

State-Wide Primary Care Access Authority

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Meeting Summary

July 29, 2009, 7:30 A.M.

Members Present: Margaret Flinter, Tom Swan, Dr. Sandra Carbonari, Lynn Price, Jody Rowell, Evelyn Barnum and Dr. Robert McLean

Margaret Flinter reviewed the agenda, which includes review of two sets of minutes, from May and June. It also includes an update on electronic relicensure and workforce survey, a review of the Sustinet bill, and the key elements of the federal reform bill proposal. She noted this is especially important so that people aren't starting in three years but are starting now with actions that really advance the cause of universal access to primary care.

Jody Rowell made a motion to approve the May minutes. The May minutes were approved.

Margaret Flinter opened the June minutes for approval or discussion. The June minutes were approved.

Margaret Flinter reminded the members that minutes are posted to the ct.gov website after approval. She commented that the last meeting and Joy Anderson's presentation was very provocative in terms of thinking about make more rational sense of the whole "cash system" in health care.

Margaret Flinter congratulated Jennifer Filippone, Karen Buckley-Bates, Commission Galvin and the DPH team for their work on electronic re-licensure and surveying. She noted it is up and running for the physicians, who are renewing licenses, with the expectation that the APRN's, RN's, Dentists and others will follow soon. It feels like the first of many efforts to have really tangible workforce data, that will for the first time tell us not just that there are x-thousands of each group of healthcare professionals, but where and whether they practice, in primary care or specialty, with an e.m.r. or not, how long in practice, etc. With any luck that means within a year rather than doing derivative data to figure out whether we have enough providers to take care of the people of Connecticut from a primary care perspective, we will actually have some hard data. Thank you and congratulations to DPH.

Lynn Price asked if we have any idea how they are introducing the survey to providers and opined that it will require outreach to people.

Dr. Robert McLean suggested that they reach out to the state Medical Society to at least give a warning that the process is changing, and why; it will make physicians more amenable to the change

Tom Swan commented that DPH is planning broader public relations and working through organizations, they want to make sure that there aren't any kinks and that they work them through

Margaret Flinter introduced a discussion of the highlights of the Sustinet Plan which was distributed to members. She noted that it reflects many of the recommendations of the HealthFirst Authority as well as our discussions on this Authority.

Tom Swan gave a detailed overview of the Plan, which is designed to have a universal plan for an up or down vote for January of 2011. . Some key components of Sustinet are the creation of a public plan that actually is about combining the state employee pool along with the Medicaid and various other state programs to give small businesses and others the opportunity to buy into in order to, in many ways, streamline the delivery in a way that hopefully will make both the provider community's life more reasonable and also provide some cost savings and assistance in navigating for those of us in the small business or the non-profit world. Tom then invited comments and discussion.

Dr. Robert McLean urged everyone to consider recommendations for the Board and workgroups that will ensure good representation by people who are qualified and understand the issues.

Lynn Price noted the short timeline for all the work to be done and encouraged everyone to think about recommendations for members of the committees and workgroups.

Dr. Sandra Carbonari asked about the relationship between this Authority and the new Sustinet group, and how to avoid overlap and redundancy.

Tom Swan suggested that we invite the Comptroller to our September meeting for an update and feedback. Margaret Flinter added that the Primary Care Access Authority is a 4 year Authority and timing-wise it would be ending at around the time that Sustinet was actually going live. The challenge over the next 2 years is to make sure that all the work of the Authority to date and all of that expertise and data and recommendations that were developed are used to help advance the work of the Sustinet board so they don't have to go back and reinvent the wheel

Jody Rowell expressed her excitement about the progress on health care and added that one of the most important things is that we are moving forward, and hopefully looking holistically at each human being.

Margaret Flinter reviewed key elements of the provisions of the federal reform bill in terms of coverage, care transformation, and workforce, health information technology and prevention/public health. She encouraged people to read the plan and comment on it when they come back after the session in the summer.

The members discussed the contribution of the reform bill to care coordination, development of electronic health records, and community based care. Margaret asked if anyone knew what the strategy was going to be for the Connecticut Medical Society to pursue ARRA stimulus funds to help practices. Margaret Flinter. Lynn Price noted her concern, based on experience, of the difficulty of different systems communicating with each other.

Dr. Robert McLean reviewed the details of the federal program for reimbursing practices for the costs of implementing electronic health records, based on their ability to show that they meet the standards—which haven't been released yet. He added that he is not aware of any organized strategy by the Medical Society at this time.

Margaret Flinter summarized some of the issues before us: HIT, integrating behavioral health, following through on the HealthFirst recommendation for the state to convert SAGA to Medicaid, continued development of the medical home, and primary care case management. Dr. Carbonari noted that PCCM has now been expanded to everybody in the Waterbury and Windham areas, and is going to expand to New Haven and Hartford on January 1.

Evelyn Barnum gave an update on the status of expansions of the community health centers.

The Authority discussed the approach to the final report. She asked members to continue to work on their sections, and added that she and Tom are trying to get support to get a consultant to pull it all together and work with each person. Dr. McLean stated his concerns over the data in the primary care access authority, which is different than that in a survey done by the CSMS.

Margaret suggested that our next focus areas are the report and the specificity of the recommendations. The next meeting would be on August 26, 2009. She will invite the Comptroller and if she is unable to attend that meeting, we will cancel the August meeting and meet in September.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 am.