Health and Human Services Oversight Committee
Minutes
Friday, April 26, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.
Legislative Office Building Room 210-211

Meeting called to order by the Chair at 10:09 a.m.

Present: Rep. Mark Pearson (Chairman), Rep. Merchant, Rep. Murphy, Rep. McDonald, Rep. Weber, Sen. Gray, and Sen. Rosenwald

Absent: Rep. Edwards, and Rep. Bill King

Note: Sen. Gray left the meeting at 11:50AM

February 23, 2024, meeting minutes approved as presented. Sen. Rosenwald abstained.

Next meeting May 24, 2024, at 10 a.m.

DHHS Commissioner update presented by Associate Commissioner Patricia Tilley

Associate Commissioner presented the NH Lives Well 2023-2028 New Hampshire Health Improvement Plan.

Key points of the plan, a plan that includes all entities who partner with the Department. The Department is committed to working with its partners and to support the plan. The plan includes 'Communities create Meaning' to align equity across three themes: 1) Sense of belonging, 2) Inclusive systems of care, 3) pathways to opportunity.

- The plan has four key areas:
    - Access to Opportunity
    - Health Status and Outcomes
    - Community
    - Social Connectedness
- Access to Opportunity - every person living in New Hampshire has what they need to meet their basic needs – such as a safe housing and enough food to eat.
- Health Status and Outcomes – every person has equitable access to affordable, effective, high-quality resources and services delivered by sustainable systems.
- Community – all people are surrounded by healthy built and natural environments and live in a community with supports and services that adapt to meet their current and changing needs.
- Social Connectedness – all people feel a sense of community and belonging because our state celebrates all types of diversity; communities are engaged to eliminate isolation and build personal resilience.

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The Department has a focus on partner-aligned planning to leverage innovative cross-sector partnerships; incorporate innovative or novel approaches to deliver services, when possible; center approaches that eliminate inequities and reduce disparities; all grounded in data that fully and accurately reflects the communities being served.

The Department is focused on heart disease; mothers health during and after pregnancies; having a robust mental health system; decrease in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases as Chlamydia; decrease in environmental hazards as PFAS, lead exposure for children; reduction in the harms of substance misuse; for communities to have the necessary resources to tackle these issues within their community. These objectives will require the Department to think strategically, and to use financial resources effectively and efficiently.

The Governor and Council approved the closed loop program contract. DHHS works closely with the Department of Environmental Services on environmental projects that may have a public health concern as the Nashua plant for asphalt.

The state health improvement plan includes the community health worker's plan.

Sullivan County real estate has significantly increased in the past few years at a much higher rate than increase in worker salaries creating more of an issue with affordable housing in comparison other areas of the state as the southern part of the state.

Medicaid Program update on HB 2 Chapter 79:412 law on Medicaid Enhancement for Children and Pregnant Women quarterly report.

Mr. Henry Lipman, Medicaid Director, presented the DHHS Continuous Enrollment update. Key points of the presentation.

- HB2 required the state Medicaid plan to submit an amendment to the state plan to federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) by August 15, 2023, to establish and implement 12 months of continuous coverage for the entire postpartum period.
- The amendment was submitted to CMS prior to the August 2023 deadline.
- The first six months (October 2023 to March 2024), 137 women gained this 12-month postpartum eligibility who otherwise would have only had 60-days of coverage.
- The Department will add metrics as the data and experience under the waiver develops.

Medicaid Continuous Enrollment Report by Henry Lipman, Medicaid Program Director.

Mr. Lipman presented an update on the Medicaid Continuous Enrollment. Key points of the presentation.

- New Hampshire has the 4th highest percent of renewals of Medicaid benefits using Ex Parte bases with 81 percent. The backlog or pending renewal reviews at the end of the prior month was 3.3%, below the national average and second lowest in New England.

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- Children coverage continues to improve from the baseline from the same time as last year.

- NH Medicaid has requested that CMS extend the deadline for evaluations from 15 to 30 days for Medical Eligible Determination (MEA) for long term care. The extension will provide time necessary to work through a determination to assist individuals who apply.

- DHHS continuous enrollment unwind status (HCBC-CFI) renewals, all but 5 were renewed as of the end of March 2024. Nursing home reviews had all but 5 were renewed for eligibility.

Medicaid Program Adult Dental Program – Sarah Finne, DMD, MPH

Dr. Finne presented a report, making key points in the report.

- April 1st marked the one-year program anniversary
- There are now 12,000 unique individuals enrolled in the program
- Mobile dental clinic/service is more robust
- Cheshire County continues to recruit more dentists into the program
- Northeast Delta Dental and Dental Quest continue to solid program partnerships
- Northeast Delta Dental has made a sizeable investment in the load repayment program which requires eligible dentists to serve NH Medicaid patients

Newborn Screening Annual Report – Courtney Keane, Administrator

Ms. Keane presented the annual report, making key points in the report

- RSA 132:10-a requires a healthcare provider attending the birth of a newborn to screen the infant for a panel of heritable disorders. RSA 132:10-c allows a parent to opt out of the screening.
- RSA 131:10-c requires DHHS to make an annual report to the DHHS oversight committee of the previous year activities including but not limited to the number and type of tests performed and their fiscal impact.
- Last year there were 12,030 infants screened out of 12,135 births with 732 having an abnormal test result done by the screening.
- 2022 had a series of staff transitions, with 0.5 FTE Nurse Program Specialist position vacant for 6 months. The 0.5FTE program planner position was vacant from January 2021 to May 2022. Currently the program is fully staffed.
- Quality improvement plan (appendix B of the report) is currently exceeding the 95 percent on time collection with 98 percent.
- Repeat specimens are costly and the number of repeat specimens continue to decrease.
- There has been a slight increase in the number of out of hospital births.

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- Specimens are blood only, there are no urine or silva tests

State Office of Rural Health report presented by Danielle Hernandez

Ms. Hernandez presented the annual New Hampshire Health Care Workforce report. Key points of the report.

- The report was published on December 1, 2023.
- RSA 126-A:5, XVIII-a authorizes the State Office of Rural Health to receive and collect data from participating health care professionals during license renewals.
- This is the only database within the state that collects and monitors healthcare workforce.
- License renewals occurring on a rolling renewal basis create overlaps in calendar years creating timing issues within the report.
- Response rates have improved with survey compliance which require a licensee to response to the survey unless they opt out. This has significantly increased the response over the past 2 years.

Next committee meeting is scheduled for May 24 at 10AM.

Meeting adjourned by Chairman at 12:02 PM.

Minutes submitted by Rep. Gary Merchant (acting clerk)

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