



**Washington Health Benefit Exchange
Navigator & Certified Application Counselors Technical Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 15, 2026
2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Teleconference and Webinar**

NAV CAC TAC Members Present:

Alex Cordova
Bishaw Gezie
Sara Abbott
Dina Prigodich
Riva Garza

Molly Morris
Yuvi Arciniega
Callista Kennedy

Washington Health Benefit Exchange (WAHBE) Staff Present:

Alex Jonson
Wynne McHale
Jasper Marino

Kristin Phillips
Kelly Aaron

Meeting notes

Survey feedback and training materials

- Kelly explained that survey feedback indicated the training content was too dense, and participants preferred more concise materials like one-pagers and handouts.
- Kelly clarified that some participants felt they already had the necessary tools and did not need additional resources or training, based on their roles.

Presentation updates

- Kelly informed Alex that the first check-in question was removed from the presentation, leaving only the end check-in.
- Kelly confirmed Alex can express gratitude verbally during the presentation instead of including it in the slides.

Legislative session updates

- Wynne presented an overview of the legislative session, highlighting the budget deficit, new revenue ideas, and state efforts to address federal policy changes in health care.
- Wynne explained that over 1600 bills were introduced during the 60-day session, with approximately 17% passing.
- Wynne offered to follow up on any questions they could not answer during the presentation.
- Wynne explained that the Safeguarding Exchange Consumers Bill (SB 6210) advanced 99% through the legislative process but was not passed due to time constraints at the end of the session.
- Wynne reported that the Safeguarding Exchange Consumers Bill did not pass but significant progress was made in educating legislators about access and affordability issues.
- Wynne described new privacy protections passed for sex designation information and correct terminology for non-citizens, highlighting the implementation of HB 2632.
- Wynne summarized the outcomes of several health care policy bills, noting that 340B protections, health carrier payment transparency, preventative health services, and prior authorization reforms passed, while Medicaid debt interest limits did not.

Legislative session and budget

- Wynne explained that the legislature faced a \$2.3 billion budget deficit, addressed through stabilization accounts, expenditure cuts, fund sweeps, and new revenue measures, including the millionaires tax.
- Wynne reported that the exchange staff reviewed 52 bills and prepared 14 fiscal notes during the 60-day session, highlighting significant organizational involvement.
- Wynne noted that most decision packages submitted to the legislature were funded as written, including a 15% increase for the Lead Org program, marking its first funding increase since the exchange's inception.
- Wynne reported that several proposed revenue measures, including increased premium taxes and assessments on capital gains reserves, were considered but did not pass during the session.
- Wynne explained that Apple Health expansion and funding for low-income health care continued in the budget, including new slots for people on the wait list and support for those affected by federal Medicaid changes.



- Wynne stated that Cascade Care Savings was funded for another year at \$55 million, but emphasized the need to find additional funding sources to meet community needs.

Navigator program survey results

- Alex reported that the open enrollment 13 survey received 337 responses, a 19% increase from last year, with all geographic areas represented and significant participation from experienced Navigators and Tribal sisters.

Navigator program support and communication

- Alex summarized feedback indicating that call center support was limited by long hold times, inability to resolve issues, and inconsistent lead org engagement, with requests for faster response times and more supportive interactions.
- Alex summarized feedback on LMS resources, noting that while materials were comprehensive and informative, challenges included dense content, outdated links, lack of time to review, and perceived irrelevance for some roles.

Enrollment and coverage challenges

- Alex highlighted that customers often do not enroll due to immigration status, lack of resources, and confusing insurance processes, while coverage is frequently dropped because of non-payment, affordability barriers, and plans not covering needed services.
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- Alex explained that 26% of survey respondents experienced language barriers, affecting application completion and plan understanding, with specific challenges including lack of native language options, need for indigenous translators, and inaccurate translations.
- Kelly reported that mitigation efforts, including premium alignment and Cascade Care Savings, reduced anticipated enrollment losses from 55% to 30% following HR1 implementation.

Navigator program resources

- Kelly reported that a new one-pager for conditional eligibility verification was created based on Sara's feedback, uploaded to LMS, and announced in the newsletter.

Enrollment reports

- Kelly announced that the 2026 open enrollment preview report is available and the spring enrollment report will be published later in April.
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Policy and program changes

- Kelly explained upcoming HR1 changes, including loss of federal tax credits and Medicaid eligibility for lawfully present immigrants, shortened open enrollment, and future manual renewal requirements for qualified health plans.
- Kelly explained that spring training will focus on HR1 changes for 2026 and 2027, with later changes addressed closer to their implementation to avoid overwhelming navigators.

Leadership transition

- Kelly announced that Ingrid, the CEO, is stepping down, and the board is actively planning for an interim CEO and successor, with no expected changes to the Navigator program.