

**Maine Quality Forum
Advisory Council
Minutes of Meeting
Friday, September 14**

The Maine Quality Forum Advisory Council held a meeting on Friday, September 14, 2007. Members in attendance were: Rebecca Colwell, Chair; Robert Keller MD, Co-chair; Josh Cutler MD, MQF Director, W. Stephen Gefvert MD, Jeffrey Holmstrom MD, Frank Johnson, Maureen Kenney, Brenda McCormick, Rod Prior MD, and Janice Wnek MD. Also in attendance were Karynlee Harrington, Executive Director of the Dirigo Health Agency and Maureen Booth of the Muskie School of Public Service.

Rebecca Colwell, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:15 AM. Ms. Colwell welcomed two new members to the Advisory Council: Douglas Salvador, MD (Patient Safety Officer at Maine Medical Center) who replaces Robert McArtor, MD; and Rod Prior, MD (Medical Director of MaineCare) replacing Brenda McCormick...

Dirigo Update - Karynlee Harrington

Ms. Karynlee Harrington, Director of the Dirigo Agency, gave the following report on Dirigo initiatives:

An Adjudicatory Hearing was held on July 26, 2007 announcing a total of \$78.1 million in savings in CY 2007, taking into account adjustments for bad debt and charity care and provider fee incentives. Final ruling on savings will be made by Maine's Superintendent of Insurance based on his review of the record, testimony of expert consultants and arguments made by interveners (Maine Association of Health Plans, Maine Chamber of Commerce, Consumers for Affordable Health Care and the Maine Automobile Dealers' Insurance Trust). A final decision is expected to be rendered on September 17, 2007.

Once a final decision is made, the Dirigo Board of Directors has the statutory authority to determine whether all or some of the savings are passed on in the form of hospital assessments. This decision is expected by January 1, 2008. Ms. Harrington underscored the time and resources spent to date in this process by all involved parties. It is her expectation that, going forward, a financing mechanism other than the savings offset payment could be established to support the program. To date, none of the proposed alternatives (tax on cigarettes, surcharge on hospital claims) have been acceptable to the Insurance and Finance Services Committee or Legislature

On September 5, 2007, the Dirigo Agency announced that it was unable to negotiate a mutually agreeable terms with Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield as the fiscal intermediary for the Dirigo product. The agency approached Harvard Pilgrim Health Care who agreed and accepted the terms previously offered to

Anthem. All parties are currently working together to assure a smooth transition of the program's 15,000 enrollees without disruption of service.

Organizational Changes at Maine Quality Forum

With regret, Dr. Cutler reported the resignation of Chris McCarthy. Chris will join Bath Iron Works where he will coordinate their community health outreach efforts. Ms. Colwell recognized Chris as one of the movers and shakers of quality reform and conveyed the sentiment of the Advisory Council that he (and his generous spirit) will be very much missed. This loss, in combination with the recent departure of Carrie Hanlon, has placed an urgency on recruitment efforts. It has also provided an opportunity for the agency to think strategically about its functions and, knowing that staff resources will remain minimal, how best it can work collaboratively to achieve its ambitious goals.

Present, Past and Future of Maine Quality Forum

Dr. Cutler presented an historical perspective of the MQF and its founding principals and statutory obligations (see Attachment A for copy of slides). The presentation then focused on his major priorities going forward:

Hospital Infections: Although recognized as a high priority by everyone (including CMS), collection efforts are hampered by several challenges. First no reliable method presently exists for determining whether an infection occurred prior to hospital admission. Proposals to insert billing codes have failed. Current coding to determine the presence of infections are inaccurate. Measuring outcome data requires expensive and time consuming chart review of clinical data. Lengthy discussion followed on whether the MQF measures should be based on administrative (claims) data or the more reliable clinical data.

Safety Star Program: This program has been disappointing in that no hospitals have yet applied for designation. Dr. Cutler expressed his concern that the program was very much a top-down approach with limited incentives or tools available to assist hospitals in meeting the standard. Dr. Cutler would like to switch the focus of this program to more direct work with critical access hospitals, whose needs have not been specifically addressed by the MQF. Dr. Cutler reported that he has had preliminary conversations with critical access hospitals, the Maine Health Access Foundation (MEHAF), the Maine Office of Rural Health, and the Muskie School about working together on patient safety initiatives.

State Health Plan: Trish Riley, Director of the Governor's Office of Health Care Policy and Finance, has been invited to attend the MQF Advisory Council meeting in November to review the charge to the MQF with respect to the State Health Plan.

Brenda McCormick questioned whether and how MQF planned to use pharmacy data to assess quality and monitor trends. Academic detailing has been found to work for the MaineCare population but is a costly proposition that could be better performed in concern with other insurers and quality programs. MQF was seen as the logical convenor for these kinds of statewide initiatives to be effective.

Advisory Council Meetings

From its onset, the Advisory Council has met monthly. While more frequent meetings were warranted in the early years to establish the structure and relationships needed to move forward, the work now focuses primarily on the efforts of staff and their contractors. Members agreed that less frequent meetings would be desirable and proposed five per year. This schedule would convert to meetings every other month between September through May and once in the summer. It was also agreed meetings of the Performance Indicator Committee meetings would occur after the Council meetings; other ad hoc Committees would meet when needed.

Feedback

Members expressed appreciation for the thoughtful reflections on the organization's past and future. It was felt that more targeted efforts and a clearer sense of the audience would enhance the effectiveness of efforts.

There being no input from the audience, the meeting adjourned at noon.

Next Meeting – November 9, 2007