



MRT Work Group Meeting Summary

WORK GROUP NAME:

Program Streamlining and State/Local Responsibilities

MEETING DATE, TIME, LOCATION:

September 8, 2011 - 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
335 East Main Street, Rochester, New York

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Acquario, Kate Breslin, Maggie Brooks, Trilby de Jung, Robert Doar (by phone), Melinda Dutton, Denise Figueroa (by phone), David Jolly, Deborah Mabry, Ann Monroe, Martha Robertson, Robert Thompson, Fran Turner

SUMMARY OF KEY MEETING CONTENT:

The majority of the meeting focused on reaching consensus on a model of State and Local responsibilities for eligibility and enrollment in the context of the Exchange. Consensus development was facilitated by a review of the results of a pre-meeting survey of members on their views about which eligibility and enrollment functions should be centralized and which should remain local. The major theme that arose from the survey results was that if automation has been achieved, the function should be centralized. Where automation is not yet available, the functions should remain local. The group reached consensus on:

- *Centralize eligibility determinations for MAGI online applications, wherever initiated.*
- *Centralize processing of MAGI mail and phone applications*
- *Provide local in-person assistance (i.e., government, community organizations) to help consumers apply for all Insurance Affordability programs with eligibility determinations centralized through a common eligibility system.*
- *Automate non-MAGI eligibility determinations where possible (i.e., MSP); non-automated eligibility determinations remain with local districts.*
- *Provide local specialized "hands on" help for non-MAGI individuals and centralized supports for assistors.*
- *Support specialized third-party assistors for LTC, disabled individuals, and other special eligibility pathways.*

Three areas requiring further discussion are: 1) the role of the local district in assisting MAGI individuals who are not eligible for Medicaid, but may be eligible for another Insurance Affordability program (CHIP, Advanced Premium Tax Credit, reduced cost-sharing); 2) local roles - what functions remain with the local districts and what functions are performed by other local partners; and 3) linkages with other social services programs.

The group then turned to a discussion of the guiding principles for the coverage goals of the Exchange. Some additions to the draft guiding principles included: a recognition that implementation of the ACA is a state responsibility, the addition of program integrity as a principle, and an acknowledgement that implementation of the ACA will be phased and care should be taken to avoid disruptions during the transition.

The Work Group agreed to a financing recommendation to forward to the full MRT. The financing recommendation is:

- In most of the 50 states, Medicaid is financed almost exclusively with state and federal tax dollars. In New York State, approximately 30% of the non-federal cost of Medicaid is paid through the local taxes.
- The fiscal structure is unsustainable for several reasons:
 - *Reliance on local property taxes to fund Medicaid has contributed to making New York's local tax burden the highest in the nation.*
 - *Use of a narrowly defined and regressive tax for such a large State program contributes to both negative perceptions of the program and inconsistent eligibility policies across counties.*
 - *The new property tax cap imposes annual growth limits on revenue that are far below the expected growth rate in Medicaid costs.*
 - *This fiscal structure creates challenges as the State implements the requirements of the Affordable Care Act. It will be difficult to accomplish the goals of the ACA – to move the culture of Medicaid away from a welfare program toward health insurance – if the funding continues to be derived from local property taxes.*
- We recommend the State develop and implement a plan for more sustainable Medicaid financing that phases out reliance on local taxes (e.g., property taxes) and includes the examination of financing structures in other states.

The next segment of the meeting described the status of the long-term care subcommittee. Trilby de Jung reviewed the subcommittee's charge which includes focusing on streamlining and standardizing eligibility and enrollment for long-term care recipients, addressing delays in processing of enrollment, and the education of consumers, workers, and providers. Ms. de Jung also summarized the information the group asked to be provided by the Department. An important theme is an emphasis on consistency in the application of policy.

Finally, the group reviewed the status of their recommendations. This led to a discussion of the progress on legislation to establish New York's Exchange. The group felt strongly that New York should have its own Exchange and not allow the federal government to run New York's Exchange. The group intends to recommend that the Legislature enact the Governor's program bill (passed by the Assembly) before the end of 2011. Some in the group recommended the Governor explore administrative options to establish an Exchange absent legislation. At the same time, the group agreed that the Governor's Program bill was the best approach for New York to move forward with an Exchange.

NEXT STEPS/PRELIMINARY AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

- Obtain member feedback on draft recommendations prior to the next meeting, including the revised model of state/local roles in eligibility and enrollment
- Develop a straw man model of local roles
- Draft a summary of the roles and responsibilities of the various third party assistors (i.e., navigators, facilitated enrollers, brokers, etc).

The next meeting will be the last meeting of the Work Group. The group will discuss local roles in eligibility and enrollment, linkages with social services programs, status of the long-term care subcommittee, and vote on the recommendations where consensus has been reached.

NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, LOCATION:

September 27, 2011, 10 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.
One Fulton Street, Troy, New York