

Texas MCO NMDOH Learning Collaborative In-Person Meeting

October 25, 2024

Made possible thanks to the support of the Episcopal Health Foundation and the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation



Welcome and Introductions.

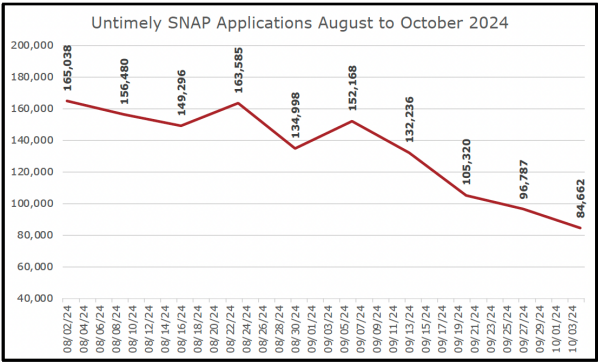
Shao-Chee Sim with Episcopal Health Foundation kicked off the second in-person Learning Collaborative for Year 5 of the initiative with the announcement that EHF will be funding a 6th year of the Collaborative. **Valerie Mayes, Deputy State Medicaid Director** also welcomed everyone and gave an overview of key initiatives taking place at HHSC around NMDOH including the HHSC Action Plan, Implementation of HB 1575 and the new HHSC MCO Alternative Payment Model Framework.

Jamie Dudensing, the CEO of the Texas Association of Health Plans, thanked EHF for funding 5 years and committing to a 6th year and commended the work of the group. Jamie also reminded everyone that the 89th Legislative Session will be kicking off in January and TAHP is supportive of NMDOH interventions and will be focusing on Medicaid coverage of mental health services. Jamie introduced the group to the new **CEO of the Texas Association of Community Health Plans, Janet Walker**, who echoed her commitment for this work and excitement to get to meet everyone and participate in the Learning Collaborative.

HHSC Agency Updates.

Michelle Alletto, Chief Program and Services Officer at HHSC provided an update on Eligibility and Access Services – see slides for details. Michelle gave an update on the progress her team is making in processing Medicaid and SNAP applications. She has also been working to maximize and motivate her team and has a 93.4% fill rate in eligibility advisor positions. They hope to see the MCO Application Assistance program continue and are leveraging other partners to help with eligibility tasks. HHSC is also implementing strategies to create data and system efficiencies including 1902(e)(14) waivers to help with ensuring accurate addresses, reviewing income data, and extending MEPD renewals.

Comparing the number of untimely SNAP applications from the week ending August 2, 2024, to the week ending October 4, 2024, there was a 48.7% decrease in backlog.



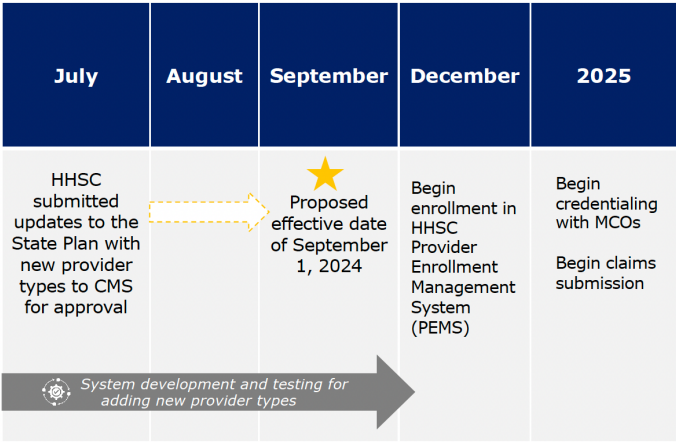
Michelle also provided a preview into the Access and Eligibility Services of the Future. HHSC is focusing on:

- Streamlining business processes and reducing rework
- Improving the client experience
- Automating manual tasks
- Reducing complexity that leads to errors and delays
- Maintaining program integrity

HHSC has requested \$800 million via Exceptional Item #2 for the 2026-2027 budget to support timely and accurate eligibility processing – see slides for details but this will provide funding for TIERS.

Of interest to the participants is a new HB 12 toolkit around extended postpartum coverage – see [here](#). Michelle closed with her commitment to working with stakeholders and welcomed outreach if you need anything or want to meet.

Michelle Erwin, Deputy Associate Commissioner, Office of Policy gave an update on implementation activities associated with HB 1575 which adds CHWs and doulas as provider types under the Medicaid case management program – CPW.



