

MAC Handbook

MassHealth Member Advisory Committee

February 2025

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WELCOME LETTER



Dear MAC Member,

Welcome to the MassHealth Member Advisory Committee (MAC)! Thank you for participating in this important group.

MassHealth and its community-based partner, Collective Insight, co-developed this Handbook to help you learn more about the MAC, your role, and the role of others. This Handbook covers many topics and will help guide the work of the MAC. The contents of this Handbook may change based on feedback from MAC members and lessons learned throughout MAC meetings. The Table of Contents outlines the different sections included in this Handbook and can help you find information on specific topics. The MAC website, at: MassHealth Member Advisory Committee | Mass.gov, is another resource where you will find information about the MAC.

We are excited to get to know you and work together to improve MassHealth programs and policies!

Best,

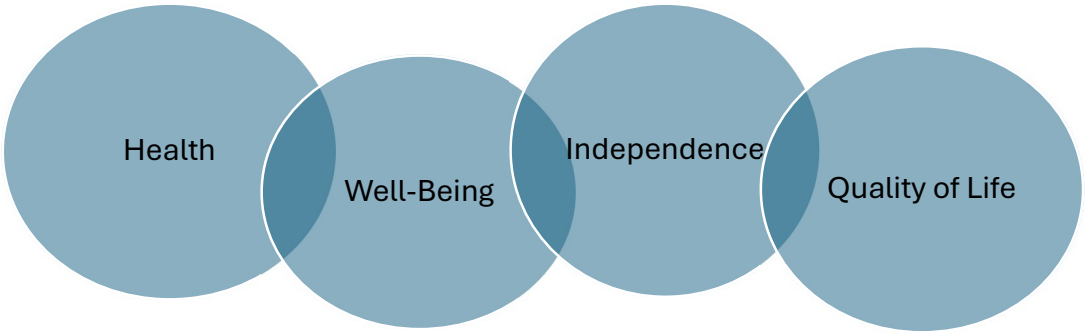
The MassHealth Team

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

[Reserved]

MASSHEALTH'S COMMITMENT TO MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

In Massachusetts, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) are combined into one program called MassHealth. MassHealth's mission is to improve the health outcomes of its members and their families. MassHealth does this by providing access to integrated health care services that equitably promote:



Member engagement is a key part of achieving MassHealth's goals. MassHealth is committed to working with MassHealth members to better understand their experiences with the MassHealth program, address inequities, and eliminate disparities in health and healthcare.

MassHealth is launching the MAC to provide a space for current and former MassHealth members, guardians, and family caregivers to share their priorities, ideas, and experiences to help MassHealth improve quality and access to care for MassHealth members.



Community Input in Developing the MAC

A key part of MassHealth's commitment has been to seek community input from the beginning of the MAC development process. In response to feedback from community members, **MassHealth partnered with Collective Insight**, a Massachusetts woman-owned community engagement firm, to support the launch of the MAC.

In spring 2024, Collective Insight organized and facilitated a series of Brainstorming Sessions that included MassHealth members, parents, caregivers, providers, advocates, and other interested individuals from across the Commonwealth. Feedback from the community Brainstorming Sessions helped formulate key aspects of the MAC, as reflected in this MAC Handbook.

UNDERSTANDING THE MAC

MAC Purpose

The **purpose** of the MAC is for MAC members to provide advice to MassHealth on topics related to policy development and program implementation to improve quality and access to care for MassHealth members.

The MAC is intended to be a safe and welcoming space where MAC members can engage with MassHealth staff and one another to share their ideas and experiences.

Goals of the MAC

MassHealth hopes to engage with MAC members to:

- Learn about your experiences with the MassHealth program
- Understand your priorities for MassHealth
- Help guide programs and policies that ultimately improve quality and access to care

MAC members and MassHealth will work together to develop additional goals for the MAC.

MAC Membership

MAC members are current or former **MassHealth members** (individuals who have been members within the last five years), or **guardians** or **family caregivers** of MassHealth members. MAC members are intended to reflect the many communities MassHealth serves.

MassHealth staff attend and support MAC meetings.

MAC Benefits

There are many benefits to being a MAC member. As a MAC member, you will have the opportunity to:

- ✓ Share your priorities, ideas, and experiences directly with MassHealth
- ✓ Advise MassHealth on policies and programs
- ✓ Work with each other and MassHealth to advise on how to improve quality and access to care
- ✓ Receive a stipend, if you choose
- ✓ Receive a certificate of appreciation for your service once you complete your term.

