

# MAC Brainstorming Sessions

Meeting 2: May 1, 2024

## MAC Approach Discussion

The group discussed the logistics of a Member Advisory Group (MAC) and provided insights on group size, representation, and member term lengths as well as provided recommendations on meeting accommodations, length, frequency, and location. The group also discussed elements such as MAC orientation and follow up processes.

## MAC Size Recommendations

Participants provided various recommendations for the optimal size of a MAC, not including MassHealth staff members. Many members suggested sizes between 10-15 members, and a few specifically highlighted 12 members as optimal. Participants also discussed the possibility of engaging smaller subgroups or groups of representatives.

Participants noted several elements to consider when making decisions about group size, including:

- Managing meeting time
  - A Participant noted that the meeting must allow for everyone to have time to share their experiences
    - Participants highlighted the need for enough members to represent a diverse array of experiences
  - A Participant noted that more than 20 people can become difficult to manage
- Accounting for member availability
  - Participants highlighted that not all members will join every meeting and recommended building a slightly larger group to account for this
  - Participants also discussed the possibility of allowing another group of folks to review MAC resources and provide written feedback rather than join the meetings
    - This may reduce MAC numbers to ensure the size is reasonable while offering an opportunity to MassHealth members to participate who may be unavailable to meet or uncomfortable speaking
- Ensuring accessibility

- A Participant noted that accommodations for Deaf and hard of hearing people, such as seeing the video and using captions, become more difficult with more meeting participants
- Creating subgroups
  - Participants discussed the benefits of creating subgroups, including
    - As a means of building community through creating groups based on identity or issues, such as LGBTQ+ healthcare, MassHealth and rural areas, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) access to MassHealth
    - As a means of reducing workload for a larger group through the use of a subgroup of representatives

## MAC Diversity and Representation

The group discussed the importance of including diverse lenses in a MAC. Heather elaborated on what diversity might mean in this context, including diversity in age, culture, language spoken, racial and ethnic identity, health status, disability, sexuality, gender identity, lived experience, geographic location, and participation in different MassHealth programs. Participants affirmed the importance of the varying lenses identified by Heather and provided the following additions:

- Participants suggested including neurodivergent lenses
- Participants highlighted geographic diversity, such as
  - Lenses from rural and city settings
  - Lenses from each county of Massachusetts
  - Participants noted the importance of MAC representation mirroring the geographic distribution of MassHealth's membership
- Participants recommended including people living in community settings such as retirement communities, college campuses, or hospitals
- A participant recommended connecting with potential members from Boston Health Care for the Homeless to ensure the MAC represents the homeless population
- A participant recommended including lenses of those who are transitioning out of the MassHealth program
  - This unique subset of people face particular challenges reporting their income status
- Participants suggested including people with experience in various MassHealth programs, such as

- MassHealth Standard
- Integrated Care
- Senior Care Options (SCO)
- OneCare
- Personal Care Attendant program
- Frail Elder Waiver
- MassHealth Limited
- Long Term Care facilities
- Memory care
- Traumatic brain injury programs
- Participants recommended including lenses of those who have experienced different programs. For instance, people who enter new programs after turning 65
- Participants noted the importance of recognizing intersectionality and including folks that may identify with many of the lenses listed
- Participants also noted the need to balance bringing folks together based on diverse identities without exacerbating a sense of exclusion or separation

The group discussed the possibility of including caregivers in the MAC. Participants provided the following perspectives:

- Participants shared that caregivers bring a valuable perspective to MassHealth
- Participants also identified concerns about including caregivers, including that these voices may speak over the MassHealth members receiving care
  - One participant felt that membership should be limited to MassHealth members
- Participants identified ways caregivers may be essential to accommodating member participation, such as
  - Providing needed care or technical assistance during meetings
  - Advocating for the member, particularly when experiencing mental health challenges
  - Participants noted that if a caregiver is joining merely to assist a member, they should not be counted towards the attendance
- Participants also highlighted issues with defining caregivers
  - Some participants consider caregivers to only include those who have a personal relationship with the person they care for beyond the caregiving relationship

- Some participants noted that purely professional caregivers also experience challenges with MassHealth and may bring a valuable perspective to the group
- Participants agreed that the definition of a caregiver is often situational and may be best defined by the person receiving care

## MAC Member Term Length

The group discussed the use of term limits for the MAC. Participants suggested term limits between 2-4 years. Participants also discussed term renewal options. Participants expressed varying perspectives on term renewal, with some stressing the need for a frequently revolving door, some suggesting unlimited renewal options, and others suggesting a maximum of 4 terms. Participants noted that even if terms are unlimited, it is valuable to instate a reselection process after each term is up to ensure new members have an opportunity to join.

## MAC Meeting Accommodations

Participants highlighted the importance of incorporating accommodations throughout MAC meetings, including the following suggestions:

- Ensure funding and planning for language, interpretation, and captioning services
  - Participants noted that auto-generated captioning systems may have difficulty capturing the speech of those with accents. Accommodation planning must account for the varying language needs of the group
- Provide ongoing technological support to MAC members
- Account for the use of chat in virtual and hybrid meetings
  - Participants discussed the value of including two facilitators in each meeting to ease the monitoring of chat

## MAC Meeting Logistics

The group discussed MAC meeting logistics, including meeting length, frequency, and location. Participants noted that these logistics are often interrelated. For instance, a MAC with shorter meetings may need to meet more regularly. Participants also noted that many of the logistics will depend on the specific accommodation needs and other preferences of MAC members. The group provided several insights to inform MAC meeting logistics planning based upon previous experiences with similar meetings.

