

Meeting Summary for the July 11, 2025 MAPOC (Full Council) Zoom Meeting

Quick recap

The meeting focused on discussing the impact of new federal legislation HR1 on Medicaid and SNAP programs, with presentations and analysis from the Department of Social Services on potential changes to benefits, work requirements, and financial impacts. Various concerns were raised about the effects on vulnerable populations, administrative challenges, and the need for ongoing legislative involvement and communication strategies. The conversation ended with updates on recent legislative activities, subcommittee reports, and upcoming meetings, including discussions on healthcare disparities, quality improvement, and Medicaid eligibility guidelines.

Next steps

- DSS Team: Develop cost estimates for technology upgrades and additional staffing needed to implement work requirements and share with OPM
- DSS Team: Create detailed timeline and implementation plan for educating the public about Husky/Medicaid changes, including town halls and webinar series
- DSS Team: Meet with Children's Hospital in next 2 weeks to discuss impact of Medicaid cuts on their funding
- DSS Team: Draft and circulate petition letter to HHS Secretary regarding bipartisan Drug Task Force recommendations by next week
- DSS Team: Issue Provider Bulletin on Medicaid coverage for breast and breast prosthesis in the next few weeks
- DSS Team: Update the MedicaidMattersCT.org campaign to more clearly communicate that HUSKY is Medicaid: MedicaidMattersCT.org
- DSS Team: Prepare rate increase implementation plan for FY2026 and FY2027 following rate study roadmap
- DSS Team: Continue development of quality metrics program payment model for nursing home facilities
- DSS Team: Begin user journey mapping next week to identify pain points in work requirements implementation process
- DSS Team: Continue discussions with Georgia and Kentucky to understand complexity of work requirements implementation
- DSS Team: Collect and analyze data on use of GLP-1 drugs for January 15, 2026 deadline
- Christine Weston: Target hearing for late fall to amend Katie Beckett waiver

Summary

HR1 Medicaid Impact Analysis

The meeting begins with introductions and housekeeping matters. Quad-Chair Representative Gilchrist announces that MAPOC is now quad-chaired by the co-chairs of the Human Services and Public Health Committees. The main focus of the meeting is to discuss the new federal legislation (HR1) and its impact on the Medicaid program. Commissioner Andrea Barton Reeves from the Department of Social Services introduces her team, and Deputy Commissioner Peter Hadler begins a presentation on the agency's preliminary analysis of HR1, emphasizing that the information is new and they may not have answers to all questions yet.

SNAP and Medicaid Program Changes

Peter provided an overview of significant changes to the SNAP and Medicaid programs under the new federal law, highlighting key provisions such as new cost-sharing structures, stricter work requirements, and reduced benefits for legal immigrants. He detailed the potential financial impacts on the state, including increased administrative costs and reduced Federal funding, and discussed the challenges of implementing work requirements. Peter also explained upcoming changes to the provider tax and the Covered Connecticut program, emphasizing the need for further analysis and federal guidance on these provisions.

Medicaid and SNAP Policy Changes

Peter outlines ongoing collaboration with various state agencies on communication plans for Medicaid members and SNAP recipients regarding upcoming changes. He emphasizes the need for support from stakeholders as they implement numerous changes in the coming years. Rep. Jillian Gilchrest expresses concern about the impact on vulnerable populations like refugees, asylum seekers, and victims of trafficking. The discussion then focuses on administrative changes, with Commissioner Andrea Barton Reeves confirming that work on implementing new requirements will begin soon to meet deadlines and avoid potential penalties. Rep. Gilchrest requests ongoing involvement of the legislature in these discussions and asks for a breakdown of administrative costs. The conversation also touches on the impact on family planning services and SNAP error rates.

Medicaid and SNAP Compliance Strategies

Commissioner Barton Reeves discusses the impact of a new bill on Medicaid and SNAP benefits. She explains that while states recognize the devastating effects on vulnerable populations, they are not considering declaring states of emergency. Instead, states are focusing on creative compliance strategies and early communication to minimize the impact. Andrea emphasizes the importance of starting communication efforts immediately. She also mentions that while she doesn't have exact figures for the cost of continuing services, she cautions against using state resources to fill a permanent gap. She notes ongoing discussions about supporting rural and children's hospitals in

light of potential Medicaid cuts. Lastly, she mentions a public education campaign to clarify that Husky is part of Medicaid.

