

Medicaid Member Engagement Committee (MMEC) Meeting Minutes

Date: 7/7/26

Welcome & Icebreaker

Welcome

- Roll Call
 - MMEC members
 - Allison Wanner
 - Ashley Roulette
 - Ashley Steele
 - Candace Swenning
 - Eldor Scheid
 - Kara Hanson
 - Neha Patel
 - Also present
 - Janice Tweet
 - Jen Sheppard
 - Monique Runnels
 - Rachael Buchwitz
 - Sara Regner
 - Wendy Schmidt

Icebreaker

Did you celebrate Independence Day? If you did, what did you do? If not, what is a summer holiday that you love to celebrate, and what did you do last time you celebrated it?

Conflicts of Interest

- Opportunity to disclose a potential conflict of interest.
 - No conflicts shared.
- Committee decision to accept or refuse conflict of interest.

- N/A.

Guest Speaker

Dental Services and Provider Shortages: Rachael Buchwitz and Sara Regner

We discussed dental services covered by North Dakota (ND) Medicaid and which services are covered under dental versus medical. We discovered the process for deciding which dental services ND Medicaid will cover.

We explored the dental provider shortage and identified that ND Medicaid reimbursement rates are on-par or above other states in our region. We acknowledged demographic impacts on professional workforce shortages, overwhelmed dental practices, and prohibitive costs of schooling for dental providers.

Presenters explained how Insure Kids Now data helps them understand provider shortages. ND Medicaid is using targeted outreach and policy changes to reduce administrative burden and increase dental provider enrollment. Presenters offered help finding dental providers and shared that travel is often involved for those in rural areas.

Bismarck State College (BSC) is starting a dental hygiene program. They will offer student loan repayment options to train more dental providers to work in our state.

- Questions and Answers (Q&A).
 - Q: One member shared that their dentist reported being reimbursed at 50% for provided services. What percentage of dental billing charges does Medicaid pay?
 - A: ND Medicaid reimburses a flat rate for each service. Providers set their own rates, so the percentage that ND Medicaid covers differs by provider. There are a great number of services covered.
 - Q: 265 dentists are currently enrolled with ND Medicaid. What is the total number of dentists in ND?
 - A: About 385 providers are affiliated with the Dental Association but not all may be actively practicing. This number was much lower than the MMEC anticipated.
 - Q: How many students will BSC be able to accommodate?
 - A: 14 students.
 - Q: Do any enrolled dentists offer emergency care services?
 - A: Most dentists will only provide emergency services to established patients due to needing the patient's health history.
 - Q: What causes claims denials?
 - A: Claims can be denied for many reasons. If a dentist provides a service that needs to be pre-authorized, that claim may be denied until the provider

obtains a prior authorization. A denial can also occur if benefits are not coordinated correctly between more than one source of health care coverage.

- Q: When does ND Medicaid cover services?
 - A: There are times that Medicaid cannot pay certain claims. They can pay for claims that become the patient responsibility.
- Q: Does BCBS Medicaid Expansion cover dental? If not, this should be changed.
 - A: No. This was reviewed during the last legislative session but did not pass. The next step is to speak to your area representative and/or a legislator to help represent this need during next legislative session.
- Q: What dental information would be recommended to share with members?
 - A: Remind members to call and cancel versus not show up to a scheduled appointment and to use non-emergency medical transportation to get to and from appointments.

Discussion

Annual Goals Tracking

Provide education

- Member handbook work has been slowed due to other duties with deadlines.

Improving the Customer Support Center (CSC) experience

- Task force formed between ND Health and Human Services and Human Service Zone staff.
 - As of June 1, eligibility team members are required to work 8 additional hours each week.
 - In the first two weeks, more than 4,282 extra hours were worked.

Improving the website

- Our website continues to undergo significant long-term work. Right now, we are beginning to meet with Medical Services staff to explore each webpage, its compliance to accessibility requirements, need for each webpage, and navigation to each webpage.

Sharing access to resources

- E-News is sharing resources around dental services, the enrollment of Community Health Workers, new school-based services, and more.

