

MassHealth Member Advisory Committee (MAC)

Meeting 3 (virtual)

June 24th, 2025, from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Attendance

- 14 out of 17 MAC members were in attendance
- MassHealth Team: Malinda Ellwood, Stacey Nee, Viveka Prakash-Zawisza, and Celia Segel
- UMass Chan Team: Hilary Deignan, Catie Geary, Jennifer Hitchcock, and Olivia O'Brien

Welcome and Housekeeping

MassHealth welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened with an optional icebreaker for MAC members to share their favorite or least favorite part about summer in the chat.

MAC Meeting Schedule

MassHealth gave an overview of the meeting schedule, which includes a meeting on July 22nd, a voluntary MassHealth 101 Overview in August, and a MAC meeting in September on a date to be determined.

The purpose of the voluntary MassHealth 101 Overview is to provide information for those who want more background on MassHealth to strengthen their participation in the MAC.

Meeting 2 Reflection Survey Results

MassHealth shared learnings from the Meeting 2 Reflection Survey.

- There was generally positive feedback about the pace and content of the meeting.
- The group expressed wanting to spend less time on icebreakers, so in this meeting, the icebreaker is being done through the chat function.
- Members continue to be interested in an acronym list, which MassHealth is working on.

Objectives for Meeting 3

MassHealth shared the objectives for Meeting 3:

1. Understand the status of proposed federal Medicaid cuts
2. Discuss ideas for how MassHealth should engage the MAC in time-sensitive activities.
3. Provide feedback on gathering MassHealth member stories.
4. Understand what bylaws are
5. Discuss the draft MAC bylaws and provide input

MAC Meeting Guidelines

The MAC had no comments or updates to the guidelines as presented in Meeting #2.

MPAC Representative Election Results and Next Steps

MassHealth announced the three representatives that were elected to join the MPAC for 2025. There will be another election next year for 2026 MAC MPAC representatives.

Responsibilities of MAC members elected to the MPAC:

- Prepare for and attend quarterly MPAC meetings in addition to MAC meetings.
- Share MAC updates with the MPAC and MPAC updates with the MAC.
- Seek input from MAC members to inform relevant MPAC discussions and decisions.
- Help draft the MAC section of the annual MPAC report.

MPAC meetings are open to the public and MassHealth will send the meeting details to all MAC members in advance of each meeting in case others want to attend.

MassHealth expects the first MPAC meeting to be held in the fall (as current planning is still in process).

MassHealth will outreach the three MAC representatives when further MPAC details have been confirmed.

Federal Medicaid Budget Status Update

MassHealth continues to monitor activities in the House and the Senate, and as of now is not pausing or stopping any programs or payments to providers, plans, or other payees. However, the Governor and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS, who oversees MassHealth) are continuing to sound the alarm on effects of potential federal Medicaid cuts on MassHealth members and their families.

The MAC discussed what they or their communities are most concerned about with respect to potential federal changes.

They expressed the following concerns:

- losing access to MassHealth coverage as a result of additional paperwork requirements
- having coverage for medications and services reduced or cut
- providers leaving their networks due to a potential reduction in reimbursement rates
- Ensuring continued access to mental health care, especially for non-traditional or newer treatments
- having access to gender affirming care
- having access to accurate information, particularly for vulnerable communities facing uncertainty.

MAC members had a conversation about what kind of information would be helpful for MassHealth to share at MAC meetings about Federal changes and asked for a brief update at the next meeting. Members also want to continue focusing on current issues where there may be existing opportunities to improve member programs and policies.

Engaging the MAC in Time-Sensitive Activities and Gathering Member Stories

MassHealth's Communications Director shared that MassHealth is developing a library of member stories.

Members agreed that storytelling (and gathering the stories in writing) is a good strategy:

- it makes the Medicaid cuts real to the audience, and
- sharing how a service helps someone and what would happen if the service got cut is extremely effective.

Members also shared ideas for strengthening the initiative, such as:

- having additional ways for people to share their stories, such as through video, voice recordings, pictures, over social media, or over the radio.
- setting up a separate time and place for members to record their stories.

- use similar strategies as prior state-sponsored campaigns that have promoted education about services across multiple media outlets, such as billboards and social media.
- Members shared that people might also be nervous to share their experiences (or be linked to an organization) they think may not share all their same values

Members provided additional recommendations on how to gather more stories, including:

- Tapping into the foster care and adopted child community
- Connecting with other groups doing similar work to collect stories (like the Arc)
- Working with larger community-based health centers and organizations (like Elliott CHC) to help gather stories from their members and communities

Many members shared that they are part of the MAC to bring about change and would like to continue sharing their personal stories when appropriate.

- Moving forward, MassHealth will put “time sensitive” in email subject lines if something is urgent so it doesn’t get lost with more regular communications like meeting minutes review.
- Members can also take action individually or with advocacy groups
- MassHealth clarified that they do not anticipate the MAC making its own public statements, as the purpose of the MAC is to provide advice and share experiences in order to make program and policy improvements together.

MassHealth emphasized that MassHealth members would be notified directly by MassHealth in the event of any changes to their coverage.

- MassHealth strongly encouraged MAC members to reach out directly if they are confused or to help clarify any information on potential changes to MassHealth that they hear about in their communities.

