



Executive Director Report

January 2017

By Sharon Becker, Executive Director, January 6, 2017

Administration

Enrollee Communications and Open Enrollment – WSHIP’s open enrollment period for 2017 concluded on December 15. Enrollee communications included extensive information about how to access other options for coverage. BMI will provide an update on enrollment for 2017 at the January Board meeting, however, the full extent of terminations for 2017 will not be known until the end of January when the grace period for premium payment expires.

Connected Diabetes Program (CDP) – WSHIP non-Medicare enrollees with diabetes will soon receive information about WSHIP’s newest available care management program. The program utilizes a cellular-enabled blood glucose meter that automatically triggers the transmission of data to program monitors available 24/7/365 who alert patients and the clinical team to critical readings and allows care coaches to work with the patient to get their glucose levels back in control.

WSHIP Updates to Senate and House Committees

Shaun Koos and I provided a WSHIP update to the Senate Health Care Committee during their November 14, 2016 work session. Sheela Tallman joined me for an update to the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on December 1. The presentations included information about the current status of the pool and the Board’s 2017 Policy Agenda.

Washington State Government – Legislative Session

2017 Legislative Session - The Legislature will convene for a Regular Session on January 9, 2017. It is scheduled to end on or before April 23, 2017. Rep. Eileen Cody will continue to chair the House Health Care & Wellness Committee and Senator Ann Rivers will replace Senator Randi Becker as chair of the Senate Health Care Committee.

Washington Health Benefit Exchange (HBE)

2017 Open Enrollment Update – Open enrollment for individual plans sold inside and outside the Exchange is November 1, 2016 thru January 31, 2017. By mid-December, a 13% increase in enrollment was reported. As of December 23 (the deadline for January 1 coverage) 180,000 individuals have selected a 2017 plan.

Market Analysis – The HBE and Office of Insurance Commissioner (OIC) retained Wakely Consulting Group, LLC to conduct a market analysis of the health insurance market, both inside and outside the Exchange. The review addressed the effect on the individual and small group markets of specific market rules in Washington State as well as the general health and viability of the individual market. The analysis concluded that the Washington market appears to be relatively stable compared to many other states. It recommends that the State maintain its current statutory and regulatory framework for the individual market and the Exchange. Here is a link to the full report: [Washington State Health Insurance Market Analysis](#).

Federal Transition

Secretary of Health and Human Services – President-elect Trump has nominated Rep. Tom Price to head the Department of Health and Human Services. Rep. Price is a six-term congressman and orthopedic surgeon, and has chaired the House Budget Committee the past two years. He has worked closely with House Speaker Paul Ryan and was one of the authors of Speaker Ryan's "A Better Way" policy agenda.

Repeal & Replace – To-date, the key points in President-elect Trump's vision for health care reform include:

- Repeal the ACA
- Allow people to purchase insurance across state lines
- Allow individuals to fully deduct premium payments from their tax returns
- Expand the use of Health Savings Accounts (HSA's)
- Require price transparency for all health care providers
- Block-grant Medicaid to the states
- Remove barriers to entry into free markets for drug providers
- Work with states to establish high-risk pools to ensure access to coverage for individuals who have not maintained continuous coverage

State of Reform Conference

Mark Rose and Anita Wuellner attended the State of Reform "Bridging the Gap between Health Care and Health Policy" conference at the Hilton SeaTac Airport conference center on Thursday, January 5th. Scott Plack and Alison Mondy were also there. The conference was informative even though there are many open questions about the fate of the Affordable Care Act. During the policy leadership presentation of republicans, Representative Schmick specifically commented that he would like the high risk pool to continue.