MassHealth believes that MassHealth members and their families are experts in their own experiences. By sharing your ideas and experiences, you have the power to make a difference. This will require that each of us take time to learn and share while also being flexible, respectful, and patient with each other.

MAC Time Commitment

MassHealth is grateful for the time and energy you will contribute to participate in the MAC. For the MAC to be successful, it is important to understand the expected time commitment.

MAC members are expected to:

- Attend all meetings. There will be approximately one meeting every other month for two hours (some additional meetings may be requested on a limited basis).
- Do some work to prepare for meetings, as needed.
- Be present at all meetings and not distracted, to the extent possible.
- Serve on the MAC for a set period (also described as a "term"). You may not serve for more than one consecutive term (meaning one term following another), but you can apply for more than one non-consecutive term.
- As noted below under "Federal Requirements for the MAC," some MAC members will also attend meetings of the MassHealth Program Advisory Committee (MPAC).

Meeting Details

MAC meetings will take place approximately every other month. Meetings will generally take place virtually. You may also be asked to attend some meetings in person, but you will always have the option to attend by phone or video conference.

Travel for meetings in 2025 that take place in-person will be reimbursed at $0.67 per mile (this rate may change annually). You can also be reimbursed for the cost of tolls and parking. If requested, options for pre-paid transportation will be explored.

MAC Meeting Topics

The MAC will cover topics guided by your interests as well as by MassHealth's. Meeting topics may be different each meeting, or the MAC may stay with one topic for a few meetings. MAC meeting topics could include:

- Sharing experiences with getting care
- Reflecting on quality of care received
- Discussing overall experiences with MassHealth
- Improving communication between MassHealth, providers, and MassHealth members
- Sharing experiences with the process of getting signed up for and staying signed up for MassHealth
- Offering ideas to improve materials for MassHealth members and to make them easier to understand
- Discussing how health care differs across communities and ideas for how to make sure all communities get the same quality and access to care
- Providing feedback on program areas
- And more!

MAC Meeting Guidelines

You will work with MassHealth and other MAC members to develop Meeting Guidelines for MAC meetings. The Meeting Guidelines will be the expectation for how everyone will interact with each other in MAC meetings. They help to create a safe and welcoming place for all members to share their experiences, priorities, and ideas. The Meeting Guidelines will be flexible and may change over time to ensure they reflect the needs and ideas of MAC members. An example of Meeting Guidelines developed by the community participants in the MAC Brainstorming Sessions is included in Appendix B.

THE MAC IS INTENDED TO BE A SAFE AND WELCOMING PLACE

It is important to note that the information you share as a MAC member will not influence your eligibility for MassHealth benefits or services.

DEVELOPING MAC BY-LAWS

You will also work with MassHealth and other MAC members to create MAC By-Laws. The By-Laws will outline the policies for how the MAC will operate. The By-Laws will include topics covered in this Handbook, as well as additional MAC information, including:

Purpose and Goals	Membership Terms	Member Expectations
Focus Areas	Eligibility and Application Processes	Member Accommodations and Support
Recommendation and Decision Making	Engagement with the MPAC	Meeting Guidelines and Procedures

It is important to note that the By-Laws will be a living document and may change based on MAC feedback and lessons learned throughout MAC meetings. We will refer to the By-Laws during meetings as needed to ensure we are abiding by them and to assess if changes are needed.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO THE MAC

Federal law requires state Medicaid programs to have "Beneficiary Advisory Committees," made up of Medicaid members and their families and caregivers (42 CFR 435.412). The MAC will fulfill MassHealth's requirement to have a "Beneficiary Advisory Committee," by meeting certain requirements outlined in federal law. MassHealth and MAC members will discuss these requirements in more detail over the coming months.

MassHealth Program Advisory Committee (MPAC)

Federal law also requires state Medicaid programs to have "Medicaid Advisory Committees." MassHealth's "Medicaid Advisory Committee" is the MassHealth Program Advisory Committee (MPAC) | Mass.gov, which is separate from the MAC. The MPAC is intended to be a space where MassHealth-serving stakeholders can advise MassHealth on policy development and the effective administration of the MassHealth program. The MPAC is expected to include a wide range of voices, including providers, advocates, government representatives, and MAC members. Like the MAC, the MPAC will advise MassHealth on matters of concern related to policy development, and matters related to the effective administration of the MassHealth program.

The MPAC will have four meetings a year. There will always be an option to attend MPAC meetings by phone or video conference. Federal law requires some members of the MAC to also serve as MPAC members. The MPAC will provide an annual report on its work, which will include information about the MAC's activities, topics discussed, and recommendations.

MassHealth will work with MAC members to decide how best to engage with the MPAC.