Lessons Learned: NMDOH Screening Pilot

HB 1575 also requires MCOs to screen pregnant women using a standardized NMDOH screening tool developed by HHSC. **Veronica Neville, Director for the Delivery System Quality and Innovation Team**, gave an update on a recent pilot to test the NMDOH screening questions that were effective September 1, 2024. The screening took place May – August 2024 and 11 health plans participated. HHSC will publish a report with findings in December 2024.

Andrea Gomez with the Texas Children’s Health Plan and **LaTreace Harrison with Wellpoint** provided an overview of their pilot and shared lessons learned which include:

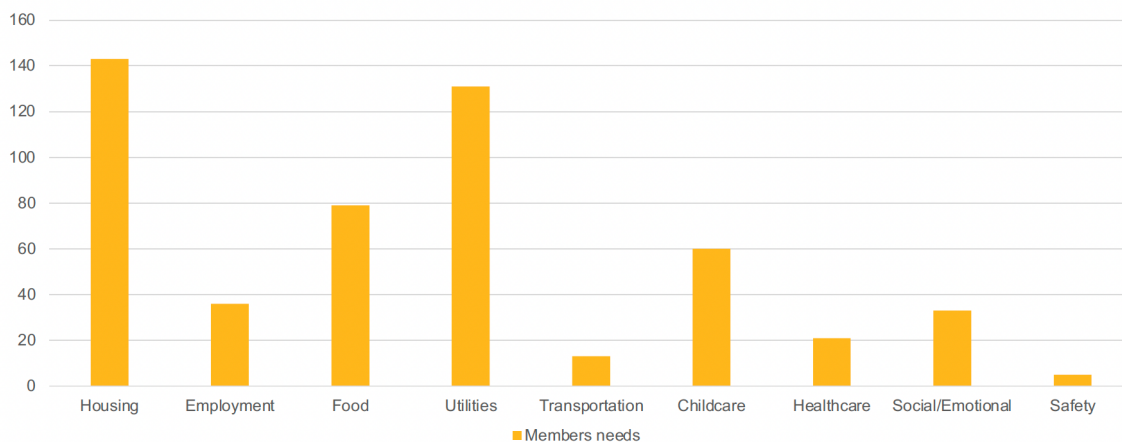
- Combining the screening with other screening reduced member abrasion
- Food and childcare issues were among the highest identified needs
- There was some hesitation to participate in the screening which also impacted their desire to receive other health risk assessments.
- A personalized approach helped – building rapport and developing a relationship was important.

What’s Happening in Texas: An Update on Texas-Based Projects.

Dr. Carol Huber with the Institute for Public Health gave an update on the Value Based Payment and Quality Improvement Advisory Committee Legislative Recommendations that will be in their legislative report published in December 2024. The Committee has 4 workgroups that provided recommendations outlined in the slides. The workgroups include NMDOH, APMs, Timely and Actional Data, and Value-Based Care in Rural Texas.

Tara Stafford with Baylor Scott & White Health Plan gave an update on their new project called Waco Connect, a 2 year pilot social care navigation program aimed at connecting families experiencing mental health needs to a network of non-medical resources through FindHelp. Tara’s slides outline many of her findings including the fact that clients appreciated frequent check-in and help in navigating services, texting worked well, the importance of warm handoffs and active case management.

SDOH Member Needs



National NMDOH Landscape.

Anna Spencer and Rob Houston with the Center for Health Care Strategies gave an update on federal guidance, an overview of other states' efforts to identify and address NMDOH needs, and provided an overview of how states are addressing food insecurity, and provided some hot topics of other states during design and implementation of NMDOH interventions. See slides for details and highlights include:

- Most states are using screening to identify and target specific populations – high risk pregnancy vs all pregnant women for example.
- New York, Mass and NC requires screening of all Medicaid members.
- North Carolina provides a directory and closed loop platform.
- Pennsylvania provides food boxes/grocery delivery for pregnancy and post-partum enrollees and their households
- Massachusetts provides meals “at the household level”
- NC, New York, and Mass include assisting or providing members with transportation to covered HRSN services or case management activities

Recent Federal Guidance Encouraging States to Address Health Related Social Needs (HRSN)



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Engaging Medicaid Members: Findings from Member Focus Groups.

