quarterly meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 24, 2026. • Follow-up in Spring 2026 with DHS agency which will be testing a redesigned member benefit decision notice (BDN). One of the goals is to create a simplified, user-friendly first page explaining key information. Determine if BAC members can review it when ready and provide feedback.

Future Meeting Dates	Meeting Schedule: Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) 2025-2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 1-2:30 p.m. via Teams• Tuesday, June 16, 2026, 1-2:30 p.m. via Teams
Adjournment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.