

MassHealth Member Advisory Committee (MAC)

Meeting 8 (hybrid)

April 28, 2026, from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Westborough, MA

Attendance

- 15 out of 16 MAC members were in attendance; 8 in-person, 7 via Zoom
- MassHealth: Malinda Ellwood, Celia Segel, Viveka Prakash-Zawisza, Jarred Damico, Abby Akoury, Danielle McKnight, Shaneia Nelson
- UMass Chan Team: Hilary Deignan, Cassidy DiRamio, Catie Geary, Olivia O'Brien

Welcome and Housekeeping

MAC Meeting Schedule

- Meeting #9 will be held on Tuesday, June 30, from 12pm to 2pm (virtual)
- MassHealth anticipates holding an optional training to give an overview of My Services in late May (date to be determined).

Meeting 7 Reflection Survey Results

- A few members shared positive comments on the cohesion of the group, noting that it feels more like a team working towards its goals.
- Some members also felt that there was a little too much information on the agenda, particularly with the 1115 Waiver

Response to MAC Feedback

- MassHealth will revisit aspects of the 1115 Waiver later in the year, based on topics of specific interest to MAC members

Other announcements:

- In response to feedback from MAC members, the current MAC term will be extended through December 31, 2027.
- At the MAC's request, MassHealth developed a list of commonly used acronyms for MAC members (included in the Meeting 8 materials)

Objectives for Meeting 8

1. Relationship building.

2. Updates on the state budget process, program integrity, and federal data sharing.
3. OB3 Implementation update
4. Review and share feedback on draft OB3 member communications
5. Discuss MAC engagement with the broader MassHealth member community.
6. Preparing for Meeting #9.

Relationship Building

MAC members formed groups of two to three and asked each other ice-breaker questions. Some members shared what they learned about each other with the larger group.

MassHealth Updates: Annual State Budget Process, Program Integrity, and Federal Data Sharing

MassHealth Annual State Budget Update

- MassHealth's budget proposal was filed by the Governor in January 2026 and is currently with the State Legislature.
- The House passed their version of the State's budget, and now it goes to the Senate.
- Once a budget is passed by the Senate, members of the House and Senate will meet together to compromise on differences and eventually pass a final budget
- The finalized budget is then sent to the Governor to sign:
 - The Governor may also choose to veto some budget items - if that happens the vetoed items can go back to the Legislature for an override vote.
 - The budget will be finalized in June or July.

Discussion

MAC members had some follow-up questions and feedback about two of the program areas identified in the last MAC meeting (Meeting #7) as having the highest cost growth: Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) (specialized therapy services for autistic children) and the Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Program.

- ABA therapy: MassHealth noted significant growth in the ABA program over the past few years, which many Medicaid programs throughout the country are experiencing.
 - Some MAC members were interested in learning more about standards of practice and licensure for ABA providers
 - MassHealth noted that MassHealth does require ABA provider organizations to meet certain requirements described in their provider contracts and beginning in 2027, ABA provider organizations that are contracted to provide

- ABA services to MassHealth members will also be required to be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body specialized in ABA
- MassHealth will follow up with additional information.
 - PCA Program: some MAC members were interested in understanding more about MassHealth oversight of Personal Care Management (PCM) agencies. PCMs conduct assessments, evaluations, and provide Functional Skills Training for PCA consumers to ensure that they are following the rules.
 - In general, when the PCM network is procured, organizations who apply to be PCMs must submit detailed information on how they run their programs, which is then evaluated by MassHealth.
 - Once selected to participate in the network, MassHealth PCM contracts include specific requirements for PCMs, as well as regular reporting along a variety of metrics.
 - PCM agencies are regularly audited and have monthly contract compliance check-ins with MassHealth

Program Integrity Efforts

On March 3, 2026, MassHealth received [a letter](#) from some members of Congress asking how MassHealth identifies, assesses, and investigates fraud. Ten other states received similar letters. MassHealth's [response is posted on their website](#).

