



Executive Director Report

January 2021

By Sharon Becker, Executive Director, January 6, 2021

Administration

Open Enrollment – WSHIP’s open enrollment period for 2021 concluded on December 15. This is the period each fall when enrollees may switch plans for coverage that will begin January 1; it is available to current enrollees only. BML will provide an enrollment update at the January Board meeting; however, the full extent of changes for 2021 will not be known until the end of January when the grace period for premium payment expires.

Express Scripts Account Team – Account Executives Amy Daily and Harris Zeyae have recently moved to new positions within Express Scripts and will no longer be on WSHIP’s account team. Lindsay Luelf, is our new Account Executive and Thomas Kiese, a pharmacist, is our new Clinical Account Executive. Our Account Manager, Amy Williams, will be continuing in her current role on the WSHIP team.

Board

Governor-Appointed Board Openings – The following two WSHIP Board positions are still in need of Governor-Appointments. If you know of anyone interested in applying, please ask them to contact me or Ambar Algera, Director Boards & Commissions at the Governor’s office, at ambar.algera@gov.wa.gov.

Open positions:

- Large Employer Representative
- Small Employer Representative

State of Reform Conference

I will be attending the 2021 State of Reform Virtual Health Policy Conference on January 6 and 7 along with Sydney Zvara, Shannon Wolf, and several WSHIP Board members.

Washington State Government – Legislative Outreach

Consistent with the WSHIP Board’s 2021 Policy Agenda, Sydney Zvara met with Representative Eileen Cody and Representative Joe Schmick to discuss key findings from the Board’s study of the potential impacts of ending WSHIP’s Non-Medicare plans on December 31, 2022. As a result, Representative Schmick is planning to sponsor a bill this session to remove the sunset for WSHIP’s Non-Medicare program. Additional outreach activities are underway.

Washington State Government – 2021 Legislative Session January 11 – April 25, 2021

Like everything else, this year’s session will be different from those of the past. A limited number of legislators and some staff will be allowed into the buildings each day, but the public and lobbyists will not be allowed to enter. Legislative committee meetings and public comment will be conducted on the Zoom platform and streamed and recorded on TVW. Lawmakers will have a lot on their plate this session including budget writing and responding to the global pandemic. And given the remote working environment, most everything will probably take longer. Leadership has asked legislators to limit the number of bills they introduce to only those that are “urgently needed and ready to go”. That said, more bills have been pre-filed than at this point at the beginning of last session. In addition to tracking the bill to remove the sunset of WSHIP’s non-Medicare program, we will be closely watching to identify any bills that could potentially impact WSHIP.

Washington Health Benefit Exchange (HBE)

2021 Open Enrollment – January 1, 2021 is the Washington Healthplanfinder coverage effective date for those who enrolled prior to December 15, 2020. New coverage options included the Cascade (standard) and Cascade Select (public option) plans. The individual market is currently stable, with coverage available in all counties.

Subsidy Study – Exchange subsidy recommendations were submitted to the legislature in November 2020. No funding action has been taken.

Universal Health Care Work Group

The final report from the Universal Health Care Work Group is due to the legislature on January 8, 2021. It is anticipated the workgroup may recommend Option A (state administered universal care) as the desired long-term solution, with Option C (“close the gap”) possibly serving as a transitional step.