

Medicaid Member Engagement Committee (MMEC) Meeting Minutes

3/10/26

Welcome & Icebreaker

- Come to order: 8:27 a.m.
- Welcome
- Roll Call
 - Members present
 - Allison Wanner
 - Ashley Roulette
 - Ashley Steele
 - Candace Swenning
 - Eldor Scheid
 - Heather Skadsem
 - Jacqueline Frost-Hodny
 - Kara Hanson
 - Neha Patel
 - Members absent
 - Emily Gilpin
 - Also present
 - Janice Tweet, Coverage Policy Director
 - Jen Sheppard, Member Liaison
 - Monique Runnels, Tribal Liaison
 - Wendy Schmidt, Policy Analyst
 - Alyssa Nies, Claims Administrator
 - LeeAnn Thiel, Reimbursement Director
- Conflicts of Interest
 - Opportunity to disclose a potential conflict of interest.
 - No concerns were expressed.

Guest Speaker

- Provider Billing: Alyssa Neis
 - Covered claims statistics, process, delays, and provider support.
- Provider Rates: LeeAnn Thiel
 - Covered the provider rates setting process and examples of provider rates.
 - Q&A
 - Do providers get reimbursed at the same rate whether they are rural or urban?
 - Yes.
 - How are provider rates set?
 - Rates are set based on a formula that geographically adjusts the national rates.
 - How are Medicaid service rates set?
 - Some service rates are set based on provider costs such as nursing facilities or basic care. Some rates are specific to ND such as ambulance, dental, non-emergency medical transportation.
 - Costs are updated annually for inflation.
 - Each facility has its own costs and reimbursement rates.
 - Working with legislators is one way to address rates.
 - Are there dentists that will provide services at current rates?
 - Rates are reset to make them current. Then, these are inflated forward. Legislature decides when to reset base rates.
 - Current dentists share that they can only provide services for so many ND Medicaid patients due to current reimbursement being 50% of costs.
 - We are aware and trying to advocate for this concern.
 - Suggestion was made to set higher rates for preventive dental services.
 - Do dental rates follow Medicare rates?
 - Rates are specific to ND.

- Who initiates rate reviews?
 - This can happen within Health and Human Services or involve outside stakeholders, the Dental Association, or legislature. The MMEC can bring this forward for 2027-2029 budget work.
- How do our rates compare to surrounding states?
 - We think we are comparable to neighboring states but have not checked recently.

Discussion

- The new agenda format was introduced as a Word document instead of a PowerPoint to better align with accessibility and to offer a more concise layout.
- Annual Goals Tracking
 - What do we want to achieve within each of our 2026 goals?
 - Provide education
 - Continue to produce E-news.
 - How to log into the Self-Service Portal.
 - Have members share real stories in advocacy.
 - Improving the Customer Support Center experience
 - Decrease wait time.
 - Add a call-back option.
 - Add a ticket number to reference when issues are not resolved and assign them to an assigned worker.
 - Better equip call center staff to answer questions and provide more support in the moment.
 - Shorten the application process. Vulnerable people can't afford to wait up to three months for approval/denial.
 - Improving the website
 - Reduce changes because they disorient and confuse members.
 - Sharing access to resources
 - Promote the applyforhelp@nd.gov email for non-urgent needs.

- Share best practices for getting through to the Customer Support Center and other resources.
- Current Event Tracking
 - Rural Health Transformation Program
 - On January 21st, 2026, a special Legislative session was held to start appropriating funds for rural health transformation. This means that the Legislature made the decision to discuss how funds will be spent. The Department of Health and Human Services will administer the funding and open grant opportunities in February. These funds must be obligated by Oct. 1, 2026, and spent by September 2027.
 - CMS is reviewing a revised budget. Once this budget is approved, the first grant opportunity is expected to be released.
 - Behavioral Health Rehabilitative Services
 - Held documentation training to ensure providers have the information needed to be successful in submitting service authorizations to exceed the soft limits.
 - Community Health Worker and Community Paramedicine Services
 - No community health workers have enrolled in Medicaid.
 - One member shared that she is aware of a facility getting ready to enroll staff as community health workers.
 - Traditional Healing Services
 - Resilient Pathways event was held to consider options for pursuing reimbursement for Traditional Healing Services.
 - Met with CMS to learn more about 1115 Demonstration Waiver option.
- Status Updates on Prior Discussion
 - Direct mailer for open MMEC seats
 - 100 flyers were mailed. 12 flyers were returned because of bad addresses. Two people applied. One was eligible. One interview was set up but did not take place.
- MMEC reviewed a proposal of three pillars of the holistic member experience. Pillars will bring focus to tools and methods to support member independence, education, and covered services.
 - What should we add, remove, or improve to capture a balanced focus for our holistic member experience?

- Add posters/flyers for CBOs and waiting rooms beneath the education pillar.
- Keep putting updates in E-News for the One Big Beautiful Bill Act impacts.
- Educate members on:
 - The difference between Medicaid and Medicaid Expansion
 - Waivers
 - Medication coverage
 - Behavioral health referrals and services
 - Out-of-state services
 - Non-emergency medical transportation
 - Getting efficient and effective member support
- Working/Not Working
 - What has been going well or needs improvement with your Medicaid coverage since we last met?
- Annual MMEC Evaluation
 - Identify main goals for the MMEC to achieve through the upcoming year.
- Q&A
 - Will MMEC member receive tax documents for stipends?
 - Tax documents are sent out in January to those who earned \$600 or more during the previous year.

Next Steps

- Stipends Reminder
 - Return needed documents for timely stipend processing.
- MMAC Meeting Prep.
 - What topics would you like to see discussed at the next MMEC meeting?
 - Dental concerns for shortage in providers and what can remedy this.
 - Concerns around accessing disability services.
 - Coverage concerns for vision services.
 - Coverage concerns for hearing services.
- Reminder for Next Meeting

- May 12, 2026 @ 9:30 a.m.
- Upcoming Meetings
 - July 7, 2026
 - September 8, 2026
 - November 10, 2026
- MMEC Satisfaction Survey
 - Last meeting's satisfaction survey results were reviewed and members were asked to take the satisfaction survey for this meeting.
- Meeting Adjourned: 11:20 a.m.