

# MassHealth Member Advisory Committee (MAC)

## Meeting 4 (virtual)

July 22, 2025, from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Make-Up Meeting on August 14, 2025, from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

## Attendance

- 14 out of 17 MAC members were in attendance; 3 members attended the make-up meeting
- MassHealth Team: Malinda Ellwood, Viveka Prakash-Zawisza, and Celia Segel
- UMass Chan Team: Catie Geary, Jennifer Hitchcock, and Olivia O'Brien

## Welcome and Housekeeping

MassHealth shared a link to a draft of the updated [MAC website](#) for members to review (which includes the list of select member names as requested.)

## MAC Meeting Schedule

A voluntary MassHealth 101 Overview will be offered for MAC members- date to be determined.

The next MAC meeting (#5) will be held on Tuesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, from 12pm to 2pm.

## Meeting 3 Reflection Survey Results

- Doing the icebreaker over chat worked well.
- There is an eagerness to get to the substance of the work, but also an appreciation for the sustainable structure the group is working to create.
- Still some issues with zoom functionality

### *Response to MAC Feedback*

- MassHealth created an appendix for the meeting materials that includes virtual meeting tips to help MAC members engage with meetings in the ways that work best for them. The appendix will be included in each meeting's slides.

## Objectives for Meeting 4

1. Understand the high-level impact of the federal budget reconciliation bill and the state budget.
2. Finalize the MAC Bylaws.
3. Align on high-level goals and discuss principles and frameworks for developing MAC meeting agendas.

## Federal and State Budget Updates

### Federal Budget Update

- The federal budget reconciliation bill was signed into law by Pres. Trump on July 4.
- It includes significant policy changes to Medicaid and Health Care Marketplaces across the country, including MassHealth and the Health Connector.

It is important to note that the policies in the new law will be phased in over the next several years. MassHealth is waiting for implementation and regulatory guidance from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) (which must be released by June 2026).

At this time, MassHealth has not paused or stopped any programs or payments to providers, plans, or others.

### Massachusetts Budget Update

MassHealth is a federal and state partnership program and is impacted by policy and funding decisions at both the federal and state level. The State Budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which covers the period from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 (also referred to as “FY26”), was recently passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Healey.

### Discussion

MassHealth’s intention is to preserve care and coverage while maintaining compliance with federal rules. If there are changes to coverage, the public, including MAC members, will hear about it directly from MassHealth.

MAC members sought clarification on potential work requirements and other policies, as well as the timeline for implementation.

They raised additional concerns about the potential impact of the federal changes on:

- provider networks, e.g. if they result in lower rates, or otherwise lead to a declining interest in participating in MH networks, particularly for specialty providers (like dermatologists).
- immigrant communities who may be afraid to access care they are eligible for.

MAC members shared initial recommendations regarding implementation:

- MassHealth members should be notified through a variety of communications strategies (not just email) with clear information about any changes to their coverage, and any policy updates should be shared broadly
- Use colored envelopes for any important notices, like the blue envelope used during redeterminations in 2023 and 2024.
- MassHealth customer relations and enrollment staff should confirm with members that their contact information is updated
- MassHealth should engage the MAC when working on navigating these new changes, including reviewing notices or other member communications as part of implementation

MassHealth agreed that the MAC's partnership is important for moving forward together and will keep the MAC informed of upcoming changes moving forward. In the meantime, MassHealth members should continue to get the services they need. MAC members can reach out to MassHealth with questions about policy updates any time.

## MAC Resources and Bylaws

Three tools support the MAC's work: the MAC handbook, meeting guidelines, and bylaws. MassHealth did a high-level overview of how the three resources aid member engagement by providing structure, setting expectations, and documenting MAC policies.

MassHealth reviewed edits made to the bylaws in response to MAC feedback. MassHealth anticipates documenting the full spectrum of viewpoints from all MAC members on any discussion topics, rather than needing a singular recommendation from the group. At the same time, the bylaws provide a process for voting when needed.

### Bylaws Discussion

- MAC members approved of the updates and the document overall.
- On July 22, 2025, the MAC formally voted to adopt the Bylaws (with 13 in favor, 0 not in favor).

## Setting MAC Agendas

In order to set up a conversation about MAC Agendas, MassHealth presented introductory slides about MassHealth, including the populations it serves, how members access care, and a high-level overview of the agency's organizational structure.

The group discussed how the MAC could fit into the larger context of MassHealth's work and the communities it serves.

### Discussion

MAC members were appreciative of the visual break-out of MassHealth membership and program teams, and shared comments about what they learned from the data.

Members were particularly surprised by the lower proportion of members with disabilities (both adults in children) enrolled in MassHealth compared to the non-disabled population. Members discussed that services for these groups are particularly critical, while at the same time noting that accessing appropriate services can be challenging for them.

