



**Washington Health Benefit Exchange Board
Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2025
8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
810 Jefferson St., Olympia, WA
Or Teleconference and Webinar**

Board Members Present:

Monica McLemore, Chair
Dr. Mabel Bodell
Dr. Janice Greene
Karen Keiser
John Schapman

Leonard Sorrin
MaryAnne Lindeblad, *Ex-Officio*
Jane Beyer, on behalf of Commissioner Patty Kuderer,
Ex-Officio

Board Members Absent:

Don Conant
Hiroshi Nakano

Washington Health Benefit Exchange (WAHBE) Staff Present:

Ingrid Ulrey, Chief Executive Officer	Tara Lee, Chief Communications Officer
Jim Crawford, Chief Financial Officer	Shirley Prasad, Director of Government Affairs
Christine Gibert, Director of Policy & Market Strategy	Manny Santiago, Chief of Equity & Community Partnerships
Leah Hole-Marshall, General Counsel & Chief Strategist	David Sorrell, Chief Information Officer

Welcome and Introductions – Monica McLemore, Chair

Dr. Monica McLemore called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. She requested adjustments to the agenda to accommodate board actions and ensure quorum, while maintaining the public comment period.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – Monica McLemore, Acting Chair

Dr. McLemore requested approval of the meeting minutes from the December 4, 2024, and the February 6, 2025, Board meetings. John Schapman motioned to approve; Len Sorrin seconded the motion. Meeting minutes were approved as presented.

CEO Report – Ingrid Ulrey

Ingrid Ulrey provided an overview of significant developments since the last meeting and emphasized the importance of maintaining flexibility and supporting staff during uncertain times. She highlighted major federal and state developments, including the House and Senate budget resolutions and the CMS Program Integrity and Affordability Proposed Rule. Ingrid also discussed progress made to date toward the Exchange’s current biennial plan priorities and concluded by outlining the strategic priorities for the next biennium.

Policy Committee Report – Len Sorrin

The Policy Committee meeting on March 18th focused on two main topics: a quality program briefing from Covered California and a discussion of options for responding to federal changes. Dr. Monica Soni from Covered California presented on quality programs, highlighting the use of four key measures: blood pressure control, diabetes control, colorectal screening, and childhood immunizations. Covered California saw measurable improvement in three of the four measures across 12 of 13 carriers.

Leah Hole-Mashall provided details on 1332 waiver contingency planning and strategies to mitigate the projected \$275 million loss due to the expiration of enhanced premium tax credits at the end of 2025.

2026 Carrier Assessment (BOARD ACTION) – Jim Crawford, Chief Financial Officer

Jim presented the recommended carrier assessment for 2026, which would maintain the current assessment amounts of \$5.11 per member per month (PMPM) for qualified health plans (QHPs), \$0.94 PMPM for qualified dental plans (QDPs), and \$0.67 PMPM for pediatric dental plans. Board discussion focused on the uncertainties and assumptions involved in setting the carrier assessment rates, including the impact of potential federal changes, enrollment projections, and premium rates. The assessment is crucial for funding the operations of the Exchange, and the decision to maintain the current rates was made to ensure stability and predictability for carriers. The board approved these rates, emphasizing the importance of avoiding disruptions and maintaining stability and continuity in the Exchange's operations.

Karen Keiser motioned to approve the 2026 Carrier Assessment for Qualified Health Plans at \$5.11 per member per month; Dr. Mabel Bodell seconded the motion. Christine Gibert conducted a roll call vote of board members.

<u>Yea</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Mabel Bodell		
Karen Keiser		
John Schapman		
Len Sorrin		

The motion passed unanimously.

Len Sorrin motioned to approve the 2026 Carrier Assessment for Qualified Dental Plans at \$0.94 per member per month; Karen Keiser seconded the motion. Christine Gibert conducted a roll call vote of board members.

<u>Yea</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Mabel Bodell		
Karen Keiser		
John Schapman		
Len Sorrin		

The motion passed unanimously.

John Schapman motioned to approve the 2026 Carrier Assessment for Pediatric Dental Plans at \$0.67 per member per month; Dr. Mabel Bodell seconded the motion. Christine Gibert conducted a roll call vote of board members.

<u>Yea</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Mabel Bodell		
Karen Keiser		
John Schapman		
Len Sorrin		

The motion passed unanimously.

Legislative Session Update– Shirley Prasad, Director of Government Affairs

Shirley Prasad provided an overview of the current State Legislative session, highlighting key priorities and bills that have been progressing. She provided an update on the Exchange priority of continued funding for the Cascade Care Savings program, highlighting that funding for the 2026 plan year is expected despite the challenging fiscal environment. She mentioned bills of interest, such as those addressing medical debt, Medicaid access, and voter registration. Shirley highlighted the next steps in the legislative process, including the upcoming policy cut-off and the potential for a special session.

Public Comment

Dr. McLemore called for public comment. No public comment was provided.

Medicaid Update & Q/A – MaryAnne Lindeblad, Acting Director, Health Care Authority

MaryAnne Lindeblad provided an overview of the Medicaid program in Washington and highlighted the significant impact of potential federal reductions in Medicaid funding, explaining that a drop in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) could cost the state billions of dollars. MaryAnne discussed the challenges of either reducing services or cutting Medicaid enrollment, both of which would have severe consequences for access to care and the overall healthcare system. She emphasized the need for proactive planning and collaboration to address these threats and ensure continued coverage and services for Washingtonians.

Federal Responsiveness Planning – Leah Hole-Marshall, General Counsel & Chief Strategist

Leah Hole-Marshall provided an overview of the significant challenges and proactive measures being taken in response to potential federal changes that could impact the individual market. She emphasized the importance of understanding the cumulative impact of these changes, including the expiration of enhanced premium tax credits (ePTC) and the CMS Program Integrity & Affordability Proposed Rule. Leah highlighted state efforts to mitigate the loss of ePTC, such as standardizing silver loading, eliminating tobacco rating, and modifying Cascade Care Savings. She discussed the potential impact of the proposed rule on individual market enrollment,



premiums, and Exchange operational costs, stressing the importance of a coordinated response across various sectors of the health care system.

Closing Remarks & Adjournment – Ingrid Ulrey; Dr. Monica McLemore

Dr. McLemore mentioned the decision to defer the executive session due to a lack of quorum and the plan to schedule a special board meeting to conduct this matter of board business in the next two to three weeks. Ingrid thanked the board for their support and highlighted the pivotal point in time for the organization.

Chair McLemore adjourned the meeting at 11:32 a.m.