

2018 Pre-Filed Testimony Hospitals and Provider Organizations



**As part of the
*Annual Health Care
Cost Trends Hearing***

Notice of Public Hearing

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 6D, § 8, the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission (HPC), in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General and the Center for Health Information and Analysis, 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:

Tuesday, October 16, 2018, 9:00 AM
Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 9:00 AM
Suffolk University Law School
First Floor Function Room
120 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02108

The HPC will call for oral testimony from witnesses, including health care executives, industry leaders, and government officials. Time-permitting, the HPC will accept oral testimony from members of the public beginning at approximately 3:30 PM on Tuesday, October 16. Any person who wishes to testify may sign up on a first-come, first-served basis when the hearing commences on October 16.

Members of the public may also submit written testimony. Written comments will be accepted until October 19, 2018, and should be submitted electronically to HPC-Testimony@mass.gov, or, if comments cannot be submitted electronically, sent by mail, post-marked no later than October 19, 2018, to the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission, 50 Milk Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109, attention Lois H. Johnson, General Counsel.

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 Suffolk, but information about nearby garages is listed at the link provided. The event will also be livestreamed on the [HPC's homepage](#) and available on the [HPC's YouTube Channel](#) following the hearing.

If you require disability-related accommodations for this hearing, please contact HPC staff at (617) 979-1400 or by email at HPC-Info@mass.gov 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 witnesses, testimony, and presentations, please check the [Annual Cost Trends Hearing section](#) of the HPC's website. Materials will be posted regularly as the hearing dates approach.

Instructions for Written Testimony

If you are receiving this, you are hereby required under M.G.L. c. 6D, § 8 to submit written pre-filed testimony for the 2018 Annual Cost Trends Hearing. On or before the close of business on **September 14, 2018**, please electronically submit written testimony to: HPC-Testimony@mass.gov. Please complete relevant responses in the provided template. If necessary, you may include additional supporting testimony or documentation in an Appendix. Please submit any data tables included in your response in Microsoft Excel or Access format.

We encourage you to refer to and build upon your organization's 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and/or 2017 pre-filed testimony responses, if applicable. Additionally, if there is a point that is relevant to more than one question, please state it only once and make an internal reference. **If a question is not applicable to your organization, please indicate so in your response.**

The testimony must contain a statement from a signatory that is legally authorized and empowered to represent the named organization for the purposes of this testimony. The statement must note 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 difficulty with the templates, did not receive the email, or have any other questions regarding the pre-filed testimony process or the questions, please contact HPC staff at HPC-Testimony@mass.gov or (617) 979-1400.

HPC Contact Information

For any inquiries regarding HPC questions, please contact HPC-Testimony@mass.gov or (617) 979-1400.

AGO Contact Information

For any inquiries regarding AGO questions, please contact Assistant Attorney General Sandra Wolitzky at Sandra.Wolitzky@mass.gov or (617) 963-2030.

HPC Pre-Filed Testimony Questions

1) STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS HEALTH CARE SPENDING GROWTH

To address excessive health care costs that crowd out spending on other needs of government, households, and businesses alike, the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission (HPC) annually sets a statewide target for sustainable growth of total health care spending. From 2013 to 2017, the benchmark rate was set at 3.6% growth. For the first time for 2018 and again for 2019, the HPC exercised its authority to lower this target to a more ambitious growth rate of 3.1%, the lowest level allowed by state law. Achieving this reduced growth rate in the future will require renewed efforts by all actors in the health care system, supported by necessary policy reforms, to achieve savings without compromising quality or access.

- a) What are your organization's top areas of concern for the state's ability to meet the 3.1% benchmark? Please limit your answer to no more than three areas of concern.
The top areas of concern are increases in employment costs, benefit costs, real estate costs, taxes and assessments all of which are market or legislatively driven. With unemployment being very low in the areas in which we do business and the number of appropriately trained, licensed personnel being limited, employment costs may increase in excess of the 3.1% target. The company competes for real estate locations with many other types of businesses that may be benefiting from a strong economy and may be able to pay elevated rents. Additionally, insurance costs may increase for malpractice and property and casualty.
- b) What are the top changes in policy, market behavior, payment, regulation, or statute your organization would recommend to address these concerns?
Remove the need for referrals for MassHealth patients to receive urgent care. Most MassHealth patients require referrals to receive care at urgent care centers, but do not require referrals to receive care at higher cost hospital emergency departments.
- c) What are your organization's top strategic priorities to reduce health care expenditures? Please limit your answer to no more than three strategic priorities.
CareWell plans to continue providing great service and quality care, generating high ratings from patients. The company concurs with the HPC's view that access to urgent care centers has the potential to reduce avoidable and costlier emergency department visits. The cost of urgent care is substantially less than the cost of emergency departments and the company hopes that more patients who are appropriate for urgent care will have access to and utilize our centers.