MAC members shared thoughts on how they see their role on the MAC in relation to the other individuals and communities served by MassHealth:

- Ensuring members of the community have a better understanding of MassHealth by helping to educate people who may be misinformed or otherwise unable to access services
- Encouraging and helping MassHealth to outreach and target information to vulnerable communities as appropriate, such as Deaf and Hard of Hearing or immigrant communities, and helping MassHealth ensure information is relatable to specific populations, for example to Latin communities
- Current and future MAC members should continuously educate themselves on the services that fall under MassHealth, so they can help fulfill these roles.

## Framework for Setting MAC Goals and Agendas

### Proposed Goals for the MAC

MassHealth presented three proposed goals and four priorities for the MAC, based on MAC member feedback from Meetings 1 through 3.

Goal 1. Promote greater transparency and stronger engagement between MassHealth and all members.

Goal 2. Increase MAC member understanding of MassHealth programs and policies to share back with your communities.

Goal 3. Share member and community experiences and provide input to MassHealth to help improve quality and access to care.

Priorities suggested for the MAC based on discussion with members over the past few meetings:

- Strengthen member experience with customer service and supports.
- Promote clear written and virtual communication with members.
- Simplify navigation of the range of care and services across programs.
- Improve access to quality care, particularly for vulnerable communities.

## **Developing MAC Agendas**

The MAC reviewed and approved principles for developing agendas, including:

1. MAC members and MassHealth will work together to set agendas.
2. MassHealth will work to strike a balance in meetings between updates, education, discussion, and opportunities for feedback.
3. When proposing agenda items or discussion topics, MassHealth and MAC members will highlight how the topic relates to achieving goals of the MAC.

## **Discussion on Proposed Goals and Agenda Planning**

MAC members shared the following comments:

- More specifically integrate building relationships, exploring how decisions are made, and encompassing work to learn about and build connections with other member engagement groups, like plan Patient-Family Advisory Committees (PFACs), into the goals or priorities.
- The group felt that the goals and priorities are generally broad enough to incorporate more concrete focus areas as appropriate.
- MAC members emphasized the importance of getting the MAC's feedback to the right people at MassHealth or in other agencies.
- Members were also interested in how MassHealth teams view the MAC

MassHealth reiterated its commitment to transparency and accountability, and discussed agency efforts to integrate the MAC's work and strengthen member engagement overall.

## **Potential Priorities for Future Meetings**

MAC Meeting #4

July 22, 2025

Make-up meeting: August 14, 2025

1. Learning about and strengthening member services, including:
  - Learning about the general process flow for customer service, including the types of information different kinds of staff can access to support case resolution
    - Examples of challenges included the lengthy process for enrolling a child with disabilities, and lack of consistent information
  - Clarifying specific processes, for example – transitions for children with disabilities who turn 18, or for adopted and foster children who may receive multiple IDs/duplicate coverage
  - Working to create greater transparency with members, so they can become more informed and empowered when they call, and engage more fully in outreach and stakeholder opportunities
  - MAC members emphasized that this is the space where members engage most frequently with MassHealth, and member services plays a critical role in members' ability to ultimately get the care and services they need
2. Learning about coverage types (like MassHealth Standard) and their relationship to plan enrollment
3. Learning more about programs and services for vulnerable populations, including:
  - Long-term services and supports (LTSS): such as Adult Foster Care (AFC), Day Habilitation Programs, and the Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Program
  - Behavioral health services
  - One Care
  - Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers

## **Opportunities for MAC Feedback Outside of Meetings**

MassHealth will share periodic program updates to keep the MAC informed of larger projects and initiatives happening simultaneously across the agency.

MassHealth will also share other stakeholder engagement opportunities for MAC members who may be interested in work in more specific program areas.

Current opportunities highlighted by MassHealth include:

1. Testing and providing feedback on a new “Common Portal” for state resources and services in Massachusetts.
2. Applying to be a consumer reader to review proposals related to streamlining and improving assessment processes for members requesting LTSS.

Separately, members suggested creating a virtual portal for MAC members to give direct feedback anytime, rather than just through email requests.

- Members suggested creating a log-in requirement to protect information
- Member privacy and other barriers have arisen as issues with this type of file sharing, but MassHealth will revisit it internally.

## Wrap Up and Closing

### Agenda for Meeting 5: Member Services/Operations

#### Objectives:

1. Understand the different customer service pathways for support at MassHealth
2. Understand organization, coordination and oversight of these entities
3. Share experiences and suggestions for strengthening member experience

#### Requested Meeting Preparation:

- Think about questions, experiences, or suggestions for improvement to share in advance if possible
- The more questions provided in advance, the better the meeting will be

## Next Steps

#### MAC members will:

- Complete the Meeting 4 Reflection Survey
- Review the MAC website
- Review the minutes for Meetings 3 and 4
- Submit feedback on member service experiences in advance of Meeting 5

#### MassHealth will:

- Share resources related to discussion topics
- Send details on the two current additional stakeholder work opportunities
- Send out Meeting 3 and 4 notes for review
- Finalize the date for the voluntary MassHealth 101 Overview (including acronym list)
- Continue tracking goals, agenda suggestions, and parking lot items

#### Parking Lot

- Discussion on Medicaid work requirements was added to the Parking Lot.