Interested in Learning More about the federal laws?

Go to: **Code of Federal Regulations | 42 CFR 431.12 | Medicaid Advisory Committee and Beneficiary Advisory Council**

MAC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to MAC members, MassHealth staff will attend MAC meetings. UMass Chan Medical School staff will also attend MAC meetings to support project management. More information about the different roles of MAC members, MassHealth, and UMass Chan Medical School is included below.

Members

- Be open to sharing your experiences
- Provide feedback or share ideas on MassHealth programs and policies
- Ask questions when you need help or clarification

MassHealth

- Be open about how MAC input is shared with MassHealth
- Follow through with next steps from MAC meetings
- Provide education and resources to help members understand MassHealth programs and policies

UMass Chan Medical School

- Take notes during meetings to share with the MAC
- Support technology use by MAC members and provide administrative support to MassHealth staff
- Coordinate and support accommodations and stipends, including translation and interpreter needs

All Participants

- Prepare for and attend meetings
- Contribute to a safe and welcoming space
- Promote clear communication
- Listen to and be respectful of others, even if you don't agree with their ideas or opinions
- Follow MAC Meeting Guidelines and By-Laws as may be developed

Please note: MassHealth may ask MAC members to stop participating in the MAC if they are unable to meet their obligations or do not comply with meeting guidelines and by-laws as may be developed by MassHealth and MAC members. This includes irregular meeting attendance or having an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

PREPARING FOR MAC MEETINGS



Preparing for MAC meetings is the first step to effective MAC participation. Learn more below about important steps to prepare.

☑ Planning Agendas

You will develop agenda topics in partnership with MassHealth that reflect the MAC's interests, priorities, and experiences. The agenda will:

- Set the plan for the meeting
- Describe the topic areas for the meeting
- Hold time for questions, clarifications, and discussions
- Leave time to review what happened in the meeting and next steps

☑ Identifying and Addressing Accommodation Needs

MassHealth is dedicated to identifying and addressing your accommodation and support needs. If you request an accommodation, the UMass Chan Medical School Team will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your request and work with you to identify available resources to support your ability to participate fully in meetings. For example, MAC members may request:

- Language interpretation (including American Sign Language (ASL))
- Material translation
- Closed captioning
- Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART)
- Help using technology or the internet
- Additional help to support planning for MAC meetings and understanding materials

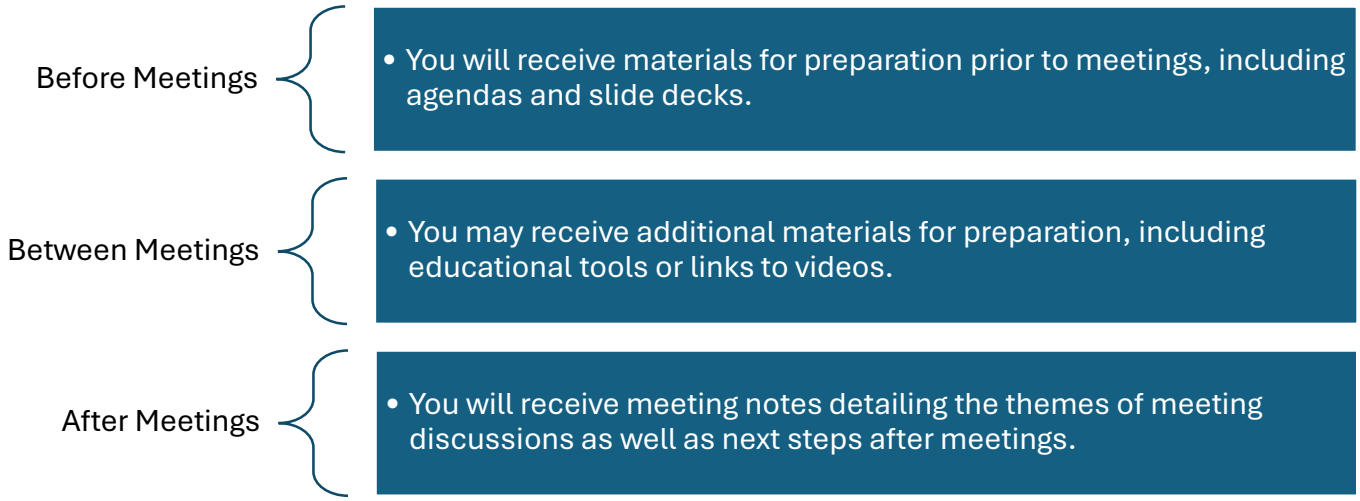
In addition…

- **If you do not have a computer or internet access**, you may choose to join MAC meetings by phone.
- **If you need support with travel for in-person meetings**, travel will be reimbursed at state determined rate per mile plus reimbursement for the cost of tolls and parking. To get reimbursed, please email images of travel receipts.

