

**Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Long-Term Services & Supports and Health Equity Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes**

Date of Meeting: Monday, April 28, 2025

Time: 11am to 12pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Members Participating Remotely	
1	Carl Richardson (Co-Chair) – ADA Coordinator, Massachusetts State House
2	Charlie Carr (Co-Chair) – Legislative Liaison, Disability Policy Consortium
3	Honorable Representative Denise C. Garlick, MA House of Representatives
4	Oz Mondejar – President, Mucho Gusto Consulting
Members Not Present	
5	Angela Ortiz – Executive Director, MA Health Council
6	Chris White – CEO & President, Road to Responsibility, Inc

Action Items		Person Responsible
1	Reach out to the Health Equity Compact for round table discussion	Oz, Imene
2	Brainstorm names and organizations to invite to roundtable for late spring: - Topic: Disparities in health care for people with disabilities, particularly crisis standards of care.	All members
3	Invite external stakeholders to participate in subcommittee discussions and initiatives, including but not limited to: MassHealth, MA Health Council, Health Care for All, BCBS Foundation, Health Equity Compact, and national disability advocacy groups.	Ongoing
4	Invite Collin Killick and Bill Henning to speak about the consequences of Covid regarding health equity for people with disability and lessons learned	Charlie, Oz

Agenda

- Welcome, Roll Call, Approval of Minutes
 - Minutes have been approved after motion.
- [Presentation](#) by Leslie Darcy, Chief of Staff, MassHealth Office of Long-Term Services and Supports (EOHHS)

Highlights:

- PCA program is the largest LTSS initiative under her oversight.
- Advisory group includes representatives from:
 - Health and Human Services
 - PCA Workforce Council
 - 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
 - Massachusetts Senior Care Association
 - Massachusetts Senior Action Council
 - The Arc of Massachusetts
 - Disability Policy Consortium

Key Recommendations from the Advisory Group:

- Enforce overtime cap at 66 hours (projected savings: \$6.7M)
- Address fraud in the PCA program
- Eliminate paperwork burden for non-live-in members due to electronic timesheets (EVR) (projected savings: \$700K)

Program Data:

- PCA program served 56,000 members in SFY24 (26,000 in managed care)
- Annual cost has increased from \$1.2B (SFY20) to \$1.6B (SFY24), projected to reach \$2B by SFY27
- Cost increases attributed to serving a growing number of older adults
- State budget impact is significant; MassHealth must control growth and rates

Discussion Points:

- PCA program is the gold standard, no cap on hours for services like bathing/dressing
- Capping meal prep at 1 hour/day could save \$28M
- Administrative costs are low due to the model
- About 30,000 individuals live in skilled nursing facilities
- Wages for PCAs are increasing:
 - Entry wage: \$20/hour
 - \$25/hour for complex care starting January 2026
- Rate increases due to collective bargaining
- Need to align policy recommendations with health benchmarks
- Ongoing tension between rising needs and budget sustainability

3. Health Equity Informational Hearing – Update

- **Date:** Monday, May 19, 2025
- **Location:** Room 428, MA State House & Zoom

- **Purpose:** To spotlight systemic barriers and solutions to health equity for people with disabilities. The event brings together state leaders, healthcare professionals, and disability advocates to identify challenges and collaborative opportunities.

Confirmed Speakers:

- Dr. Craig Andrade – Health Equity Compact
- Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts
- Linda Long Bellil – UMass Chan Medical School
- Keith Jones – Disability Rights Advocate
- John Madondo – CEO, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of MA
- Nassira Nicola – MA Department of Public Health
- Maura Sullivan – The Arc of Massachusetts
- Heather Watkins – Disability Rights Advocate

2025 Meeting Dates

- May 19 health equity informational hearing 10:30am-12pm
- August 25, 11am-12pm
- November 17, 11am-12pm