

MassHealth Member Advisory Committee (MAC)

Meeting 2 (virtual)

April 29th, 2025, from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Attendance

- 15 out of 17 MAC members were in attendance
- MassHealth Team: Malinda Ellwood, Camille Pearson, Celia Segel, and Viveka Prakash-Zawisza
- UMass Chan Team: Hilary Deignan, Cassidy DiRamio, Catie Geary, and Olivia O'Brien

Welcome and Housekeeping

MassHealth welcomed everyone to the meeting, and UMass Chan gave a brief Zoom tutorial including an overview on how to use closed captioning and how to switch between the English and Spanish interpretation channels.

MAC Summer Schedule

MassHealth gave an overview of the summer meeting schedule, which will include one meeting in June and one meeting in either July or August. The dates for the meetings will tentatively be:

- June 24th and
- Likely either July 29th or August 26th

The group discussed whether to meet in July or August. Some MAC members indicated that having the fourth meeting in July would be preferable. MassHealth will follow up via email with the updated schedule.

Training Opportunities

MassHealth also proposed scheduling an optional MassHealth 101 training in August or September for those that would like more information on MassHealth and its programs. The session will be recorded and shared with the MAC for every member to access at any time. The session will also be available in Spanish. MAC members were generally enthusiastic about this opportunity. MassHealth will follow up over email to confirm next steps for optional MassHealth 101 training.

Meeting 1 Reflection Survey Results

MassHealth reflected on Meeting 1 and shared learnings from the Reflection Survey.

- Overall, members shared positive thoughts about the first meeting. Members felt prepared, understood the purpose, and that meetings are a good use of time.
- Some members reported having challenges with closed captioning and interpreter supports, which were resolved for Meeting 2.
- One member also suggested providing space for open-ended comments in each question, which has been added for Reflection Survey 2.
- A few members also mentioned the importance of ensuring the MAC stays on track with discussions
- Another member also thought it would be helpful in the future to differentiate between members' individual goals and the goals of the MAC.

MassHealth suggested the group consider addressing these last two points during discussions on Meeting Guidelines.

Objectives for Meeting 2

MassHealth shared the objectives for meeting 2:

1. Continue getting to know one another
2. Review and update the Meeting Guidelines
3. Learn about CMS Requirements for the MAC
4. Understand the relationship between the MAC and the MassHealth Program Advisory Committee (MPAC)

Sharing Our Stories

MAC members shared their names and pronouns (optional) and were asked to share (1) their favorite food, and (2) a community resource or tip that they have found helpful in their healthcare experience.

Below is a list of the tips and resources MAC members shared:

- Many members emphasized the importance of connecting with other community members, especially those with lived experience, including caregivers, parents, and family members in learning about helpful resources, both for themselves and to pass on to others.
 - People with lived experience tend to know about existing resources and how to navigate the health care system

- Support groups have been a helpful resource
- Many also emphasized the importance of, in turn, passing along their own lived experience to others in their communities
- Connecting with community-based organizations and service agencies that provide health-care related services and education, including:
 - [Aging Services Access Points](#) (e.g., [ETHOS](#), [Mystic Valley Elder Services](#))
 - [Independent Living Centers](#)
 - Organizations that provide care coordination support
 - [Home Health Care Agencies](#)
 - [Health Care For All](#)
 - [Massachusetts Law Reform Institute \(MLRI\)](#)
 - [The Insurance Resource Center for Autism & Behavioral Health](#) at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center, UMass Chan Medical School
 - [Seven Hills Foundation](#)
 - The [MassFamilies](#) leadership training
 - Reports on MassHealth and other health care issues from the [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation](#)
 - Certified Application Counselors (CACs) in the community for assistance with MassHealth eligibility and enrollment
 - Services offered through the Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
- Examples of positive experiences with health care services:
 - Receiving gender affirming care at UMass Memorial Hospital
 - A member's child having spinal surgery at Boston Children's Hospital
 - Accessing speech therapy as a support for autistic children
 - Access to a diabetes nurse educator
 - Having Family Partners in medical offices
 - Having access to transportation to medical appointments using the PT-1 system through MassHealth (the system through which MassHealth members can request transportation to and from non-emergency medical appointments through their providers).
- Helpful tips
 - Bring a friend to act as your advocate at medical appointments
 - Ask for everything you might need because you never know what might be available to you

MassHealth will compile these suggestions into a separate resource list to post on the MAC webpage to share with other community members.

Group Discussion on Meeting Guidelines

MassHealth shared updated Meeting Guidelines which incorporated the feedback from Meeting 1's discussion. Members did not have any further edits, and shared the following comments:

- The guidelines are a helpful foundation and can be updated in the future.
- Having too many guidelines may make people hesitant to participate in discussions, but this will change over time.
- The group will get more comfortable with the guidelines as they continue to meet.
- Communication is key.
- It will be useful for MassHealth facilitators to play a role in ensuring that the guidelines continue to be effective in helping MAC members feel comfortable participating and keeping the group on track.

