

Meeting Summary for BHPOC Zoom Meeting

Oct 08, 2025 01:55 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) ID: 974 0475 0139

Quick recap

The meeting began with introductions and logistics, including updates on council members and technical arrangements for interpretation and recording. The main discussion focused on the impact of federal policy changes on healthcare services, particularly regarding Medicaid and Medicare programs, with detailed presentations on demographic challenges and legislative updates. The conversation ended with updates on various community health services, including dental care access at FQHCs and upcoming legislative initiatives, with commitments made for future presentations and discussions with commissioners.

Next steps

- [Co-Chair Terri DiPietro to send invitations to DSS and DDS commissioners for upcoming meetings.](#)
- [Terri to reach out to Commissioner Sheff to invite him to either the December or January meeting.](#)
- [Fatmata Williams to discuss internally with partners about the ECC telehealth first visit requirement and report back.](#)
- [Fatmata to explore options for batch submission of ECC data to reduce administrative burden and report back.](#)
- [Fatmata to check with the Dental ASO about potential issues impacting dental care at FQHCs.](#)
- [DCF and Dr. Springer to consider presenting on the Crisis Stabilization Programs in spring after CHR's program is operational.](#)
- [Kate Parker-Reilly to review data on dental care concerns from members and report back.](#)

Summary

Meeting Updates and Language Settings

The meeting began with introductions and updates, including introduction of new council members like Hector and Terra Vines. Spanish translation was available, and attendees were reminded to select their preferred language. The meeting started at 2:03 pm.

AI Usage and Commissioner Updates

The meeting began with a discussion about AI usage, where David Kaplan clarified that only Zoom's AI should be used for meeting minutes, and Terri confirmed she would not use any AI for notetaking. The group welcomed Commissioner Navarretta, who was scheduled to speak about her department's vision and challenges, with plans to hear from other commissioners in future meetings. Terri announced that the meeting recordings would be available on the website after the meeting.

HR1's Impact on Medicaid and Medicare

Commissioner Nancy Navarretta presented on the potential impacts of Public Law 119-21, also known as HR1, on DEMAS, focusing on changes to Medicaid and Medicare programs that could increase the number of uninsured and underinsured individuals. She outlined key provisions likely to result in greater churn, particularly among the adult expansion population, and discussed recent federal actions and executive orders that have affected DEMAS clients. The

Commissioner assured that the state is taking legal action where necessary to protect access to care and is closely monitoring the federal government shutdown, with contingency plans in place to maintain operations and services.

Policy Changes Impact on Contractors

The Commissioner discussed the challenges and uncertainties faced by contractors and beneficiaries due to recent policy changes, emphasizing the need for clear communication and support. Fatmata Williams (DSS) clarified that individuals with severe mental illness and substance use disorders are exempt from community engagement requirements and outlined efforts to support vulnerable populations through outreach and risk stratification. Janine Sullivan-Wiley raised concerns about the impact of increased paperwork on direct care funding and highlighted the vulnerability of young people with mental health issues. The Commissioner and Fatmata assured that these concerns are being addressed, with ongoing efforts to prevent individuals from falling through the cracks. Mike inquired about potential federal funding losses, but the Commissioner could not provide estimates due to the evolving nature of the situation.

State Collaboration and Information Sharing

Commissioner Navarretta discussed the importance of coordination between state departments, highlighting Connecticut's strengths in communication and collaboration, especially during challenging fiscal times. She mentioned belonging to national organizations that facilitate information sharing with other states. Terri and DCF Susan Sullivan expressed appreciation for Nancy's presentation and emphasized the value of collaboration among state agencies, providers, and the governor's office in addressing ongoing challenges. Both Commissioners acknowledged the support of the Council and expressed willingness to work together to address issues as they arise.

DDS and Legislative Updates Meeting

Co-Chair Terri DiPietro led a meeting where Tammy Venenga reported on DDS activities, including ongoing RFPs for children's step-down units and behavioral health initiatives, with Terri noting she would reach out to Commissioner Sheff to speak at a future meeting. Fatmata presented updates on several legislative bills passed in 2025, including changes to the Katie Beckett program lowering the maximum age to 18, a planned autism needs assessment with federal funding, Medicaid coverage for gene therapies to treat sickle cell disease, and participation in various work groups studying emergency preparedness, Alzheimer's/dementia services, and homelessness prevention.

Healthcare Initiatives and Project Updates

The meeting covered several key updates and discussions. Fatmata confirmed that the sickle cell gene therapy project is progressing, with no current signs of being derailed, despite federal policy uncertainties. Rob Haswell (DMHAS) highlighted two training initiatives: the adoption of ASAM 4 criteria by 2027 and a planned webinar series for 2026 focusing on complex co-occurring substance use and mental health needs. He advised providers to wait before making EHR changes for ASAM 4, as more clarity is expected in early 2026. Hector Glynn inquired about the CCBHC, and Rob provided an update on its progress, including ongoing recruitment for working groups and plans to submit a no-cost extension application. Dr. Stephney Springer (DCF) shared that a second subacute crisis stabilization program for youth is expected to open in December, and Terri suggested a future presentation on the Urgent Care Centers' success. Brian Delude (CSSD) announced an upcoming bid opportunity for the Advanced Supervision Intervention and Support Team model, which provides clinical support to clients with moderate mental health issues.

Grants, Funding, and Committee Updates

Bryan Klimkiewicz (CTSDE) reported that IDA and special education funding was received as expected, with 25% of the SEED grant distributed to districts in October. He outlined new grant opportunities, including behavioral health support services for students with IEPs and trauma backgrounds, and discussed requirements for out-of-district placements and functional behavior assessments. Steve Girelli announced his departure as chair of the Child and Adolescent Committee, with Hector Glynn set to take over. Fatmata provided updates on UCC funding and efforts to maximize billing within the state plan. The group discussed concerns about the requirement for in-person initial assessments for Enhanced Care Clinics, with Fatmata noting that this policy may be revisited.

FQHC Dental Services Under Threat

The meeting discussed updates on various community health services, focusing on the impact of federal changes on FQHCs. Fatmata mentioned a federal rule affecting care for non-citizens, while Sabrina Trocchi explained that dental services at FQHCs have faced financial challenges, leading some centers to reduce or eliminate services. She also clarified that Connecticut continues to provide care to all individuals without requiring citizenship documentation, pending the outcome of legal challenges in other states.

Dental Care Access Concerns

The meeting focused on concerns about access to dental care, particularly at federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), where Kate Parker-Reilly reported receiving many calls from members seeking reassurance about care continuity. Janine Sullivan-Wiley expressed hope that the state would not return to a situation where people could only access dental care through UCONN Health Center, which would create transportation and access challenges (See below to contact the CT Dental Health Partnership). Terri committed to inviting Commissioners Barton Reeves and Sheff to a future meeting, with Fatmata requesting early notice to hold their calendars.

Maureen O'Neill-Davis announced that Family Forward Advocacy is working with the Children's Committee on a restoration of parental rights bill for the 26th legislative session, aimed at addressing the issue of older youth remaining in foster care.

Kate Parker-Reilly (CT Dental Health Partnership)

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