

Meeting Summary

NJ FamilyCare / Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC)

Date: Monday, September 29, 2025

Time: 1:30 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: Quakerbridge Plaza and Zoom

Attendees

BAC Members Present: Dina Ginsberger, Elray Hobbs, Rosalyn McEvilly, Anthony Pantaleo, Bee Ray, Shirley Santillan, MrDexter Stevenson, DA, JD, LG, AL, AN, SS, AW

BAC Members Not Present: Sachin Pathare

State Participants: Valerie Mielke, Greg Woods, Kris Byrnes, Karen Enoch, Lynda Grajeda, Dr. Thomas Lind, Natalie Kotkin, Gina Artman, Lauren Koenig, Jen Kraemer, Sam Krauss, Phyllis Melendez, Geralyn Molinari, Michelle Pawelczak, Amanda Pinto, Paige Solarski, Maria Terlecki

Meeting Overview

The inaugural BAC meeting convened to introduce members to New Jersey's Medicaid program, NJ FamilyCare, clarify the BAC's purpose, and gather member feedback on their experiences with the Medicaid program and its services.

Key Meeting Topics

1. BAC Purpose and Structure

- **Overview (Greg Woods):** BAC serves as a formal venue for Medicaid beneficiaries to share feedback and inform policy and program improvements.
 - **Relationship to the Medical Assistance Advisory Council:** The BAC will complement, not duplicate, the Medical Assistance Advisory Committee (MAAC).
 - **Continuity Across Administrations:** Greg Woods and Valerie Mielke confirmed that although leadership positions are appointed, the BAC is a standing body required by federal rule.
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2. Member Introductions & Initial Feedback

Members introduced themselves and stated their relationship to the Medicaid program.

BAC members also shared their personal experiences navigating Medicaid and highlighted common challenges:

- **Access to Care:** Difficulty finding providers, particularly mental health, dental, and women's health providers (notably in Sussex County).
 - **Provider Acceptance:** Confusion when plan providers are listed in health plan directories and later find that providers may no longer accept new patients.
 - **Specialized Care:** Lack of options beyond basic mental health services.
 - **System Navigation:** Provider network adequacy and contact points for provider-related consumer inquiries.
 - **Other Notes:** Online application and renewals, and prescription systems are viewed favorably.
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3. Program Overview and Q&A

Topics Covered:

- **Medicaid Eligibility - Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) and Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) programs** – led by *Kris Byrnes*
 - Questions on gig work income, SSDI thresholds, and disability determinations.
 - Individual follow-up planned on specific questions
 - **Enrollment and Renewal Process** – led by *Greg Woods*
 - Members noted delays in initial application approvals.
 - Questions were raised about the differences between county and state (vendor) processing.
 - Interest in adding mail-in application guidance (a checklist) and clarification of various hotline roles in future materials.
 - Suggestion to invite application processing representatives to a future meeting.
 - Suggestion to incorporate automation/technology into application processing.
 - **Covered Services and Managed Care** – led by *Dr. Thomas Lind* and *Lynda Grajeda*
 - Members requested clearer materials on available services.
 - Discussion on managed care organizations' (MCOs') roles and the need to help beneficiaries choose health plans effectively.
 - Suggestion for real-time provider network data and MCO network updates.
 - **Governance and Financing** – led by *Greg Woods*
 - Questions about state vs. federal funding and approval processes.
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4. Sticky Note Exercise

- Collected input on “What’s working” and “What’s not working” in Medicaid experiences.
 - Common themes included: provider access, information clarity, and care coordination.
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5. Planning for Future Meetings

Members prioritized future topics:

- Provider network adequacy (including mapping availability)
 - Call center coordination and communication
 - Federal updates and state flexibility
 - MAGI and NJ WorkAbility rules
 - Quality of care and care management access
 - Dual eligibility (Medicare/Medicaid)
 - Outreach for mental health services
 - County vs. state vendor processing roles
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6. Wrap-Up and Next Steps

- Proposed next meetings:
 - **December 2025** (Virtual)
 - **2026:** March, June, September, December
- **Upcoming MAAC Meeting:** October 30, 2025

Adjournment: 4:00 PM

Next Meeting: December 2025 (Virtual)