Meeting One Recap and Big Picture

MassHealth reviewed discussion topics from Meeting 1 and provided an overview of how discussion topics in Meeting 1 and today will fit into the bigger picture for MAC work.

In Meeting 1, members discussed the MAC Purpose, Bylaws, goals, and ideas for future discussions. Progress and next steps are summarized below.

- **MAC Purpose:** MassHealth will draft a simplified version of the MAC purpose based on the discussions and share it at Meeting 3.
- **MAC Bylaws:** During today's meeting, MassHealth will review CMS (the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services – the federal counterpart to MassHealth) requirements related to MAC representation on the MassHealth Program Advisory Committee (MPAC), which will need to be incorporated into the bylaws. MassHealth will use feedback and ideas from Meeting 1 and today to draft bylaws to share with the group for review in Meeting 3.
- **MAC Goals:** MassHealth will continue to pull together consolidated goals to share back with the group and help inform discussions on future agenda topics.
- **Ideas for future discussion:** MassHealth will continue to document ideas as part of the parking lot. The group will work together to determine agenda items for future meetings.

Overview of CMS Requirements for the MAC

MassHealth provided an overview of federal requirements from CMS (the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services – the federal counterpart to MassHealth) that relate to the MAC. The requirements state that the MAC will:

- Promote transparency by requiring some MAC information to be posted publicly, such as:
 - Application materials and selection process
 - MAC membership list (but individuals may choose to remain anonymous)
 - Example – an individual could be listed as “MAC Member 1”
 - Meeting schedule (though meetings will not be open to the public)
 - Meeting notes
 - Bylaws
- Establish a relationship between the MAC and the new MassHealth Program Advisory Committee (MPAC) including that:
 - 25% of MPAC members be from the MAC. For example, if the MPAC has 12 members, 3 of the 12 must be from the MAC.
 - The MPAC must submit an annual report that includes a section on MAC activities, discussion topics, recommendations, and MassHealth’s response.

Current status relative to CMS Posting Requirements

The current MAC [website](#) includes MAC application materials and information about the selection process. It needs to be updated to share that the MAC is up and running with an active membership, schedule, bylaws, and meeting notes. MassHealth will work to make preliminary updates to the website by Meeting #3. MassHealth also welcomes ideas on the website’s content but noted that there is limited ability to make changes in the format or structure of the site because it is part of Mass.gov.

MPAC Overview

MassHealth Legislative Director, Camille Pearson, leads the MPAC on the MassHealth side, and provided an overview of the MPAC to the group.

MPAC Eligibility

The MPAC will be a committee of stakeholders to advise MassHealth on policy development and the effective administration of the program. The previous iteration of this group was known as the MassHealth Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC).

To be eligible to serve on the MPAC, CMS requires that individuals be MassHealth-serving stakeholders from among particular representative categories:

- State or local advocacy groups;
- Clinical providers or administrators;
- MassHealth Participating managed care entities, including Managed Care Organizations, Accountable Care Partnership Plans, Primary Care Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs), One Care Plans, Senior Care Options (SCO) plans, the Behavioral Health Vendor, or a Primary Care Clinician (PCC); and
- Members of the MAC

MPAC Goals

The goals of the MPAC are similar to that of the MAC. The main goals include learning more about MPAC member priorities and working together in developing and improving programs and policies that ultimately improve the effective administration of the MassHealth program. MassHealth and MPAC members may co-develop additional goals.

MPAC Meetings

The MPAC will meet approximately four times per year for about two hours per meeting over a two-year term.

- MPAC members will be required to attend all meetings to the extent possible.
- Some meetings may require additional preparation time between meetings.
- Once selected, MassHealth will provide MPAC members with thirty days' advance notice of meetings.
- MPAC members will have the option to join meetings in-person or remotely over phone or computer (Zoom).
- All meetings will be open to the public.

MPAC Website

The MPAC website will include meeting materials, the annual report, and a list of MPAC members. MAC participants who are selected to participate in the MPAC can choose not to have their names listed.

Current MPAC Status

- MassHealth recently released a “Notice of Opportunity” (NOO) seeking approximately 12 individuals to join the MPAC through a new selection process.
- MPAC applications were due on February 24th, 2025, and are under consideration.
- More information about the MPAC, including the NOO and Application can be found on the [MassHealth Program Advisory Committee \(MPAC\) webpage](#) and [COMMBUYS - Bid Solicitation](#) (BID # BD-25-1039-EHS01-ASHWA-110531).
- It is anticipated that the first meeting will take place either in July or August.

MPAC Key Points for MAC Members

- Over the coming months, the MAC will need to choose some of its own members to attend MPAC meetings (about 3 members).
- The MAC is not a subcommittee of the MPAC.
- The MAC will continue to have its own agendas and maintain its own direct communication to MassHealth Executives.

Joining the MPAC will be an opportunity to:

- Help lead MAC engagement with the MPAC
- Continue growing knowledge of MassHealth programs and policies
- Learn about other stakeholder experiences and priorities
- Form relationships with other stakeholders

MAC members on the MPAC will be required to:

- 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

MassHealth and UMass teams will be available to support MAC members with meeting preparation and participation. The same stipend amount, transportation, and accommodation supports will be available to MAC members for participating in MPAC meetings.

