

GLOBAL WAIVER TASK FORCE MEETING
February 25, 2013
MEETING MINUTES

Task Force Members Attending: Paul Block, Leo Canuel, Rebecca Kislak, Joanne Malise, James Nyberg, Br. Michael Reis, Sharon Terzian, Dawn Wardyga, Vivian Weisman

Staff Members and Public Attending: Lori Qarantu, Steven J. Patriarca, Darren McDonald, Denise Achin, Michael Cancelliere, Michael Menard, Holly Garvey, Ron Pariseau, Rele Abiade, Kathleen Kelly, Thomas Marcello, Tina Spears, Anthony Salvo, Ann Martino, Elena Nicolella, Senator Tom Izzo

Ann Martino, EOHHS Policy, opened the meeting by informing all attendees that future task force meetings will be posted on the EOHHS website (www.eohhs.ri.gov). She also noted that staff is in the process of developing a new EOHHS website and is looking for information from the task force members. A new one stop shop page will be available on the site that allows users to access every state service they need for a particular population. Feedback for this aspect of the website is necessary to ensure a consumer-friendly and effective page is created. All members who seek to provide input on this matter should contact Anthony Salvo (asalvo@dhs.ri.gov) with their information.

Senator Tom Izzo, Community Chair, spoke to the task force in regards to getting an agenda out a few weeks prior to the start of each monthly meeting. He also noted the need for greater collaboration between EOHHS and the task force as the waiver renewal application goes forward. Sen. Izzo requested that future budget initiatives and other legislative pieces be presented to the task force at the next meeting.

Ann Martino also asked the task force to solicit all ideas on the future of the task force to Anthony Salvo. Task force members should establish idea on where they see the task force going in the next few months.

Question – Dawn Wardyga – Will the legislative information be presented in an easy to understand manner for the task force?

Answer – Ann Martino – There are a lot of Dept. of Health bills in the hopper right now, the General Assembly is a little behind this session and we expect to see the pace pick up sometime soon. We will continue to look at the Affordable Care Act at the national level and update the task force throughout the process.

Question – Vivian Weisman – Will the task force be presented with information on the changes coming in Medicaid eligibility and the expansion of coverage?

Answer – Elena Nicolella – Yes, we are working on compiling data and will provide the task force with an update.

Question – Br. Michael Reis – Is the task force set up to give support to agency initiatives or to provide honest suggestions?

Answer – Ann Martino – EOHHS and the agencies are bound by the Governor’s choices. If there are disagreements on issues from the task force we can take those opinions to the department directors and bring those ideas to the table.

Question – Dawn Wardyga – These conversations are very useful to the agencies and the community. Knowing the position an agency takes helps us to let the process work out and get the voices of constituents heard. We do need facts from the agencies in order to communicate with the public.

Answer – Ann Martino – We can use sidebars to keep a running list of activities and to conduct informal outreach to stakeholders.

Elena Nicolella, Medicaid Director, provided the task force with an update on the Unified Health Infrastructure Project. The project is a collaboration between EOHHS, Rhode Island Health Benefit Exchange, Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner and the Department of Human Services. The goal is to create a technological solution by designing and implementing an integrated web portal for health insurance/human services eligibility. The first phase of the project will allow users to go online and find out which health insurance coverage they may be eligible for and then apply for that coverage. By 2015 users will be able to access SNAP, TANF and other benefits through the same system. The system is designed to reach across population groups and has performance measures in place. There is also a burden and importance on managed care companies to have data and analysis. We can use this data for continued improvement going forward.

Senator Izzo voiced concerns regarding the numerous initiatives that focus on infrastructure. He stated that sometimes quality gets lost in the governing process. He also noted that people and outcomes are important and it is equally important that we have the capacity to respond to and improve outcomes.

Ann Martino noted that there is a lot of research that goes into programs. However, the Governor sets the policy priority. Ultimately the decisions lie in the hands of the General Assembly.

Elena Nicolella also provided the task force with an update on the 1115 waiver renewal. The state comment period was closed on March 1, 2013. On March 11, 2013 the final document will go to CMS along with responses to public comments. The federal government will then have 30-45 days to review the request and will conduct another comment period at the federal level.

Ms. Nicolella also spoke on budget initiatives within Medicaid. There will be a delay in the increased nursing home rates that were scheduled to occur. Hospitals will also have a delay in their rate increase for the next FY. A cut to managed care contracts will also result in approximately \$8.8 million in savings.

Question – Will the CNOM money be put back for home modifications?

Answer – Elena Nicolella – This goes through the Office of Rehabilitation Services. The money is going through the process of being formally restored. Department of Elderly Affairs funds were restored as well. We will connect with our budget staff and give information as it comes along.

Question – Jim Nyberg – Can you comment on the innovation grant?

Answer – Elena Nicolella – The federal government has announced opportunities for states to receive innovation grants. States can pursue and put together a proposal and ask for funds. The funding is \$1.6 million for a six month planning period. We plan on using models created by the Lt. Governor. This will benefit both Medicaid and Medicare. As of right now we are in the process of reviewing grant requirements.

Senator Izzo also spoke on the delicate balance that exists between agencies and advisory groups. He noted that there needs to be a way to draw on the wealth of ideas that exist and how to blend those ideas into the process. There is a desire to have additional conversations regarding the 1115 waiver renewal.

Ann Martino commented on the 1115 waiver extension and how many ideas from the task force were included almost verbatim into the actual extension request. She also told the task force to think about what ideas they would like to see addressed.

The next meeting of the Global Waiver Task Force is scheduled for Monday March 25, 2013 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm at the Arnold Conference Center, Eleanor Slater Hospital.