

# January 9, 2026 MAPOC (Full Council) Zoom Meeting

## Meeting summary

### Quick recap

The MAPOC committee held a joint meeting to discuss the Substance Use Disorder 1115 demonstration waiver renewal package, with DSS presenting data and updates on the waiver's implementation and impact. Les shared call center statistics showing improvements in wait times and abandonment rates, while Commissioner Barton Reeves and Dan Giacomi discussed advocacy efforts in Washington D.C. regarding SNAP program changes. The committee received updates on various committee activities, including the Women and Children's Health Committee's upcoming presentations on HUSKY Limited Family Planning benefits and reproductive health education, and the Care Management Committee's discussion of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) and PCMH Plus program changes. The conversation ended with public comments on the waiver renewal, including Sheldon Toubman's explanation of Medicaid policy regarding institutionalization and justice-involved components.

### Next steps

- [DSS/Mercer staff: Record and document all public comments from today's meeting in the official meeting minutes and include responses in the 1115 SUD demonstration waiver renewal submission to CMS.](#)
- [MAPOC members and public: Submit written comments on the SUD demonstration waiver renewal to \[Alexis.Mohamed@ct.gov\]\(mailto:Alexis.Mohamed@ct.gov\) by January 17th.](#)
- [DSS: Continue to engage with CMS on a monthly basis to respond to questions and provide updates regarding the justice-involved demonstration waiver application.](#)
- [Les/Lorianne \(DSS\): Update and restore the public dashboard with current call center data, including call volumes, wait times, abandonment rates, and \(once workforce is stabilized\) staffing levels for both state employees and Tier 1 contractor, by the end of January.](#)
- [DSS: Present the medical frailty claims data analysis at the next Care Management Committee meeting after leadership review is complete.](#)
- [Commissioner Barton Reeves and Dan Giacomi: Share with MAPOC the specific points being advocated for at the National Governors Association \(e.g., hold harmless for SNAP error rate, timeline delay\) so MAPOC members can support advocacy efforts.](#)
- [Rep. Johnson/Complex Care Committee: Continue outreach to hospital discharge planning committee chairs and work to include hospital discharge planning issues on the next Complex Care Committee agenda.](#)

- [Rep. Comey/Rep. Dathan: Continue offline discussions regarding the PCMH Plus program, including potential cost recovery and future of quality management, and update the committee as appropriate.](#)
- [Rep. Anne Hughes/Complex Care Committee: Finalize and distribute the agenda for the January 15th meeting by Monday.](#)
- [Alexis Mohammed: Share email address for public comment submission both in chat and verbally during the hearing \(completed during meeting but noted as an action item from transcript context\).](#)

## **Summary**

### **Substance Use Disorder Waiver Renewal**

The first MAPOC meeting of 2026 was convened to discuss the Substance Use Disorder 1115 demonstration waiver renewal package. Bill Halsey (DSS) provided context on the waiver, explaining that it allows for federal reimbursement of residential substance use disorder treatment programs, which previously relied on state funding. Alexis Muhammad from the Department of Social Services highlighted the benefits of the demonstration waiver, including improved access and quality of care for Medicaid members. The meeting included a presentation by Mercer, the consultants on the waiver, who would walk through the SUD renewal slide deck.

### **Connecticut Substance Use Waiver Renewal**

The meeting focused on the renewal of Connecticut's substance use demonstration waiver, which aims to improve substance use treatment for individuals in the state. Brenda presented key aspects of the waiver, including its goals, eligibility criteria, and the adoption of the ASAM 4th edition. Mercer, the independent evaluator, highlighted challenges such as provider recruitment and care coordination issues, while also noting a statistically significant reduction in overdose deaths. Recommendations were made to address these challenges, including increasing provider capacity and improving care transitions. The meeting also covered the justice-involved waiver, which is part of the renewal and aims to provide targeted services to individuals leaving correctional facilities. The state plans to implement these services by July 1st, 2026.

### **Substance Abuse Peer Support Waivers**

The meeting focused on the peer support components of substance abuse treatment waivers, with Quad-Chair Senator Lesser inquiring about peer support services in residential and outpatient settings. Brenda confirmed that peer support is included in residential treatment under the demonstration, but not as a standalone benefit for outpatient services. The group discussed the status of the justice-involved demonstration waiver, with Bill reporting ongoing engagement with CMS and optimism about the process. Sabrina Trocchi raised concerns about the lack of reimbursement mechanisms for peer specialists in outpatient services, an issue that Bill acknowledged and said was being considered for incorporation into care management teams. The

conversation ended with a decision to recess the hearing and reconvene after the MAPOC agenda items were addressed.

### **VoiceCT Phone System Implementation Update**

Les provided updates on the implementation of the new phone system, VoiceCT. He reported that the SNAP interview line had moved to the new system, and the final group of call queues would transition on January 14th. Les shared positive feedback from community partners about the callback feature, which allows clients to receive a callback while continuing their work. He presented call statistics for October, November, and December, highlighting improvements in average handle times and a decrease in abandoned calls for the SNAP PI line. Les also noted that staff was becoming more accustomed to the new system, and he planned to review data again next month with January's partial statistics for the specialty queues.

### **Call Center Performance Improvements**

Les presented improvements in call center performance, noting a decrease in call abandonment rate from 49% to 20-25%, though concerns remain about staffing and future call volume increases. Les confirmed that a private contractor was recently hired to handle Tier 1 calls, with 26 staff members starting on January 2nd, and 30 new hires began on December 15th. Laurie, the Chief Customer Experience Officer, committed to restoring the dashboard by the end of the month, which will include staffing levels once the workforce stabilizes, and clarified that community options refer to all waivers under LTSS, including nursing home and community care.

### **H.R.1 Implementation Challenges**

The meeting focused on the implementation of H.R.1, particularly its impact on Medicaid and SNAP programs. Bill explained that the Department of Social Services is preparing for the 2027 implementation date by working on eligibility systems, communication strategies, and exemption categories. Commissioner Barton Reeves discussed SNAP changes, highlighting the lack of federal guidance and the need for a hold harmless provision to account for errors during the shutdown period. They plan to advocate for a delayed start date for error rate calculations and penalties. Both Medicaid and SNAP recipients are experiencing challenges due to the changes, and efforts are being made to provide support and guidance to affected individuals.

### **Connecticut Medicaid Policy Updates**

The meeting covered several key topics related to Medicaid and social services in Connecticut. Dan Giacomi, Acting SNAP Director, discussed the delay in implementing benefit cost sharing and challenges with quality control and hold harmless periods. The committee heard updates on Medicaid projections and work requirements from Andrea, who clarified that about a third of the HUSKY D population is at risk of losing Medicaid if not exempted. Committee updates were provided by Amy Gagliardi on the Women and Children's Health Committee, Rep. Robin Comey on the Care

Management Committee, and Rep. Johnson and Rep. Hughes on the Complex Care Committee. The conversation ended with a public hearing on the substance use disorder demonstration waiver, where Sheldon Toubman provided context on Medicaid policy and restrictions.