

Washington Health Benefit Exchange
Board Retreat
June 21, 2018

Summary Report
Prepared by Andrew Cline, Cline Consulting, LLC

Retreat Background

The facilitated full-day board retreat was held at the Exchange in Olympia, Washington. Andrew Cline – of Cline Consulting, LLC – facilitated the retreat.

The retreat agenda and structure were designed in partnership with Andrew Cline, Chief Executive Office Pam MacEwan and Director of Policy Molly Voris, with significant input and instruction from Exchange Board Members Melissa Cunningham, Hiroshi Nakano, and Mark Stensager. The entire design and preparation process was a collaborative process that worked well.

The retreat structure and design – and its stated outcome – was constantly informed by the HBE Mission and objectives:

Exchange Mission: The Washington Health Benefit Exchange seeks to redefine people’s experience with health care. Our mission is to radically improve how Washington residents secure health insurance through innovative and practical solutions, an easy-to-use customer experience, our values of integrity, respect, equity and transparency, and by providing undeniable value to the health care community.

Exchange Objectives:

- Increase access to affordable health plans
- Organize a transparent and accountable insurance market to facilitate consumer choice
- Provide an efficient, accurate, and customer-friendly eligibility determination process
- Enhance health plan competition on value: price, access, quality, service, and innovation

Retreat Objectives

1. Have a common understanding of the progress the Exchange accomplished since the board retreat of June 2017
2. Vote on the revised 2018 Strategic Plan
3. Review the results from the first formal Board Self-Assessment
4. Look at near-term proposals to stabilize the market and help consumers with affording health care. Discuss issues pertaining to the Next Generation of Informed Consumers
5. Learn from and engage with a Guest Panel on the Underlying Cost and Delivery of Healthcare
6. Discuss and gain alignment around the Health Equity Statement proposed by the Health Equity TAC for the board to adopt

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Summary Report of Outcomes:

The retreat was designed to give board members the time and structure around which to have more robust discussions than schedules and itineraries usually allow. The day was broken up into three major segments.

Part I: Internal Organizational Work

The retreat spent the first part of the morning looking at progress since the June 2017 Board Retreat, taking a pulse on the current state of the Health Exchange, and focusing on the evolution and adaption of the 2018 Strategic Plan.

A presentation by staff was given highlighting data trends around the cost of healthcare in Washington State.

Along with the Strategic Plan the CEO presented her Vision Statement for the Health Exchange.

The Board looked at the results of the Board Self-Assessment which all board members had taken before the retreat. Areas where there was common agreement on how the Board was doing, areas that needed clarification, and areas where the Board recognized work needing to be done were all discussed. Continuing to improve Board processes and performance was highlighted as the key purpose of doing an annual Board Self-Assessment and there was agreement that the tool and process would be looked at for future use.

Part II: Shorter-Term Affordability and Addressing the Underlying Cost of Healthcare

The Board formed smaller groups of four and three and did work that centered around confirming the values and challenges of standardized plans and affordability wraps and looked at ways to overcome the challenges. This was part of a larger discussion around understanding and supporting near-term proposals that help stabilize the market and help consumers with affording health care.

A guest panel comprising of two of the largest employers in Washington and the deputy director of Washington Health Alliance spoke on initiatives underway to help address the underlying cost and delivery of healthcare. This was a robust presentation that included discussion with the Board, which then moved into smaller work groups that focused on how to increase transparency, align with ACH initiatives, and incorporate Bree Collaborative recommendations for health plans.

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Part III: Health Equity Initiative

The Health Equity Technical Advisory Committee presented a Health Equity Statement to guide the work of the Health Benefit Exchange and recommended it for Board adoption. The Board unanimously voted to adopt the statement.

Conclusion & Facilitator Thoughts

The board has continued to develop as a functioning body over the last year as long-standing members have rotated off and three new board members have joined. It is encouraging to see that new board member orientation has been well structured and is consistent, giving new members the guidance and education they need to quickly be fully engaged. It is clear the Board enjoys working together and are proud of the work they have accomplished for Washingtonians and their access to health care.

Trust in staff and in the leadership of the CEO is palpable. The Board looks to the latter for a Board/Staff relationship that is collaborative, generative, and ever-evolving. It is wonderful to experience the transparent and honest conversations between the different functioning bodies that make up the Exchange and allow it to “get better” and continue to thrive in an ever-changing and volatile external environment.

It is highly recommended that the Board follow-through with making sure the Board Self-Assessment is a focused and appropriate tool, and that they decide on how often and in what context they want to use it. It might be best to incorporate portions of it in regular board meetings, and not just at the annual retreat.