



**Washington Health Benefit Exchange
Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2024 | 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

Policy Committee Members Present:

Hiroshi Nakano, Chair
Mabel Bodell

Policy Committee Members Absent:

Don Conant
Len Sorrin

Board Members Present:

David Frockt

Washington Health Benefit Exchange Staff Present:

Ingrid Ulrey, Chief Executive Officer	Laura Kate Zaichkin, Director of Market Competition & Affordability
Jim Crawford, Chief Financial Officer	Julia Nestor, Policy Analyst
Leah Hole-Marshall, General Counsel & Chief Strategist	Budd Spencer, Senior Policy Advisor
Christine Gibert, Director of Policy & Market Strategy	Kristin Villas, Senior Policy Analyst
Joan Altman, Director of Coverage Strategies & Expansion	Amairani Castaneda, Board Coordinator
Tara Lee, Chief Communications Officer	Carly Christiansen, Executive Assistant
	Ned Gaines, Deputy for Rates, Forms and Provider Networks (OIC)

Welcome and Introductions

Policy Committee Chair, Hiroshi Nakano, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

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.

Fiscal Update- Jim Crawford, Chief Financial Officer

Jim Crawford provided a fiscal update noting that it is the beginning of the fiscal year and spending is on track. He highlighted that the Exchange is at a record high enrollment, and



discussed efforts to develop the next biennial budget, considering a projected drop in enrollment in January 2026, when enhanced American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) subsidies expire.

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.

The budget request for Cascade Care Savings is solicited at an increased \$75 million to address increasing premiums and prevent coverage loss after ARPA subsidies expire. Jim states that requests for budget approval are more likely to succeed if they do not require an increase in carrier assessment.

Strategic Plan Progress- 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.

Plan Readiness for 2025 – Progress Check-in Discussion Kristin Villas, Senior Policy Analyst

Kristin Villas updated the Policy Committee on carrier progress towards plan approval deadlines. All carriers must receive Washington state Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) approval by September 12th, 2024, and approval needs to be presented to the Health Benefit Exchange Board by September 5, 2024, with the risk of not being listed on the Exchange in 2025 if this deadline is not met. Carriers have reported premium rate changes and risk adjustment payments, with all currently on track for timely approval. Kristin acknowledged OIC Commissioner Ned Gaines for his partnership in Plan Certification preparations. She discussed themes for 2025, including rate increases, plan changes, and reductions in Cascade Care Savings subsidies. Federal risk adjustment payments, received at end of July, are the most significant factor in changes to initial rates that will be reflected in the final rates. Discussion was made regarding increases requested by carriers for 2025.

2025 Cascade Care Savings Update Discussion Julia Nestor, Policy Analyst

Julia Nestor presented a timeline for the 2025 Cascade Care Savings policy and per member per month (PMPM) subsidy amount development. She discussed options for PMPM amounts, including reducing the monthly subsidy for all customers, reducing the maximum for federally subsidized, or holding 10% of the budgeted \$55M in reserve for enrollment uncertainty.



The review is based on program data, plan year appropriation of \$55 million, projected enrollees, and premium rate changes. Stakeholders favored lowering one fixed amount and holding less in reserve to ensure individuals without federal subsidies continue to receive \$250 per month.

Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

Adjourn

Policy Committee Chair, Hiroshi Nakano adjourned the meeting at 10:58 a.m.