

August 21, 2015

Mr. Melvin Kleckner
Town Administrator
Town of Brookline
333 Washington Street, 6 Floor
Brookline, MA 02445

Dear Mr. Kleckner,

The Health Policy Commission (HPC), in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General (AGO) and the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA), is required by state law to hold annual public hearings concerning health care cost trends in the Commonwealth. (See the Notice of Public Hearing attached as “Exhibit A.”) G.L. c. 6D § 8 requires the HPC to identify a representative sample of health care providers and payers as witnesses for the hearing. In accordance with these provisions, the Town of Brookline has been identified as a witness and is hereby requested to submit written testimony in response to the questions of the HPC in “Exhibit B.”

The annual health care cost trends hearing is a public examination into the drivers of health care costs as well as the engagement of experts and witnesses to identify particular challenges and opportunities within the Commonwealth's health care system. This year's hearing will focus on a number of important topics, including the state's performance under the health care cost growth benchmark. Your assistance and active participation in this hearing process will contribute to the on-going public dialogue about how to develop a more affordable, effective, and accountable health care system.

In summary, the Town of Brookline is required to electronically submit to HPC written testimony, signed under the pains and penalties of perjury, responding to the areas of inquiry identified on the attached “Exhibit B” on or before the close of business on **Monday, September 21, 2015**.

The written testimony should be submitted to HPC-Testimony@state.ma.us. Any and all written testimony will be a public record and will be posted on the HPC's website at www.mass.gov/hpc.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



David Seltz
Executive Director

CC: Karen Tseng, Chief, Health Care Division, Office of the Attorney General
CC: Áron Boros, Executive Director, Center for Health Information and Analysis

Exhibit A: Notice of Public Hearing

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 6D, § 8, the Health Policy Commission (HPC), in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General (AGO) and the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA), will hold a public hearing on health care cost trends. The hearing will examine health care provider, provider organization and private and public health care payer costs, prices and cost trends, with particular attention to factors that contribute to cost growth within the Commonwealth's health care system.

Scheduled hearing dates and location:

Monday, October 5, 2015, 9:00 AM
Tuesday, October 6, 2015, 9:00 AM
Suffolk University Law School
First Floor Function Room
120 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02108

Time-permitting, the HPC will accept oral testimony from members of the public beginning at 4:00 PM on both days. Any person who wishes to testify may sign up to offer brief comments on a first-come, first-served basis when the hearing commences on October 5 and 6.

Members of the public may also submit written testimony. Written comments will be accepted until October 9, 2015 and should be submitted electronically to HPC-Testimony@state.ma.us, or, if comments cannot be submitted electronically, sent by mail, post-marked no later than October 9, 2015, to the Health Policy Commission, 50 Milk Street, 8th floor, Boston, MA 02109, attention Lois H. Johnson.

Please note that all written and oral testimony provided by witnesses or the public may be posted on the HPC's website: www.mass.gov/hpc.

The HPC encourages all interested parties to attend the hearing. For driving and public transportation directions, please visit: <http://www.suffolk.edu/law/explore/6629.php>. Suffolk University Law School is located diagonally across from the Park Street MBTA station (Red and Green lines). Parking is not available at the law school but information about nearby garages is listed at the link provided.

If you require disability-related accommodations for this hearing, please contact Kelly Mercer at (617) 979-1420 or by email at Kelly.A.Mercer@state.ma.us a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the hearing so that we can accommodate your request.

For more information, including details about the agenda, expert and market participant panelists, testimony and presentations, please check the Annual Cost Trends Hearing section of the HPC's website, www.mass.gov/hpc. Materials will be posted regularly as the hearing dates approach.

Exhibit B: Instructions and HPC Questions for Written Testimony

Instructions:

On or before the close of business on September 21, 2015, electronically submit, written testimony signed under the pains and penalties of perjury to: HPC-Testimony@state.ma.us.

Please begin each response with a brief summary not to exceed 120 words. Responses should be submitted in Microsoft Word format. Please contact Kelly Mercer at Kelly.A.Mercer@state.ma.us or (617) 979-1420 if you would like a template to use for your responses. Please submit any data tables included in your response in **Microsoft Excel or Access format**.

The testimony must contain a statement that the signatory is legally authorized and empowered to represent the named organization for the purposes of this testimony, and that the testimony is signed under the pains and penalties of perjury. An electronic signature will be sufficient for this submission.

If you have any other questions regarding this process or regarding the following questions, please contact: Lois Johnson at Lois.Johnson@state.ma.us or (617) 979-1405.

Questions:

1. What has been your experience participating in the Group Insurance Commission? What are your observations of health care cost trends before and after your participation?
2. What methods, if any, does your organization use to encourage employees to use high value (high quality, low cost) providers? What has been the effectiveness of these efforts?
3. What methods, if any, do you use to educate employees about tiered and limited network plans offered by the Group Insurance Commission? What has been the reaction of your employees to these products?
4. Please identify any additional health care cost drivers that you believe should be examined in subsequent years and explain your reasoning.
5. Please provide any additional comments or observations you believe will help to inform our hearing and our final recommendations.