

**Washington Health Benefit Exchange  
Operations Committee Meeting Minutes  
August 20, 2024, 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

**Operations Committee Members Present:**

John Schapman, Acting Chair  
Dr. Janice Greene

**Operations Committee Members Absent:**

April E. Lynne, Chair  
David Frockt

**Washington Health Benefit Exchange Staff Present:**

Ingrid Ulrey, Chief Executive Officer	Tara Lee, Chief of Communications
Jim Crawford, Chief Financial Officer	Christine Gibert, Director of Policy & Market Strategy
Leah Hole-Marshall, General Counsel & Chief Strategist	Kristin Villas, Senior Policy Analyst
David Sorrell, Chief Information Officer	Julia Nestor, Policy Analyst
Manny Santiago, Chief of Equity and Community Partnerships	Amairani Castaneda, Board Coordinator
	Carly Christiansen, Executive Assistant

**Exchange Guests:**

Becky Carrell, Deputy Division Director, Medicaid Programs, Health Care Authority

**Welcome and Introductions**

Operations Committee Acting Chair, John Schapman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 14, 2024**

The May 14, 2024, meeting minutes were approved as presented.

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

Ingrid Ulrey welcomed the Committee members and thanked them for their participation at the Board Retreat in July. Ingrid Ulrey highlighted the work the Exchange is currently focused on including the upcoming legislative session, preparing for open enrollment, and reviewing the proposed Integrated Eligibility & Enrollment (IE&E) roadmap.

**Finance Report - Jim Crawford, Chief Financial Officer**

Jim Crawford provided a fiscal update on the month of July noting the Exchange ended the first month of the fiscal year was under budget by 3.5%. He reviewed activities underway to develop the next biennial budget with respect to the state budget and the Exchange's revenue sources. Jim

shared that the Exchange is planning a proposed budget to include a projected drop in enrollment in January 2026, due to the expected expiration of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) subsidies.

Current decision packages being considered by the Exchange may necessitate an increase in carrier assessment by \$2.50-\$3.00 per member per month (PMPM) due to budget constraints.

Jim previewed the budget request for an increase to Cascade Care Savings to \$75M per year, with plans to more precisely target and support enrollees who need premium assistance most. Jim also provided an overview of the enrollment outlook, noting that attrition has been less this year than in past years and the Exchange is at record high enrollment.

**Apple Health Expansion – Becky Carrell, Deputy Division Director, Medicaid Programs, Health Care Authority**

Becky Carrell provided an update on the implementation of expansion programs to cover residents regardless of citizenship status. Becky Carrell presented on the Apple Health Expansion (AHE) implementation led by the Health Care Authority (HCA).

AHE was funded by legislature with \$74 million to create a “Medicaid look-alike” for undocumented residents that was launched on June 20<sup>th</sup> and reached its enrollment cap the next day. Becky highlighted that work has now shifted to managing enrollment and identifying a permanent community workgroup to engage with enrollees on ongoing policy and activities. Becky stated that the HCA will be submitting an initial legislative report on November 1<sup>st</sup> and will be submitting a decision package to expand enrollment. Becky added that about 12,000 people were enrolled in 34 out of 39 counties and being assisted in 35 languages.

Manny Santiago provided an overview of the Immigrant Health Coverage expansion program, which opened qualified health plan and qualified dental plan shopping through *Washington Healthplanfinder* (HPF) to undocumented immigrants for the first time last November, with coverage starting January 2024. Manny stated the Exchange worked closely with HCA and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to prepare for the AHE, which opened on July 1<sup>st</sup> with a group of qualified health plan (QHP) enrollees with incomes under 138% FPL moving directly into the AHE program. Manny noted the purpose of these expansion programs are to provide coverage options for Washingtonians regardless of immigration status, reduce the number of uninsured residents, improve health equity and reduce racial disparities, as well as to improve lives of Washingtonians and their communities.

**Strategic Plan Progress Update – Leah Hole-Marshall, General Counsel & Chief Strategist**

Leah Hole-Marshall and provided an update on the progress of the Exchange Board’s Five-Year Strategic Plan with input from David Frockt and John Schapman. The Board retreat in July highlighted the importance of centering equity in all work, boosting Exchange expertise, maturity, advocacy, and emphasizing accountability. The Washington Health and Human

Services Enterprise Coalition (HHS) partnership will prioritize participation to maintain Exchange value. Proposed changes, crafted by Board members and staff, aim to enhance health coverage, affordability, outcomes, promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), utilize *Washington Healthplanfinder* (HPF) technology, and prioritize customer experience and community relationships.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**Next Meeting and Adjourn**

Operations Committee Acting Chair, John Schapman, adjourned the meeting at 2:13 p.m.