As described in the response, MassHealth has a robust process for identifying, reviewing, and referring credible allegations of Medicaid fraud to appropriate law enforcement authorities, and works closely with the Attorney General and State Auditor in these efforts.

Discussion

- MAC members appreciated learning about the fraud hotlines operated by MassHealth, the state auditor, and the attorney general's office. MassHealth will share information about these resources via email.

Federal Data Sharing

Last year the U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services (HHS) entered an agreement to share the personal information of Medicaid enrollees with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials for immigration enforcement purposes. MassHealth objects to this data sharing and has joined a lawsuit challenging it as unlawful.

In December 2025, a judge ordered a ruling that CMS can share certain information about people that are not lawfully residing in the U.S. with DHS, but CMS is not allowed to share information on citizens, or on those who are legal residents.

In March 2026, the state's attorney general asked for court monitoring of this process. More information is available [here](#).

Discussion

MAC members were very concerned about the data sharing agreement. During the discussion MassHealth confirmed that CMS can only share their names and addresses, CMS cannot share health information with DHS.

- MAC members asked how MassHealth shares data on its members with CMS.
 - MassHealth explained that it must provide all its data to the federal government (CMS) as required by law, as Medicaid is a joint federal-state partnership program.

One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OB3) Communications

MassHealth is planning to send a variety of communications to members impacted by new OB3 requirements before the changes take effect.

Jarred Damico, Deputy Chief Operating Officer and Abby Akoury, Operations Outreach Strategy Manager walked the MAC through the draft member communications. They noted that they had six focus groups to shape the communications included in the drafts. Five of the focus groups were with members, one of which was all Spanish-speaking members, and one focus group was with providers.

RFI Envelopes

MassHealth will attempt to automatically verify compliance with work requirements for impacted members using available data sources. If MassHealth is unable to verify automatically, Requests for Information (RFIs) are sent out. MassHealth is looking for ideas to help increase the chances that impacted members will see the envelope and read the notice. One idea is for MassHealth to use the same blue envelopes for these RFIs as the ones used in the redetermination campaign.

General Discussion

- MAC members discussed potential reasons why members might ignore RFIs (e.g. members may move without updating their mailing address with MassHealth).
- MAC members recommended that the envelopes explicitly reference MassHealth so that members know they are important.
- MAC members also emphasized the importance of members being able to choose electronic communication options (i.e., email v. regular mail).
 - MassHealth confirmed that members can opt to receive electronic notices.

MAC Member Feedback

Most MAC members were in favor of using the blue envelope for RFI letters. They noted:

- This would build off the success of the previous campaign and is something members have been conditioned to look for.
- Blue stands out and indicates something important; white looks like all other mail
- White envelopes with red lettering look like spam or junk mail.

MAC members also suggested:

- Adding language indicating who the letter is from and what it is about, e.g.:
 - “From the Executive Office of Health and Human Services”
 - Include “MassHealth” or related logo
 - “This is about your benefits”
 - “This is about your health insurance plan please respond”
 - Others noted that envelopes with “Response required” are often looked at as spam.
 - Make the text that says the letter is from the State, or the State Seal larger
 - Bold “renewal” in black
- Consider using envelopes with windows that show a pink colored notice on the inside- this usually indicates that it’s a final notice/bill and people need to open it.
- Make the envelope larger to help them stand out more for members.

OB3 Toolkit Concept and Design

MassHealth is planning to implement a variety of communication modalities to help reach members impacted by OB3 changes, including a communications toolkit and flyers to help outreach members. Communication will also include text, email, and robocalls, along with regular noticing.

General Discussion

As a general comment, the MAC would like to see language in all communications frame MassHealth membership as a positive attribute, to combat the stereotypes they encounter. Some members also suggested that the notices clarify that the new requirements are based on federal policy changes.

Members also suggested (if capacity allows), creating a dedicated phone line for these populations so they are not competing with the regular customer service phone queue. (MassHealth noted that this would likely not be possible given capacity constraints).

Separately, one member recommended that MassHealth create a member-led group to develop a whole new logo/brand redesign for MassHealth more generally (similar to what Mass Ability did).