Current Event Tracking

Rural Health Transformation Program

- Rural Health Care Suicide Prevention initiative to improve health care for people at risk of suicide.

- \$40 million to the Rural Hospital Clinical Equipment funding opportunity to upgrade equipment and strengthen emergency and specialty health care.
- \$1.5 million to support a mobile mammography unit for rural communities in the western part of ND.
- [Learn more about these and other RHTP opportunities.](#)

Behavioral Health Rehabilitative Services

- No updates.

Community Health Worker and Community Paramedicine Services

- No updates.

Traditional Healing Services

- State Plan Amendment (SPA) denial and next steps
 - We pursued a SPA. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) did not approve but recommended a demonstration waiver instead.
- Section 1115 waiver overview
 - What a demonstration waiver is compared to a SPA. What information and actions are needed to develop a demonstration waiver.
- Tribal workgroup development
 - This group will review traditional services to cover, provider qualifications, how to implement services, prioritize community needs, and more.
- Waiver planning and application components
 - How to apply and plan for a demonstration waiver through CMS.

Status Updates on Prior Discussion

- Customer Support Center updates
 - Is the CSC tracking reasons for calls yet to find whether they result from fixable issues such as better training or program updates to avoid confusing or inaccurate member notices?
 - Not at this time, but it is a proposed change, pending approval.

A Public Message Around MMEC Membership

Create a message describing the MMEC membership experience to be added to our [MMEC webpage](#). What do we want others to know? How can we make the MMEC more inviting and appealing?

- As a member, you will be introduced to committee work and current members. Some members have never been part of committee work before and others have more experience.

Before we meet, our agenda is sent out so we can prepare our thoughts and ideas for the topics we will discuss. We get to decide what we talk about and what we aim to impact.

Our committee meets online for 1.5 hours every other month. We talk about ND Medicaid changes, challenges, and positive impacts. We look at what can be improved and our part in that process.

The MMEC is made up of people who want to impact health care and health care coverage for members in our state. Our members come from all walks of life, bringing unique experiences and points of view. Please consider being our next valued member!

- Member suggested adding a sentence about Medicaid needing feedback from members to elevate concerns to leadership. Members suggested adding a relevant example.

Attending Other States' BAC Meetings

Members were presented with the potential opportunity to attend other states' BAC meetings to observe their meeting practices. Several members were interested in this opportunity.

Meeting Survey

We didn't get any feedback on our last meeting. Was there a barrier to filling out the form?

- Two members stated that they had submitted their surveys and perhaps there was an error in receiving them.
- It was determined that accessing and remembering to take the survey would be easiest if the link were shared in the chat at the end of the meeting.

Working/Not Working

What has been going well or needs improvement with your Medicaid coverage since we last met?

- One member shared their concern for lengthy wait times to specialists and how many aren't enrolled in ND Medicaid making it harder to see a specialist in a reasonable amount of time.
- Another member mentioned the lack of staffing for home health care services due to challenges in competitive pay.

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

- Q: Is there a solution to waiting an hour on hold when calling to use non-emergency medical transportation? This is a great barrier to using this service.
 - A: Member liaison to follow up and deliver feedback.

Related News

- [Medicaid Opportunities to Strengthen Oral Health Access in Rural Communities.](#)

Next Steps

MMAC Meeting Prep

What topics would you like to see discussed at future MMAC meetings?

- Continuation of current topic discussions
- Mental Health/SUD services
- Elder health/assisted living
- How to request non-covered services

MMEC Satisfaction Survey

Last meeting's satisfaction survey results showed the following ratings:

- We didn't get any feedback on our last meeting. Was there a barrier to filling out the form?
 - The MMEC members expressed that the form was not allowing submissions to some, others had submitted, and most agreed that it was easiest if the link is shared during the meeting.

Stipends Reminder

Return needed documents for timely stipend processing.

Reminder for Next Meeting

Reschedule for September 8, 2026 meeting due to scheduling conflict.

- Sept. 1 at 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
 - Vote showed favor for this option.
- Sept. 10 at 9:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.

Upcoming Meetings

- November 10, 2026

Meeting Adjourned: 11:15 a.m.