2) INFORMATION ABOUT ALTERNATIVE CARE SITES

The HPC recently released a [new policy brief](#) examining the significant growth in hospital and non-hospital based urgent care centers as well as retail clinic sites in Massachusetts from 2010 to 2018. Such alternative, convenient points of access to health care have the potential to reduce avoidable and costlier emergency department (ED) visits.

Question Instructions: *If your organization does not own or operate any alternative care sites such as urgent care centers, please only answer questions (e) and (f) below. For purposes of this question, an urgent care center serves all adult patients (i.e., not just patients with a pre-existing clinical relationship with the center or its providers) on a walk-in (non-appointment) basis and has hours of service beyond normal weekday business hours. Information requested in question (a) below may be provided in the form of a link to an online directory or as an appended directory.*

a) Using the most recent information, please list the names and locations of any alternative care sites your organization owns or operates in Massachusetts. Indicate whether the site is corporately owned and operated, owned and operating through a joint venture, or a non-owned affiliate clinical affiliate.

- i. Patriot Square, 484 Rte. 134
South Dennis, MA 02660
- ii. 42 Washington St.
Norwell, MA 02061
Phone: 781.421.3503
Fax: 781.421.3511
- iii. 922 Highland Avenue
Needham, MA 02494
- iv. 229 Andover Street (Rt 114)
Peabody, MA 01960
- v. 50 Worcester Road, Unit 3
Framingham, MA 01702
- vi. 510 Boston Post Road
Billerica, MA 01821
- vii. 345 Main Street
Tewksbury, MA 01876
- viii. 58 Bedford Street
Lexington, MA 02420
- ix. 1400 Cambridge St.
Cambridge, MA 02138
- x. 349 Broadway
Somerville, MA 02145
- xi. 601-603 Concord Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138

Carewell Urgent Care Centers of MA, PC provides clinical staff at the following locations:

- i. 500 Lincoln Street
Worcester, MA 01605
- ii. 348 Greenwood Street
Worcester, MA 01607
- iii. 333 SW Cutoff, Unit 202

Northborough, MA 01532-2130

iv. 757 Boston Post Road East
Marlborough, MA 01752

v. 380 John Fitch Highway
Fitchburg, MA 01420

- b) Please provide the following aggregate information for calendar year 2017 about the alternative care sites your organization owns or operates in Massachusetts, including those operated through a joint venture with another organization (information from non-owned affiliates should not be included):

Number of unique patient visits	136,618
---------------------------------	---------

Proportion of gross patient service revenue that was received from commercial payers, Medicare, MassHealth, Self-Pay, and Other	100%
Percentage of patient visits where the patient is referred to a more intensive setting of care	NA

- c) For the alternative care sites your organization owns or operates in Massachusetts, briefly describe the clinical staffing model, including the type of clinicians (e.g., physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, paramedics, nurses). If different models are used, describe the predominant model.

The sites operated by CareWell Urgent Care Centers of MA, PC are staffed with at least one provider (physician, NP or PA). Centers with higher volume may have more than one provider working at any given time. In addition to the providers, locations may be staffed with rad techs, nurses, medical assistants and paramedics.

- d) For the alternative care sites your organization owns or operates in Massachusetts, briefly describe the method and timeliness of how the medical record of a patient’s visit to an alternative care site is shared with that patient’s primary care provider (e.g., interoperable electronic health record, secure email transfer, fax). What barriers has your organization faced in sharing real-time information about patient visits to your alternative care sites with primary care providers or other health care providers?

CareWell uses an Athena EMR which has integrations with CareEquality and CommonWell which allows for the direct transfer of medical records from CareWell to participating providers. Most of our affiliated health systems use an Epic Systems EMR which allows the transfer of records to occur the same day as the patient visit. CareWell also faxes records upon request. The company also uses Mass HIway. The biggest barrier is ascertaining with which providers to share the information. Many patients are unsure of who their provider is, what practice they are a member of or if their provider is employed by a health system.

