

MINUTES

NH HEALTH EXCHANGE ADVISORY BOARD

February 13, 2015

Board members present: Evelyn Aissa, Christine Alibrandi, Co-chair Scott Baetz, Nancy Clark, Beth Roberts, and, Timothy Soucy. Sandra Ruka participated via conference call.

Board members unable to attend: Dianne Chase, Russell Grazier, Co-chair Lisa Guertin, and Lisa Morris.

Agency Representatives: NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Commissioner Nick Toumpas, DHHS Healthcare Program Specialist, Katja Fox , NH Insurance Department (NHID), Commissioner Roger Sevigny, Deputy Commissioner Alex Feldvebel, NHID Life, Accident and Health Legal Counsel, Jenny Patterson.

The meeting began at 9:20 a.m. with a warm welcome from Co-chair Scott Baetz. The January 9, 2015 meeting minutes were approved and Mr. Baetz continued on with the agenda asking NHDHHS Commissioner Nick Toumpas for the DHHS updates.

Commissioner Nick Toumpas – DHHS

Commissioner Toumpas began his update with enrollment numbers and reported that in just six months the NHHPP (NH Health Protection Program) has 34 thousand enrollees; it is predicted to have 50 thousand enrollees over seven years. Continuing, he reported that the NH Medicaid Care Management Program is reporting 148 thousand enrollees in the program, which also includes NHHPP bridge members, and that the number of new traditional Medicaid enrollees under the MAGI (Modified Adjusted Gross Income) calculation methodology remains stable. Other DHHS activities of note include waiting for CMS action on the Premium Assistance 1115 Demonstration Waiver ---DHHS is working with the federal government and it must be approved by March 31, 2015. Commissioner Toumpas is confident it will be approved.

Scott Baetz thanked Commissioner Toumpas and we continued on with the agenda.

Small Business/SHOP Experience

Scott Baetz kicked off this portion of the meeting by explaining his role on the Board as a member representing small business. He is pleased to be having this discussion today, as the majority of the board's time has not been spent on small business issues. Scott noted that in New Hampshire about 50% of workers (280,000 in number) are employed by small businesses. Health care, particularly the cost of health care, is a huge concern for small businesses. Business

owners want their employees to be cared for. However, the small business tax credit does not seem to be an effective way of addressing small business concerns, as very few employers qualify for it. Scott feels that the biggest benefit of the SHOP exchange would be employee choice – but this functionality is not yet in place.

Scott then introduced the presentations by Nancy Clark, small employer representative on the Board, and Greta Johansson from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Nancy Clark

Nancy noted that her business has nine employees ranging widely in age. She is a huge supporter of the ACA in concept and was excited in 2014 to get coverage through the SHOP. Prior to 2014, she always provided coverage for her employees, but the cost of coverage increased every year.

In 2014, the SHOP was not available online, and in the end she did not offer coverage for her employees that year. This year, she was able to use the SHOP, and she thought the interface was excellent. She was very pleased at having the ability to choose among several carriers, not just one. The only downside was the lack of the employee choice functionality, and she hopes this will be working next year. Because her business is so small, she was able to get input from her employees in selecting a plan. In the end, her company saved over \$500 this year on health coverage. People are pleased with their coverage, and the payment system is easy. She pays the employer share once a month with a click on the computer.

Scott Baetz asked about the application experience. Nancy said it was easy to fill out the application online. Loading in the employees was the toughest part, and might be more difficult with a larger business.

Jennifer Syria of CMS noted that she believes there is an upload function so this does not have to be done by hand.

Scott asked whether it worked not to have a broker – was it possible to evaluate and compare different plans? Nancy said yes, you can go through the whole process without buying. She said that once she had selected a plan, the SHOP sent the information to the employees and they each decided whether to accept or decline the coverage.

Scott asked about the information flow from the SHOP site to the employees, and whether the employer received notice of these communications. Nancy responded that she was informed when they accepted the offer of coverage, but did not receive notice of other communications.

Scott Baetz thanked Nancy for her enthusiastic presentation and asked Greta Johansson from the U.S. Small Business Bureau to make her presentation.

Greta Johansson

In contrast to Nancy's experience of using the SHOP without a broker, Greta started off by explaining that the role of brokers is critically important for the SHOP, especially for employers who are not able to do all of the work themselves.

Sandra Ruka commented that having a broker's help is particularly important for employers on the cusp of having 50 employees, as there are questions about whether they are eligible for the SHOP and whether they will ultimately be subject to the employer penalty. Employers with under 50 employees will not be subject to the penalty, even in 2016 when it will apply to groups of 50 or more.

Greta reiterated Nancy's point about employers being able to get premium cost estimates on the SHOP website without entering their employees' personal data (other than age, which is needed to calculate the premium). She also commented that the NHID website is helpful on the issue of which hospitals are in which carrier networks.

There was some discussion about the mechanics of using a broker through the SHOP website. Jennifer Syria from CMS noted that not every broker can assist – it must be someone who has completed the federal training and been certified to assist SHOP users. Jenny Patterson added that they must also be licensed in the state as a producer. Greta Johansson continued that a lot more brokers went through the course this year than last year, and that there is still broker training going on. Information on the training is on the marketplace.cms.gov website.