How the MAC Should be Represented on the MPAC

In general, many MAC members expressed a lot of interest in participating in the MPAC.

Members raised the following considerations for how the MAC should engage with MPAC:

- Ensure at least some continuity among MAC members to:
 - maximize the efficacy of MAC member participation by maintaining institutional knowledge of MPAC proceedings and ensuring continued forward progress on any related projects.
 - help strengthen the voices of MAC participants in the group
 - help ensure MAC members with lived experience are seen as experts on equal footing with other MPAC members
- Ensure diverse MAC perspectives are represented on the MPAC: MAC members have many different identities, including, for example, different gender identities, races, health statuses, and ethnicities; they reside in different areas of the state, may have different priorities, and have generally varying experiences.
- Maximize the opportunity for many different individuals to participate
 - MassHealth shared that MAC members who do not participate in the MPAC can still attend all the meetings, as they are open to the public.
- Develop guidelines to ensure clear and ongoing communication between the MAC and the MPAC.
 - For example, there should be guidelines for how MAC members bring items to the MPAC for input, collect that input, use the input in MPAC meetings, and report back on MPAC meetings to the MAC

MassHealth suggested options to consider for MAC participation:

- **Option 1:** select three MAC members to join the MPAC for the full two-year term
- **Option 2:** MAC members could rotate their attendance at MPAC meetings and share the responsibilities among multiple individuals.

Members also made additional suggestions for how to organize MAC participation on the MPAC:

- **Option 3:** Elect two members to consistently attend MPAC meetings, but rotate the third seat among different MAC members for each meeting
- Other ideas:
 - Send three participants and have the remaining MAC members join MPAC meetings as public attendees to reduce continuity issues
 - Explore whether additional MAC representatives could be added

Members also had questions about how communities could learn about the MPAC and stay informed about MPAC activities.

- Per MassHealth, the best way to be in the loop will be to check the MPAC website regularly for updates.
 - Moving forward, MassHealth will share MPAC meeting details and agenda items with all MAC members in advance of the meetings to help keep the group informed.
- A standing MPAC update will also be added to MAC meeting agendas.
- It was also suggested that the MPAC meetings be advertised on social media.

The group also spent some time discussing whether to wait until the June Meeting to decide on MPAC representation, or whether the group could decide this in advance to devote more time in the June meeting to other topics.

The group is mindful that the first MPAC meeting is anticipated for July or August, so a decision must be made soon.

As a next step, MassHealth will follow up with decision points for how MAC members can decide who to select to participate in the MPAC.

Wrap Up and Closing

MassHealth reiterated the common themes heard throughout the discussion:

- the importance of community
- the important role that community-based organizations and other organizations play in providing resources to members
- the high level of interest in participating in the MPAC

Agenda for Meeting 3

MassHealth outlined the objectives for Meeting 3, which will include:

1. Deciding how the MAC will engage with the MPAC and which members will attend the first MPAC meeting anticipated to be in July or August
2. Finalizing language of the MAC's purpose
3. Discussing MAC bylaws

Next Steps

MAC members will:

- Complete the Meeting 2 Reflection Survey
- MAC website:
 - Respond to an email from MassHealth by May 2nd confirming if their name can be displayed on the MAC website or if they would like to remain anonymous
 - May share ideas on the MAC website content
- MPAC:
 - Respond to any next steps related to selecting MAC representatives for the MPAC
 - May share ideas with Camille, Malinda and Viveka on how to advertise the MPAC meetings
- Bylaws:
 - Send MassHealth any examples of bylaws that may be helpful for the MAC to consider
 - Review sample bylaws that MassHealth will send when available

MassHealth will:

- Housekeeping:
 - Send out meeting #2 notes for review by the group
 - Send around a list of future MAC meeting dates and times for 2025
- Website:
 - Ask for responses on listing MAC member names on the website
 - Compile resources from the “Sharing our Stories” exercise as resource list to post and share with other community members on the site
 - Update the website accordingly
- MPAC
 - Propose next steps in the process for identifying which MAC members will participate on the MPAC
- Bylaws
 - Send out draft MAC bylaws for review and discussion in advance of June meeting
 - Send sample bylaws from similar groups for MAC members to look at for comparison or ideas
- Simplify the description of the MAC’s purpose
- Follow up over email to confirm next steps for optional MassHealth 101 training
- Continue tracking goals, agenda suggestions, and parking lot items
- Continue to work on an acronym list

Parking Lot

At their first meeting, MAC members requested the creation of a parking lot to track important ideas that are off topic for the agenda but should be discussed in the future.

The following item was added to the parking lot during this meeting:

- Gender Affirming care - discussion on how to support development of a one-stop clinic devoted to gender affirming care in the Worcester area.

MassHealth reiterated that they are happy to meet with any MAC member that would like to discuss specific concerns or topics at any time.