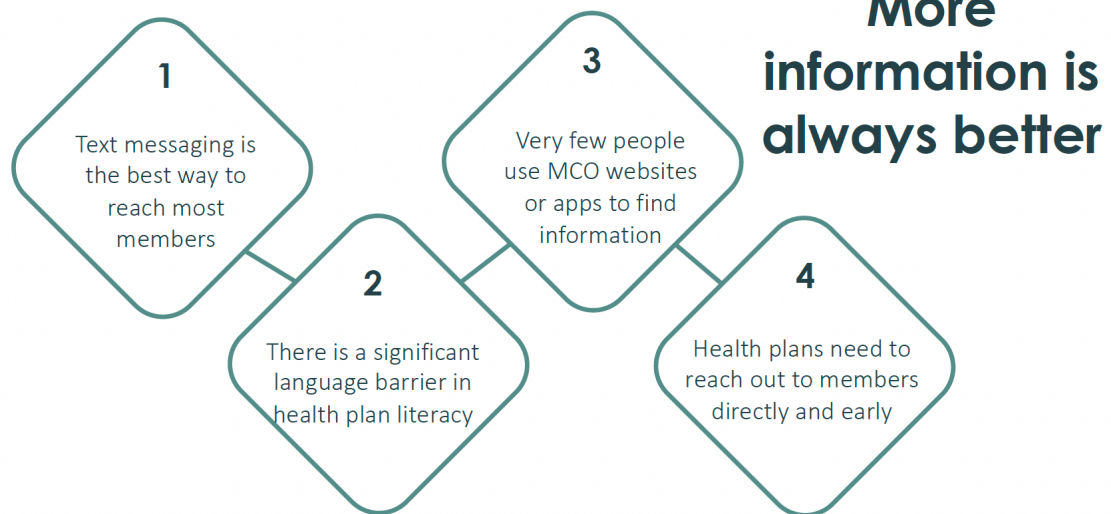
Several health plans participated in a study with EHF to better understand how Members would like to receive information about their benefits, their current knowledge of benefits, barriers they face in understanding their benefits. Each health plan hosted focus groups in a variety of ways – virtually, telephone, in-person. The discussion also focused on HB 12 to understand if women knew about their extended 12 months of coverage. Presenters included:

- **Tara Stafford, Baylor Scott and White Health Plan**
- **Shari Waldie, BCBSTX**

- Jessica Rios, Community First Health Plan
- Naomi Alvarez, Molina Health Plan
- Sonia Boyd, Superior Health Plan
- Arnita Burton, United Health Plan

Madeleine Richter-Atkinson with Treaty Oak Strategies gave an overview of the project and explained that the final report will be published on EHF's website in the next couple of weeks.

Overview Key Findings



- Overall everyone indicated they want more information.
 - o BCBSTX indicated they will be building a toolkit for members based on this experience.
- Information was found at in-person events
- Texting is good but if it is detailed information, prefer email so can reference.
- Some use websites but they often find the websites hard to navigate.
 - o Molina indicated this triggered them to take a look at their websites.
 - o It was noted that HHSC is so prescriptive about websites that it limits the ability to make them more user-friendly.
- There was a desire for more information about breastfeeding
- Most people didn't know about the mobile app
- It was identified that Members face barriers on accessing care – especially due to the need for daycare and inability to take children with them
- There is a lack of understanding and knowledge of benefits, and especially value-added services
- Difficult to find providers and sometimes call reps did not have up to date information
- Those with case managers or service coordinators found the outreach helpful and appreciate and wanted more outreach

Stay tuned for the full report.

Closing Remarks

Laurie Vanhooose with Treaty Oak Strategies and Shao-Chee Sim with EHF thanked everyone for attending and updated the group on a couple other projects that we will host webinars to highlight in the coming months – see slides for more details.

- New landscape assessment of Texas NEMT benefit coming out soon that studies Medicaid transportation benefit utilization and knowledge of the benefit.
- ARPA-H projects – there are 3 applicants in Texas: Greater Houston, Central Texas and DFW.
- Milliman is updating a recent EHF report that will look at cost drivers associated with diabetes and pre-diabetes and trends associated with high-risk pregnancies. Milliman is using actual Texas MCO data to complete these studies.

In Year 6 we plan to focus on the NMDOH screening and how can health plans and providers work together on screening members, sharing data, etc. We are welcome to other ideas so please let us know if there are specific topics you want us to include in next year's Learning Collaborative.

Thanks again to the Michael and Susan and Dell Foundation and the Episcopal Health Foundation for funding the LC and stay tuned for webinars in November and/or December and Year 6.