Greta noted that some New Hampshire employers did receive the small business tax credit. It is designed for employers with fewer than 25 employees and an average wage of less than \$50,000.

For 2015, the SHOP is open to employers with 50 or fewer employees, but for 2016 it will be open to those with up to 100 employees.

In a CMS update on the SHOP, Jen Syria noted that small businesses can apply for SHOP coverage at any time. The only issue is the 75% participation rate requirement for eligible full-time employees without another source of coverage. November 15-December 15 is the annual enrollment window for groups that do not meet minimum participation requirements.

Scott Baetz added that having heard about the improvements in the SHOP website, it sounds appropriate to recommend that employers check it out.

Jenny Patterson asked whether there were any CMS updates on the employee choice functionality; Jen Syria replied that it is not being used in any of the states in her region, so she is not sure how it is going.

Mike Wilkey of the NHID noted that the last enrollment numbers he has received from the carriers show that 36 business groups are using the SHOP with 262 members enrolled (which

could include member's families). The Board was surprised how few employers have signed up. Tim Soucy commented that we have to send messages out to small businesses. Evelyn Aissa added that from what she is hearing, the SHOP needs a spokesperson. Scott added that we should focus on getting the employee choice function up and running as that will be the main draw for employers not eligible for the tax credit.

Evelyn Aissa asked if CMS was considering moving to composite billing, rather than list billing. Jenny Patterson noted that the small group rating rules require use of the list methodology to generate the rates in the first instance, but that it is up to employers whether to calculate employee contributions in that way.

Nancy Clark asked if there are any other numbers on small group enrollment. Jenny told the group that the NHID issued a report last summer based on research by the Wakely Consulting Group and data from the carriers, which indicates that a large majority of small groups renewed their pre-2014 coverage under the CMS and NHID transitional policy.

Here is a link to that report:

http://www.nh.gov/insurance/reports/documents/wakely_ma_rpt_pr.pdf

In closing, co-chair Scott Baetz found this discussion rewarding and enlightening. He thanked Greta and Nancy, and we continued on with the brief updates on the 2015 open enrollment.

Jennifer Syria – CMS

Jennifer reviewed the enrollment numbers for New Hampshire - they are up to 48,447 so far; last year the numbers at this time were in the 40 thousand range. Of that number 70% are receiving tax credits. Last minute promotions through social media are reminding people of the end of the 2015 open enrollment period.

There was a question on whether there would be any additional special enrollment periods after February 15. Jennifer said that as of now, there has been no announcement of that. People who feel there should be an extension should let their congressional representatives know.

Jennifer also explained that the 1095A tax forms have been sent out; any questions about these should go to the IRS or VITA.

Karen Hicks – Covering NH

Karen Hicks told the group that the Covering NH campaign was wrapping up through mailings, digital advertising and social media. The TV commercial aired 7,000 times, and there have been 53 thousand visits to the website.

The rate of enrollments seems to be plateauing, indicating that those remaining uninsured may be harder to reach. There are plans for a post-enrollment survey to help assess the success of the campaign and to refine the profile of the remaining uninsured.

Commissioner Roger Sevigny – NHID

The Commissioner told the group that he had just been elected to chair the B Committee for the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC). The B Committee is the Health Insurance Committee, and at the end of the month he will be attending an all-day meeting in Washington, D.C. along with Jenny Patterson and Michael Wilkey. He will be meeting with senior leaders from CCIIO as well as other state commissioners.

Continuing, he told the group that NH is one of the lead states in investigating the Anthem data breach that is affecting 80 million people nationally, including many in New Hampshire.

Deputy Commissioner Alex Feldvebel commented that the NHID has collected enrollment information from carriers. Mike Wilkey from the NHID added that the current information shows 24,296 reported members as of January 1st; however, there is still work to do before putting the final numbers out there. Each carrier has through March 15 to get their February numbers to the NHID.

Anthem –Paula Rogers

Paula explained to the group that Anthem was in a unique position this year because its numbers include new enrollees, active renewals, and passive renewals. Thus, there is still more work to be done in reconciling their December numbers with the Healthcare.gov numbers. Also, it's possible some of their passive enrollees may be eligible for the NH Health Protection Program, but not yet signed up.

Harvard Pilgrim Health Plan – Beth Roberts

Beth Roberts told the group that as of February 1st, 5500 people have selected HPHP, 74% with the more limited Elevate Health network. In terms of metal levels, the distribution is 7% gold, 47% silver, and 46% bronze. Continuing, she explained that the 1st year marketplace is not easy. CMS has been great, but there have been some issues with response times.

Maine Community Health Options – Mike Gendron

Mike told the group that they were happy with their NH enrollment of about 4500 individuals and 6 employer groups.

Sean Caron – Minuteman Health, Inc.

Sean reported that 7500 members have selected their plans, as well as one employer in the SHOP.

The meeting ended at 10:50. The next meeting will start at the new time of 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be at the New Hampshire Insurance Department on March 13th....