## MAC Meeting Length

Participants provided the following considerations for meeting length:

- Participants suggested meetings between 45 minutes to 2 hours
  - Multiple participants suggested 1.5 hours
- Participants noted that meeting time must account for breaks and time for members to settle in
  - Participants suggested the incorporation of a break for 2- hour meetings
- One participant noted that a 1.5 - hour meeting is generally appropriate for a 2 item agenda with discussion on both items
- Some participants also provided recommendations for the timing of meetings, such as hosting meetings during the week rather than the weekend and scheduling meetings around 6pm to account for people's work day and commute.

## MAC Meeting Frequency

Participants provided the following insights for determining meeting frequency:

- Participants suggested meeting frequencies between monthly and every other month
  - Participants noted that a MAC may need more frequent meetings at certain times, such as when it is first starting up
- Participants also suggested avenues for connecting outside of general MAC meetings, such as
  - Additional meetings for a subgroup or workgroup drawn from the MAC
  - Communication channels between meetings, such as an email chain
- Participants highlighted that the MAC must account for the financial status of MAC members as meeting stipends may have tax implications
  - For instance, a MassHealth member may need to make less then \$600 per year in stipends to maintain their benefits

## MAC Meeting Location

Participants discussed the benefits and challenges of hosting virtual, in-person, and hybrid meetings as well as the possibility of meetings in diverse in-person locations. Participants provided the following insights:

- Participants provided a range of perspectives on virtual meetings, such as
  - Virtual calls may be easier for people to join if they are busy or have a long commute

- Virtual calls can make accommodations such as closed captioning easier
  - For this reason, virtual meetings with video are best
- Virtual meetings present barriers to members who lack reliable internet access
  - Calling in may be an option but may interrupt other accommodations, such as lip reading or closed captioning
- Participants discussed several challenges and benefits to hybrid meetings, including
  - Hybrid provides the same accommodations as virtual meetings, including closed captioning and removal of transportation burden
  - Hybrid meetings can be challenging to run and may require specific physical spaces and technologies
    - Participants also recommended hybrid MACs use additional facilitation support to ensure virtual and in-person members are meaningfully included in hybrid meetings
  - Hybrid meetings can be difficult when the group is doing a hands-on activity
  - A participant noted that in previous hybrid meetings they have used a platform called OWL, which has worked well
- Participants noted that many people enjoy in-person meetings as a means of building trust and a sense of community, but these meetings also pose challenges
  - In-person meetings require transportation, which is often unreliable or inaccessible to many MassHealth members
  - Participants noted that the preference for in-person meetings can vary by season. For instance, folks may be less interested in meeting in-person during the winter months.
  - Participants also noted that occasional in-person meetings can be a rewarding opportunity to meet members that have only met in virtual meetings previously
  - Participants agreed that if the MAC is in-person, there are benefits to using multiple locations based on where members are located

## MAC Orientation and Training

The group discussed the importance of setting the stage for MAC members through an onboarding process, and members provided the following insights to consider:

- Participants noted that onboarding begins with the outreach and recruitment communications

- These communications set the stage around expectations, such as how the MAC will obtain members' information
- Participants provided insights into the content essential to effective onboarding, including
  - Expectations around group norms
    - Participants noted that it is helpful to provide meeting guidelines and to create a list of common terms and definitions for the group.
  - MAC 101 information, such as
    - MAC purpose and goals
    - Overview of MassHealth
  - Participants noted that the orientation process for the brainstorming meetings was representative of an effective process
- Participants recommended flexible methods for delivering the MAC onboarding that meet the needs of members, such as
  - Peer support models
  - 1:1 orientation, especially when term endings are staggered
  - Participants also noted that the orientation process is ongoing and that it is critical to send out meeting materials ahead of time
- Participants offered insights to accessibility for an onboarding process, including
  - Ensuring materials are plain language and uses powerful imagery
  - Ensuring the process is simple and concise to meet the needs of busy members
  - Ensuring that MAC members have access to technology, such as smartphones or laptops to access onboarding materials

## MAC Meeting Follow Up

The group discussed the importance of an elastic meeting follow up and scheduling process to ensure members feel heard and have the information and support needed to continue participating in the MAC. Participants provided the following recommendations for this process:

- Participants noted that scheduling meetings can be difficult and that members will have varying preferences. Certain strategies can be used to account for this, including
  - Scheduling MAC meetings out for the year and providing members with meeting date and time information

- Sending reminders at various times to account for preferences, such as a week before the meeting, two days before, and the day of the meeting
  - The MAC may use an automated email or text generator for this purpose
  - These reminders may also include the previous meetings notes and the upcoming agenda
- Using the same link for virtual meetings so that it may be bookmarked
- Participants highlighted the importance of sending meeting notes and recommended doing so within a week of the meeting
  - A participant recommended creating a shared resource, such as a Google Drive, to house all meeting materials
  - While participants varied on the exact amount of time before and after meetings that materials should be sent, all stressed the importance of some lead up time as well as sending notes while the meeting is still fresh
- Participants acknowledged that accessibility must be at the forefront of all follow up procedures and recommended the MAC work community partners, such as independent living centers, to identify potential barriers and support needs
  - Participants also stressed the need to ask partners about their communication preferences, such as receiving materials in the mail

## Wrap up and Closing

The group wrapped up and Haylee asked that participants share what they hope the MAC will accomplish. Participants shared the following hopes:

- Radical care for all of the land, its people, its history, and revitalization
- Help people understand how community and health equity go hand-in-hand

The meeting resulted in the following next steps:

- Participants will fill out the meeting survey
- Haylee will share meeting notes
- The MassHealth team will determine if there is a conflict of interest for a MAC member to participate in another committee such as the Mass Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP)



