

**Washington Health Benefit Exchange  
Operations Committee Meeting Minutes  
May 14, 2024 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

**Operations Committee Members Present:**

April E. Lynne, Chair  
Dr. Janice Greene  
David Frockt

**Operations Committee Members Absent:**

John Schapman

**Washington Health Benefit Exchange Staff Present:**

Ingrid Ulrey, Chief Executive Officer	Becky Carrell, Deputy Division Director, Medicaid Programs
Jim Crawford, Transition Advisor	
Leah Hole-Marshall, General Counsel & Chief Strategist	Christy Bezanson, Associate Director- Operations, Eligibility, and Enrollment
Carla Reyes, Chief Operating Officer	Spencer Budd, Senior Policy Analyst
Tara Lee, Chief Communications Officer	Wynne McHale, Chief of Staff
Hy Quach, Associate Director of Development Services	Carly Christiansen, Executive Assistant Jeramie Del Rosario, Board Coordinator

**Welcome and Introductions**

Operations Committee Chair, April E. Lynne, called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 12, 2023**

The December 12, 2023, meeting minutes were approved as presented.

**CEO Remarks – Ingrid Ulrey, Chief Executive Officer**

Ingrid Ulrey welcomed Committee members and highlighted the plans for the upcoming May 23<sup>rd</sup> Board Meeting.

**Modernization Update - David Sorrell, Chief Information Officer, Hy Quach, Associate Director of Development Services**

Hy Quach presented for David Sorrell. Hy noted that the Exchange was refreshing and reviewing its current IT Modernization strategy in light of the ongoing costs associated with managing multiple databases and multiple platforms. Hy walked through the refreshed vision, goals and priorities of the plan and noted that while the vision and goals remain the same, the new plan accommodates new opportunities and applies lessons learned.

Hy began by providing background on the IT Modernization project and noted the journey began in 2015 as the Exchange began its transition of moving *Healthplanfinder* (HPF) to the Cloud. Hy

reported that as HPF was moved, new and better ways of operating the system began to emerge, which meant re-envisioning how the system could be improved to better suit its new environment in the Cloud. The initial improvement strategy was to move one piece of the system at a time to the new Cloud location, but as teams began working they discovered that it was not just a technology move, but the move would also necessitate a change in how things operated. Hy noted that the change in operations is a bigger and more complex task than was originally envisioned, affecting project timelines and resources, and triggered the refresh of how to approach the IT Modernization project. Hy highlighted that rather than taking HPF piece by piece to the Cloud, they were now looking at how to better prioritize the project pieces and how to approach the project as a whole.

Hy added that currently the IT Modernization project was funded through a decision package through 2027, and that while the current plan would go well beyond that time period, there would likely be another strategy refresh.

Hy walked through the top 5 priorities of the refreshed roadmap and plan and highlighted the internal steering committee that was convened to oversee the project.

**WAH Expansion - Carla Reyes, Chief Operations Officer, Becky Carrell, Deputy Division Director, Medicaid Programs**

Becky Carrell introduced herself to the Committee Members and noted her role with the Health Care Authority (HCA) to lead the Apple Health Expansion program in collaboration with the Exchange and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Becky began by noting that since the Affordable Care Act had passed HCA had worked with the Exchange and DSHS to serve the 43,000 individuals without immigration status that are eligible for Apple Health for Kids and Apple Health Pregnancy medical programs. Becky added that in 2022 the legislature provided funding to HCA to implement a Medicaid look-a-like program to cover uninsured adults who are ineligible for other federally subsidized programs due to their immigration status. Additional funding was provided in 2023 and is set to launch July 1, 2024.

Becky acknowledged that in order to provide adequate assistance, a limit on the number of enrollees needed to be set. Becky walked through the eligibility requirements that were implemented. Becky briefly noted some of the pending rule changes around DACA individuals that will allow them to be eligible in the coming year and walked through several examples of eligible adults.

Becky provided a look at some of the program's policies noting that HCA will use the same procedures as WA Apple Health (WAH) including eligibility, enrollment, and redeterminations and renewals; and enrollees are able to choose from one of four managed care programs.

Becky walked through how the HCA was managing enrollment for this program noting that anticipated enrolling up to 13,000 individuals. Becky highlighted that those denied for the WAH expansion in *Healthplanfinder* due to the enrollment limit, would receive an eligibility notice for health care options with those under 250% FPL eligible for Cascade Care Savings.

Becky reviewed the different pathways for individuals to submit an application and provided examples. Becky highlighted some of the different outreach tools utilized including flyers and webinars, amongst other resources.

**Medicaid Redetermination - Christy Bezanson, Associate Director-Operations, Eligibility, and Enrollment, Spencer Budd, Senior Policy Analyst**

Christy Bezanson began by noting goal of the presentation to provide an overview of the work done to support Medicaid redeterminations, over the last year. Christy noted that since the public health emergency (PHE) was declared, the Exchange knew it would eventually end and that business would need to return to normal operations. Christy highlighted that a cross departmental and cross functional team was established to plan for the unwind with the goal to keep eligible customers covered. Christy attributed the success of the effort to three factors including: an integrated platform with Apple Health and qualified health plans (QHPs), state subsidies assisting in the affordability of QHPs, and robust outreach and marketing efforts.

Spencer Budd provided a snapshot of the current progress of the redetermination effort looking back 11 months. Spencer noted that just over 2,000,000 total customers had their eligibility redetermined with 1.3 million of those remaining in Apple Health. Spencer noted that of those who lost coverage 302,000 regained coverage through *Healthplanfinder*. Spencer added that 8% of those who lost coverage selected a QHP – which is a historically high conversion rate for the Exchange.

Christy walked through an example of an enrollee as they transitioned coverage and highlighted some of their enrollment options and the outreach they may have experienced. Spencer provided an look at the role of trained assistors noting that nearly one third of those who lost coverage are partnered with an assister and 42% of those partnered returned to Apple Health or selected a QHP. Spencer also provided a look at the Customer Support Center data noting they handled 56% more calls since the start of the unwind.

Christy provided several more examples of customers experiencing the redetermination efforts.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**Next Meeting and Adjourn**

Operations Committee Chair, April E. Lynne adjourned the meeting at 2:28 p.m.