Bylaws Overview

The MAC reviewed the purpose of bylaws and discussed how they differ from the Handbook. Although the two resources have some similar information, the Handbook is designed to be a helpful resource for individual MAC members that provides additional context and information related to the MAC, while the Bylaws outline the process for how the MAC will function.

MassHealth shared a set of draft MAC bylaws for the group to review, and highlighted some key areas:

- The draft MAC Bylaws propose a less formal decision-making structure, since it is anticipated that most MAC activities will not require a formal, singular recommendation.
 - For example, MassHealth anticipates that they would share the full range of feedback on any given topic with the relevant program teams at MassHealth
 - If a vote on something is required, the bylaws propose that a vote can be completed with a simple majority of members voting.
 - An alternative would be to adopt a more formal structure, for example, taking ideas from “Robert’s Rules of Order.”
- MassHealth also anticipates adopting a shared leadership structure in the future, which would be incorporated into the Bylaws at that time.
 - For example, this could include a member co-facilitator or a subgroup of members to help plan agendas.

Discussion of Proposed MAC Bylaws

The MAC shared the following initial thoughts on the Bylaws:

- Use plain language when possible.
 - Add a glossary to the Bylaws that includes definitions for complex terms, including:
 - 42 CFR 431.12(e)
 - Term (as it relates to term limits for MAC members)
 - Words or phrases within parenthesis throughout the document (e.g., Notice of Opportunity (NOO), quorum)
 - MAC members will continue to think of additional terms to include in a glossary, as well as feedback on other areas where plain language would be beneficial.
- Consider additionally making a shorthand meeting guide so that members could quickly look at the tools for how to keep the group on track or make a request to put a topic in the Parking Lot without having to dig up the handbook or the Bylaws.
 - The guide could be the last slide of every MAC meeting presentation, or some other format for quick access.
 - MassHealth also suggested that the group could create a more formal process for adding items to the Parking Lot.

- Decision Making Structures
 - Many members agreed that having a less formal decision-making structure would work.
 - If something is not agreed to, it could be revisited a few months later.
 - Having formal rules, such as making motions and seconding motions, can be effective, but it could take away from the group's efficiency.
 - Formal rules could also be challenging for individuals who belong to marginalized groups because they are often left out of formalized structures and conversations.
 - The MAC can continue to use other tools, like the Meeting Guidelines, to help the group stay on track or otherwise ensure respectful discussion rather than putting more formalities in the bylaws.
 - A suggestion was made that items in the Parking Lot and the bylaws should be revisited every 6 months to a year
 - This will also be useful since the current group works well together, but future MACs may benefit from a more formal structure.
- MAC members provided positive feedback on having MAC members co-facilitate meetings in the future.
 - The way the group is currently working feels cohesive.
 - One member recommended having a meeting in-person to strengthen the group's dynamics and allow for more relationship-building
- A suggestion was made to add a land acknowledgement statement to the Bylaws.

MassHealth reiterated that the Handbook, the Bylaws, and the Meeting Guidelines are all meant to be living documents. The goal is to ensure they are easy to understand, responsive to the needs of the MAC, and helpful to members.

Meeting Recap and Big Picture

MassHealth provided an overview of how discussion topics from the past three meetings fit into the bigger picture for the MAC.

In Meetings 2 and 3, members discussed the MAC Purpose, Bylaws, goals, and ideas for future discussions, and elected MPAC representatives. Progress and next steps are summarized below.

- **MAC Purpose:** MassHealth included an updated (more simplified) version of the MAC's purpose in the Bylaws for members to review.

- **MAC Bylaws:** At today's meeting, the group provided preliminary feedback on the Bylaws. MAC members will continue to review the Bylaws draft and will send any additional feedback to MassHealth.
 - The MAC will discuss and vote on the Bylaws at Meeting 4.
- **MAC Goals:** MassHealth will continue to pull together consolidated goals to share back with the group and help inform discussions on future agenda topics.
- **Agenda Items and Parking Lot:** MassHealth will continue to document ideas in the Parking Lot.
 - The group will work together to determine agenda items for future meetings.

Wrap Up and Closing

MassHealth reiterated that members should reach out if they hear anything confusing or concerning about the federal budget or MassHealth's policies, so MassHealth can help clarify and ensure communities have accurate information.

Agenda for Meeting 4

MassHealth outlined the objectives for Meeting 4, which will include:

1. Finalize MAC Bylaws (formal vote)
2. Provide feedback on updated MAC website
3. Review proposed goals and agenda items

Next Steps

MAC members will:

- Complete the Meeting 3 Reflection Survey
- Review the Bylaws and send feedback, including:
 - identifying sections that are confusing or should be simplified, as well as
 - any terms to add to the glossary

MassHealth will:

- Housekeeping:
 - send out Meeting 3 notes for review by the group
 - look for August dates for the voluntary MassHealth 101 Overview
 - update the Bylaws with suggestions from today along with any other feedback provided by members.

- Website:
 - update the MAC website and send to MAC members for their feedback
- MPAC:
 - Contact the MPAC representatives once updated information is available.
 - Share the date of the first MPAC meeting with the MAC once confirmed.
- Share new community-based resources developed by the Attorney General's Office
- Continue tracking federal budget updates to bring to the July meeting
- Continue tracking goals, agenda suggestions, and Parking Lot items
- Continue working on an acronym list

Parking Lot

No items were added to the Parking Lot during this meeting. MassHealth reiterated that they are happy to meet with any MAC member that would like to discuss specific concerns or topics at any time.