

**Medical Care Advisory Committee  
Minutes Saturday, May 16, 2009**

**Members Present:**

Deb Kiley, DNP, Chair  
Tracy Charles-Smith  
Marie Darlin  
Amber Doyle  
Megan LaCross

Catriona Lowe  
Karen Sidell  
Renee Stoll, R. Ph.  
Elizabeth Turgeon, MD  
Mark Walker

Not in attendance:  
John Bringham

**DHSS Staff**

William Streur, DHSS, Deputy  
Commissioner

Sally Bowers, RN, MCAC Coordinator  
Nancy Cornwell, HCS staff

**Approve Minutes**

A motion was made by Dr. Turgeon, seconded by Amber Doyle to approve minutes of the February 6, 2009 meeting. Approved with no change.

**Medical Director's Report – Deputy Commissioner Bill Streur**

1. New Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS)

Medicaid pays about 21 million/week in health care benefits. This adds up to over a billion a year. The State has been in the process of developing a new MMIS system that will do a much better job of keeping track of what we do and ensuring payments are made promptly and accurately.

Information and regular updates on progress are available at [www.alaskamedicaid.info](http://www.alaskamedicaid.info). The new system will be virtually seamless to the providers. There likely will be some challenges as the systems roll over, but the new technology may cause some challenges. The plan is for a training team to go out to visit with providers and to offer training seminars are being planned.

**Action Item: Sally to send members the link for the new MMIS system.**

The new system currently is on time and on budget with the implementation date of June 1, 2010. This new system is fully relational and will make all data available for various reporting. Providers and recipients will be able to go online to review information in the system.

2. Revising and updating regulations. New behavioral health regulations are expected to be completed this Fall. The ABC codes currently used by mental health billers will be discontinued. By CMS standards, the ABC codes have not been in use since 2006. CMS has been extremely tolerant in allowing Alaska to use the codes but the plan is to close them out before the end of the year.

3. Expanded care

The State needs a better enrollment system. The current system is 24 years old. The ideal program would have real time enrollment so that by the time the person leaves the office they would be enrolled and not have to wait months to get enrolled for services. The system needs to be simplified to make it easier for those in the villages to get enrolled.

**Recommendation: MCAC consider taking on the task of working with the Department to update the enrollment system.**

4. Emergency regulations

The Medicaid rate is tied to Medicare reimbursement rate. Every time there is a Medicare increase there is a corresponding Medicaid increase. The 35% rate increase for Medicare that occurred as a result of the work of Ted Stevens caused a \$28 million increase in the Medicaid rate. At the end of March the State passed emergency regulations to reduce the conversion factor from 49.5 to 46.5. The 3 point reduction took the \$28 million increase down to only a \$7 million increase that was tolerable. Although this reduced the rate from the increase that was initiated in January, it actually was not a reduction on the overall. The result was an increase for most services. The issue was providers were ill informed and did not understand the intent of the emergency regulations. Many thought the Medicaid rates were being reduced, but in fact, there was an increase in the Medicaid rates, just not as much as would have been allowed when tied to the Medicare rate.

**Recommendation: MCAC may suggest some strategies for notification of providers of proposed regulation or policy changes to ensure all providers are aware of the changes being made. This could serve as a preventive measure to cause less disruption and discontent when changes are made and providers find out after the fact.**

5. Legislation

Bill provided a 2009 Legislative roundup. This information will be posted to the MCAC website for reference. <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dhcs/MCAC/default.htm>

6. Recognition of Committee Member

Bill presented Marie Darlin a certificate of recognition for 9 years of dedicated service to the MCAC.

**MCAC Planning Session – facilitated by Nancy Cornwell, HCS Staff**

Summary and draft plan in separate document.