We ask that MAC members share their accommodation needs as soon as possible so they can be addressed. If your needs change, we ask that you connect with the UMass Chan Team directly so we can work with you to make any needed adjustments.

Accessing MAC Meeting Materials

☑ You will receive different types of materials to support your success inside and outside of meetings. You can expect to receive materials before meetings, between meetings, and after meetings. Both the MassHealth and UMass Chan Teams may share materials to give you the information you need to participate in and follow up from meetings.



In general, documents will be shared electronically over email, but you may choose other options for receiving materials depending on your needs. Some materials, such as meeting notes, will also be posted on the MAC website. Please note that some materials shared may be drafts that are not yet finalized.

Getting Help Participating in MAC Meetings

☑ We will cover a lot of important topics during MAC meetings. MassHealth wants to make sure you have everything you need to attend and fully participate. Review this checklist to make sure you have what you need for each meeting:

- ☐ Device (such as a phone, tablet, or computer) with a camera that allows you to access the meeting Zoom Link
- ☐ Reliable, high-speed internet access
- ☐ Materials in your preferred language

☐ Confirmation that your accommodation request was received and will be in place for the meeting

Examples of ways we can support you:

- ☐ Providing interpreter services and translating materials
- ☐ Meeting one-on-one or logging into meetings early to work through device or internet issues
- ☐ Working with you to support any accommodations needs you may have

ATTENDING MAC MEETINGS

MAC meetings will most often take place virtually. You may be asked to attend some meetings in person. In-person meetings will be discussed well in advance with MAC members. Below are important tips for virtual meetings. These tips will help you know what to expect when you join virtual meetings.



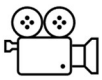
Using Zoom for Meetings

Virtual MAC meetings will take place on Zoom. Zoom features include:



Audio

Click to mute or unmute yourself



Video

Click to start or stop your camera



Participants

Click to view the list of meeting participants



Chat

Click to type a message to meeting participants. You have the option to send a message to everyone, or to select one participant to message



React

Click to view emojis that you can select to show a particular reaction, such as hand raising, clapping, and thumbs up



Closed Captions

Click to turn your closed captions on or off



View

Click to change your view of participants on the screen, including speaker view, which highlights the person speaking, or gallery view which shows everyone altogether

MEETING FACILITATION AND MAKING DECISIONS

Meeting Facilitation

Initially, MassHealth will help facilitate the MAC meetings. This means MassHealth staff will lead the meetings and guide conversations to ensure everyone can fully participate. MassHealth and MAC members will collaborate to decide the best approach, and may partner in the future to facilitate meetings together.

Making Decisions

The MAC is intended to be a safe and welcoming space where MAC members can engage with MassHealth staff and one another to share their ideas and experiences, and ultimately to learn from one another. The MAC is an advisory body – its purpose is to provide advice to MassHealth on topics related to policy development and program implementation to improve quality and access to care for MassHealth members. MAC members will determine together the process for making decisions about what advice and recommendations to provide as a group, as well as the processes for determining agenda items and other aspects of how the MAC will function. These processes will be written down in the By-Laws. When there is a difference in opinions about any specific topic, MAC participants will discuss these differences in a respectful and safe way while adhering to the Meeting Guidelines. While final decisions on whether and how to change programs and policies are up to MassHealth, MassHealth is committed to promoting transparency and accountability on the priorities, ideas, and experiences shared by MAC members. This will require everyone to take time to learn, share, be flexible, be respectful, and be patient.

FOLLOWING UP AFTER MAC MEETINGS



Completing Meeting Reflection Surveys

MassHealth will share a Reflection Survey after each meeting. We will use the Reflection Surveys to offer space for MAC members to share anonymous feedback and to learn about what is working well and what is not working well during MAC meetings. This survey will be shared virtually using a program called Qualtrics, but MAC members may also request to receive the survey in an alternative format as needed.

Responses to surveys are encouraged, but not mandatory.

At the beginning of MAC meetings, we will take time to review what we learned from responses to the Reflection Surveys and discuss how we will apply this feedback. MassHealth is also open to ideas from MAC members for editing or adding additional questions on the Reflection Surveys.

Accessing Meeting Notes

The UMass Chan Team will take detailed notes during each meeting. Meeting notes will be used to summarize discussions and reflect key takeaways from meetings. Meeting notes will not include the names of individual MAC members.

