



Executive Director Report

January 2019

By Sharon Becker, Executive Director, January 3, 2019

Administration

Enrollee Communications and Open Enrollment – WSHIP’s open enrollment period for 2019 concluded on December 15. This is the period each year when enrollees may change plans for the upcoming year; it is available to current enrollees only. Enrollee communications included information about how to access other options for coverage. BML will provide an enrollment update at the January Board meeting; however, the full extent of changes for 2019 will not be known until the end of January when the grace period for premium payment expires.

Express Scripts – As of December 20, 2018, Express Scripts is now part of CIGNA. The acquisition is not anticipated to impact our agreement with Express Scripts or its services to WSHIP enrollees.

Board

Governor Appointments – The Governor appointment for WSHIP’s small business Board position is still pending. I am continuing to work with the Governor’s Board Appointments office to fill this position.

Washington State Government – Legislative Session

2019 Legislative Session – The Legislature will convene for a Regular Session on January 14, 2019.

Committee Assembly Days – Sydney Zvara attended Committee Assembly days in November and December to continue WSHIP’s outreach and communication activities and to learn about priorities for the 2019 session. Work session agenda items by the health care committees included presentations on: Efforts to Address the Opioid Crisis, Eliminating Hepatitis C, Long Term Care Accessibility and Affordability, Medicaid Transformation Waiver and Behavior Health Integration, Monitoring Cases of Acute Flaccid Myelitis, and Policy Developments in Balance Billing,

Prefiled Bills – Prefiled bills that we are following (listed as of January 2, 2019) are summarized below. Anticipated, but not yet filed, include legislation aimed at improving the affordability of individual health coverage.

BILL NUMBER	PRIME SPONSOR	DESCRIPTION
HB 1065 Surprise Billing	Cody OIC Request Bill	Seeks to protect patients from getting an additional bill, after the patient’s health plan has paid the normal rate and the patient has paid their portion when they receive medical care for an emergency at an out-of-network emergency room and when they have an approved surgery at an in-network hospital or surgery center but receive services from an out-of-network provider.
SB 5031 Surprise Billing	Rolfes OIC Request Bill	
SB 5032 Medicare Supplements (MACRA)	Cleveland OIC Request Bill	Aligns WA with recent changes to Medicare and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) statutes which seek to prevent overutilization of services. Two key changes are: 1) As of January 1, 2020, new enrollees will no longer be able to purchase a Medicare Supplement Plan which provides coverage for the Part B deductible; and 2) Allow but not require companies to offer a new Plan G with a High Deductible option.

Washington Health Benefit Exchange (HBE)

2019 Open Enrollment Update – The HBE reports that a total of 222,636 customers selected a health plan through Washington Healthplanfinder by the December 15th deadline. This is only slightly lower than the number of sign-ups during last year’s open enrollment period that stretched one month longer.

Federal Administration

The federal judge in Texas, who on December 14, 2018 ruled the ACA unconstitutional due to the elimination of the tax penalty, has issued a second ruling that the law can remain in effect during appeal.

State of Reform Conference – January 10, 2019

I will be attending the Washington State of Reform Health Policy Conference that is scheduled for January 10, 2019 at the Westin Hotel in Seattle.