Medicaid Bill Implementation Planning

The discussion focuses on the fiscal and operational impacts of a new bill affecting Medicaid. Andrea explains that the Department of Social Services (DSS) is working with the Office of Policy and Management to determine immediate and long-term fiscal needs, including technology upgrades and staffing. She outlines plans to improve communication with Medicaid members, including upgrading the call system, conducting town halls, and launching an outreach campaign. Quad-Chair Senator Matt Lesser raises concerns about increased demand on DSS services and suggests increasing call center staffing. The Commissioner agrees that more support will be needed and mentions that DSS is starting to map out the user journey to identify potential issues in implementing the new requirements.

HHS Directive on Alien Benefits

Suzanne Lagarde informs the group about a new directive from HHS instructing various agencies, including federally qualified health centers, to stop providing federal benefits to certain non-legal aliens. This directive puts federal funding at risk for organizations that continue to provide care to these individuals. Representative Gilchrest seeks clarification on which groups are affected, and Suzanne explains that it's based on a 1996 law with exemptions now being rescinded. The group discusses the potential impact and agrees to share the document with the executive committee for further review.

Medicaid and Husky Program Challenges

The meeting focused on concerns about Medicaid and Husky program changes, including audits and work requirements. Rep. Susan Johnson raised questions about federal audit practices, while Sheldon Toubman expressed optimism that some provisions might be reversed after the midterms. The group discussed challenges with the call center system, with Sheldon noting a 49% drop-off rate and emphasizing the need for additional resources. Kelly highlighted the importance of clear communication about HUSKY and Medicaid benefits, and shared insights from her work educating the public about these programs. The meeting also included a tribute to Beresford Wilson, a long-time advocate for behavioral health who passed away on July 4th.

Medicaid Legislation and Budget Impacts

The discussion covers several topics related to Medicaid and the impact of recent federal legislation. Mark Schaefer asks about emergency Medicaid restrictions and retroactive eligibility. Commissioner Barton Reeves mentions attending an AI conference to explore technology for reducing SNAP error rates. Peter addresses emergency Medicaid, noting no immediate impacts but uncertainty about retroactive eligibility. Quad-Chair Senator Anwar expresses concern about potential Medicaid rate

cuts and the human impact of the legislation. The Commissioner reassures that the Governor's budget investments are not at risk and describes challenges in communicating with federal agencies due to staff reductions. The conversation concludes with expressions of appreciation for DSS's commitment to serving Connecticut residents despite difficult circumstances.

Medicaid Initiatives and Budget Updates

Bill Halsey provides an update on recent legislative activities and Medicaid-related initiatives. He discusses several bills that have passed, including the Katy Beckett Work group, Medicaid coverage for sickle cell, and autism and intellectual disability services. Bill also highlights budget allocations for rate increases and program expansions. He demonstrates how to access the Department of Social Services website for information on State plan amendments and waiver activities, emphasizing the department's commitment to transparency and accessibility of information.

Health Subcommittee Updates and Agenda

The committee discusses various updates and reports from subcommittees. The Women and Children's Health Subcommittee announces upcoming meetings, including a presentation on racial and ethnic disparities in hospital readmissions after delivery. The Care Management Subcommittee reports on recent discussions about PCMH updates and quality improvement activities. The Complex Care Subcommittee outlines an ambitious agenda for their July 17th meeting, including topics like Medicaid eligibility guidelines, asset limits, and call center improvements. The Quality Access Subcommittee has not met recently. The next full committee meeting is scheduled for September 12th at 1 PM.

<https://www.hhs.gov/press-room/prwora-hhs-bans-illegal-aliens-accessing-taxpayer-funded-programs.html>

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/prwora-notice.pdf>

Quick link to the backgrounder on the DSS website: https://portal.ct.gov/dss/knowledge-base/articles/general-information/federal-updates-hr1?language=en_US