MAC member feedback on language in the flyer:

- Shorten text and steer members to the MassHealth website:
 - Say “Learn more on our website” and include a link
 - Reduce the amount of text on the flyer to make people more likely to read it.
- Be very clear that these changes will not affect members with disabilities.

Text, Email, Robocall (TERB) Outreach

Communication efforts will include Text, Email and Robocall (TERB) outreach to members who share their emails and cell phone numbers with MassHealth. Each communication style has different considerations, for example -here are character limits or second limits for robocalls, while MassHealth has more flexibility on emails.

MassHealth can translate TERB messaging into the top five preferred languages – Spanish, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese, just like for notices.

MassHealth shared preliminary draft text for TERB messaging with the MAC.

MAC Member Feedback on TERB Messaging:

- Some groups, like older members, may not use text or email, or answer robocalls.
 - MassHealth confirmed TERB messaging will be in addition to regular mailings, and members can always call customer service with questions.
 - Only members ages 19-64 will be impacted by work requirements.
- People may just ignore robocalls because they get so many of them.
- The Deaf/Hard of Hearing community might be more responsive to text messages.
 - It would be particularly helpful to this community if the MassHealth website had a chat feature (staffed by people, not artificial intelligence).

Draft Notices for Members Impacted by Immigration Changes and Work Requirements

MassHealth shared draft notices with the MAC. MassHealth anticipates that these preliminary notices will be sent out in August 2026. Each notice will explain the changes and requirements, available exemptions, provide a timeline, and encourage members to keep their information updates and open/read all notices.

MAC member feedback on notice language:

- Add a watermark that states “changes are happening”

- Add “requirements to sustain coverage” in red font.
- Clearly state what is considered “work” – education, volunteering, etc.
 - Vague language leads to member confusion and questions.

Discussion:

MAC members offered additional ideas for reaching members:

- Create a video about the changes.
 - Post the video on social media
 - Include links to where members can update their information.
- Work with providers to post messaging in their offices for their patients.
- Put messaging on billboards, and involve the MAC in development
 - MassHealth confirmed that the MAC’s (and other member and stakeholder) feedback on materials will contribute to all messaging since messaging across platforms will be consistent

MassHealth requested that MAC members continue to review the communications and provide any final feedback or edits to Malinda (phone or email) by next week.

MAC Engagement with the Broader MassHealth Member Community

The MAC discussed ideas for how they would like to engage with the broader MassHealth member community. In particular, MAC members are interested in 1) informing the broader MassHealth community about the MAC and its work, and 2) finding ways to hear more from other members about what their concerns and challenges are to help inform their agendas moving forward.

Ideas included:

- Creating an email address where MassHealth members can send their questions and share their issues.
- Exploring opportunities for engagement through social media.
- Implementing open-ended surveys for members to share their questions and concerns about MassHealth.
 - MassHealth confirmed that it works with a team at UMass to implement member surveys in specific areas, including primary care, behavioral health, LTSS, and others that inform their quality strategy and plan performance evaluations.
- Talking with MassHealth health plan Patient and Family Advisory Groups (PFACs)

- Hosting open meetings to hear from groups of members, similar to the One Care Implementation Council's annual member Townhall.

MassHealth will outreach the MAC to form a subgroup to discuss next steps. In the meantime, MAC members can reach out to Malinda if they would like help drafting emails or other language to share about the MAC. For example, one MAC member worked with Malinda to draft an email about the MAC and other MH resources to share with representatives from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) at a recent event.

Wrap Up and Closing

Next Steps

MassHealth will:

- Send out Meeting 5, Meeting 7, and Meeting 8 notes for review
- Schedule an optional training session on My Services
- Create a subgroup to discuss next steps for MAC engagement with other members
- Continue tracking goals, agenda suggestions, and parking lot items

MAC members will:

- Complete the Meeting 8 Reflection Survey
- Review the minutes for Meetings 5, 7, and 8

Parking Lot: ABA provider certification