- e) Besides establishing alternative care sites, what other strategies is your organization pursuing to expand timely access to care with the goal of reducing unnecessary hospital utilization (e.g., after-hours primary care, on-demand telemedicine/virtual visits).

Our practice is focused on urgent care.

- f) Please comment on the growth of alternative care sites in Massachusetts, including implications for your organization as well as impacts on health care costs, quality, and access in Massachusetts.

No comment.

3. STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT PROVIDERS TO ADDRESS HEALTH-RELATED SOCIAL NEEDS

Earlier this year, the HPC held a special event entitled, [*Partnering to Address Social Determinants of Health: What Works?*](#), where many policymakers, experts, and market participants all highlighted the need for health care systems to partner with community-based organizations to address patients’ and families’ health-related social needs (e.g., housing stability, nutrition, transportation) in order to improve health outcomes and slow the growth in health care costs.

- a) What are the primary barriers your organization faces in creating partnerships with community-based organizations and public health agencies in the community/communities in which you provide care? [check all that apply]

- Legal barriers related to data-sharing
- Structural/technological barriers to data-sharing
- Lack of resources or capacity of your organization or community organizations
- Organizational/cultural barriers
- Other: [Click here to enter text.](#)

b) What policies and resources, including technical assistance or investments, would your organization recommend to the state to address these challenges?
no recommendations

AGO Pre-Filed Testimony Questions

1. For provider organizations: please submit a summary table showing for each year 2014 to 2017 your total revenue under pay for performance arrangements, risk contracts, and other fee for service arrangements according to the format and parameters reflected in the attached **AGO Provider Exhibit 1**, with all applicable fields completed. To the extent you are unable to provide complete answers for any category of revenue, please explain the reasons why. Include in your response any portion of your physicians for whom you were not able to report a category (or categories) of revenue.
2. Chapter 224 requires providers to make price information on admissions, procedures, and services available to patients and prospective patients upon request.
 - a) Please use the following table to provide available information on the number of individuals that seek this information.

Health Care Service Price Inquiries CY2016-2018			
Year		Aggregate Number of Written Inquiries	Aggregate Number of Inquiries via Telephone or In-Person
CY2016	Q1	NA	NA
	Q2	NA	NA
	Q3	NA	NA
	Q4	NA	NA
CY2017	Q1	NA	NA
	Q2	NA	NA
	Q3	NA	NA
	Q4	NA	NA
CY2018	Q1	NA	NA
	Q2	NA	NA
TOTAL:		NA	NA

- b) Please describe any monitoring or analysis you conduct concerning the accuracy and/or timeliness of your responses to consumer requests for price information, and the results of any such monitoring or analysis.

We attempt to respond to requests for information in a timely manner which may also include clarifying what a patient is inquiring about.

- c) What barriers do you encounter in accurately/timely responding to consumer inquiries for price information? How have you sought to address each of these barriers?

It can be difficult to reach patients with responses or to clarify what information they are looking for.

- 3. For hospitals and provider organizations corporately affiliated with hospitals:

a) For each year 2015 to present, please submit a summary table for your hospital or for the two largest hospitals (by Net Patient Service Revenue) corporately affiliated with your organization showing the hospital's operating margin for each of the following four categories, and the percentage each category represents of your total business: (a) commercial, (b) Medicare, (c) Medicaid, and (d) all other business. Include in your response a list of the carriers or programs included in each of these margins, and explain whether and how your revenue and margins may be different for your HMO business, PPO business, and/or your business reimbursed through contracts that incorporate a per member per month budget against which claims costs are settled.
Required Question: [Click here to enter text.](#)

b) For 2017 only, please submit a summary table for your hospital or for the two largest hospitals (by Net Patient Service Revenue) corporately affiliated with your organization showing for each line of business (commercial, Medicare, Medicaid, other, total) the hospital's inpatient and outpatient revenue and margin for each major service category according to the format and parameters provided and attached as **AGO Provider Exhibit 2** with all applicable fields completed. Please submit separate sheets for pediatric and adult populations, if necessary. If you are unable to provide complete answers, please provide the greatest level of detail possible and explain why your answers are not complete.
Required Question: [Click here to enter text.](#)