MAC members will be asked to review the notes after each meeting to confirm they are accurate and to provide any suggested edits. The UMass Chan or MassHealth Teams will share meeting notes with MAC members electronically via email (or in alternative formats as members may need) and post them on the MAC website once they have been approved by the MAC.

Missing Meetings and Catching Up

You must attend all meetings to the extent possible. We also understand that things come up. If you are unable to attend a meeting, or need help catching up after missing a meeting, please reach out.

STIPENDS

MassHealth values the time and expertise that you will bring in your advisory capacity, as well as the expected time commitment. Stipends are available for MAC members who would like to receive them. Stipends will be **$50 per meeting** and **$25 for meeting preparation** work as applicable, including preparing and reviewing meeting materials, participating in MAC education and orientation activities, and working on planning activities when applicable. Members may also choose to receive a lesser amount.

PLEASE NOTE: If you choose to receive a stipend, your receipt of this stipend may impact your eligibility for public benefits, including MassHealth benefits. Stipends are considered taxable income, and this stipend is countable income for MassHealth eligibility purposes**.** You should call MassHealth Customer Service at 800-841-2900 to confirm whether receipt of a stipend will affect your MassHealth eligibility.

Process for Receiving Stipends

[reserved]

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Engaging together may not always be easy, but it is worthwhile. Being aware of potential concerns and how to resolve them can help reduce stress and strengthen our work together. Below are some common challenges and tips for working through them.

Challenge	Tips
"I'm not an expert in MassHealth or medical care."	You are an expert in your own experiences as a current or former MassHealth member or family caregiver of a MassHealth member. That is what we hope you bring to the meetings. You may also have other personal or professional expertise to share. If you are interested in additional education on MassHealth, we can help provide you with resources.
"Will we ever talk about what is important to me?"	MassHealth wants to hear from MAC members about what they believe is important to talk about. We will use that learning to work with MAC members to co-create agendas for MAC meetings. Have an idea? Let us know. You can share your thoughts during the MAC meetings, by email, or by reaching out separately to the MassHealth Team. Please note that it may take some time to get to everyone's ideas and to prepare meetings that address requested topics.
"What if I join all these meetings and nothing changes?"	By engaging, you have the power to make a difference. This will require that each of us take time to learn and share while also being flexible, respectful, and patient with each other. Sometimes change takes time. Never hesitate to reach out to MassHealth or other MAC members to discuss.

If you are experiencing any challenges or concerns with the MAC, please raise them. You may not be the only one. Reach out to MassHealth or other MAC members to discuss. Our goal is to make you feel comfortable and prepared for the MAC.

APPENDIX A: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT MASSHEALTH

[RESERVED]

APPENDIX B: MEETING GUIDELINES EXAMPLE

These Meeting Guidelines were developed by the community participants in the MAC Brainstorming Sessions. The MAC will design their own Meeting Guidelines and may adopt some of the following.

MAC Community Brainstorming Sessions' Meeting Guidelines

- Provide the information and support needed for all to engage.
- Ensure space for all to contribute.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms (or spell them out first).
- Recognize all opinions matter and there are no right or wrong answers.
- Actively listen and limit outside distractions.
- Arrive on time and keep cameras on as much as possible.
- Provide space for breaks and take breaks when needed.
- Share your thoughts while also leaving time for others' ideas.
- Adhere to meeting agendas and try to stay on topic.
- Protect everyone's personal information and shared experiences.

APPENDIX C: MASSHEALTH MEMBER ADVISORY COMMITTEE REFLECTION SURVEY AS OF FEBRUARY 2025

Please take a moment to answer the following questions. We will use your responses to improve our meeting process.

1. I understood the purpose of today's meeting.

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Unsure

If you would like to add additional comments, please do so here.

2. I had the materials I needed to prepare for today's meeting.

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Unsure

If you would like to add additional comments, please do so here.

3. I had the support and/or accommodations I needed to fully participate in this meeting.

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Unsure

If you would like to add additional comments, please do so here.

4. The meeting was well facilitated.

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Unsure

If you would like to add additional comments, please do so here.

5. I was an active participant in one or more of today's discussions.

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Unsure

If you would like to add additional comments, please do so here.

6. I believe MAC meetings are a good use of my time.

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Unsure

If you would like to add additional comments, please do so here.

8. Please share anything else you would like us to know or to keep in mind as we prepare for meetings.

Thank you so much!

Your input helps us make meetings better.

You may also reach out the MassHealth Team to ask questions or discuss your ideas at any time.