

**ONE CARE: MASSHEALTH PLUS MEDICARE
EARLY INDICATORS PROJECT
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Preliminary Findings from a Focus Group with Early Self-Selected One Care Enrollees

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One approach used in the Early Indicators Project (EIP) was to conduct focus groups with MassHealth members who are eligible for One Care, to obtain their opinions and perspectives on the program. Focus groups are typically conducted with a small number of participants (8 – 10), and findings are not expected to be representative of the experiences of an entire population. However, focus group findings can help identify emerging trends, issues and concerns and can be very illuminating in the early implementation of a new program or service. The One Care focus group methods, including guiding questions and all related materials for the groups, were developed by members of the EIP Workgroup (identified at the end of this document).

Below is a brief summary of the preliminary findings from the first focus group, which included individuals who chose to enroll in One Care early in the program's implementation. The focus group was held in **Boston on December 16, 2013**.

Methods

English-speaking MassHealth members, aged 21 to 64 years who were eligible for and **chose to enroll in One Care**, were recruited to participate in the focus group. Using data provided by MassHealth, we recruited 13 members who agreed to participate; **7 actually participated** in the group. Characteristics of the focus group participants are shown in Table 1 on page 3.

The focus group was facilitated by research staff from UMass Medical School. The group was audio-recorded, and detailed notes were taken (audio-recordings and notes were transcribed for analysis purposes). At the end of the group discussion, participants were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire that asked participants for feedback on the focus group and for demographic information (see Table 1 below).

Preliminary Findings

I. Basic Knowledge of One Care/Information about One Care

- All participants were knowledgeable about One Care.
- All participants recalled receiving One Care Enrollment information
 - 4 participants received a One Care enrollment packet through the mail,
 - 1 member reported that a flyer was passed around the member's residence,
 - 1 member received the information from the member's primary care practice.
- All participants described the information as easy to understand.
- None of the participants indicated that they contacted SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) for any assistance.
- 3 contacted MassHealth Customer Service (CST) and found the staff there to be helpful and informative. Staff advised them to *"call your provider and make sure that they take the program."*

II. Choosing To Enroll In One Care

Participants described the appealing aspects of One Care, particularly:

- The care coordination services
- No co-payments on prescriptions
- Having 1 insurance card/1 insurance
- Better dental coverage

Overall, dental care was a major area of concern among focus group participants, and several had questions or expressed uncertainty which dental services are covered under One Care.

Five of the focus group participants talked with someone, including a primary care physician, a grandmother, and CST before deciding to enroll. Participants made efforts to verify that their providers, including pharmacists, participated in One Care.

III. Hopes For (And Concerns About) One Care

• Care Coordination

- 3 participants met with their Care Coordinator prior to the focus group meeting. Participants reported feeling:
 - Happy with the interaction,
 - That coordinator listened to their needs,
 - *“She’s very nice, very pleasant. She gave me her phone number, and told me if I needed anything to just give her a call...”*
- 2 participants needed to schedule the initial assessment appointment with their care coordinator
- 2 participants were still waiting for a call.
- 1 participant, who had met with her Care Coordinator, needed assistance with dental care and was relieved that the Care Coordinator offered to help her get needed dental services.

• LTS Coordination

- 3 participants use LTSS.
 - None of the participants had met with an LTS Coordinator since enrolling in One Care.
 - 1 participant who met with the Care Coordinator was told that the LTS Coordinators are *“just starting up”*.
 - Participants expect to hear from the LTS Coordinators after they meet with the Care Coordinator.
- 1 participant experienced disruption in home health services that her care coordinator resolved
 - *“I was getting home health service, cause I have a nurse that comes to see me every day, and then the agency...they said that my insurance wouldn’t pay their bill. So I called the representative that called me initially at One Care and she corresponded with the owner of [agency], and they managed to start covering me, and start paying the bill.”*

- **Overall, participants seemed satisfied with One Care** at this point, but acknowledge that it is still early. One participant said *“I have yet to lean on them for major services, so I don’t know”*.

Table 1. Characteristics of Focus Group Participants: Members Self-Selecting into One Care (N=7)

<u>Characteristics</u>		<u>N</u>
<u>Gender</u>	Male	4
	Female	3
<u>Race</u>	White	4
	Black	2
	Biracial/Multiracial	1
<u>Ethnicity</u>	Latino	0
<u>Sexual Orientation</u>	Straight	7
	Gay	0
<u>Education</u>	Some high school completed	2
	High school grad only	0
	Some college completed	2
	4-year College degree	3
<u>Employment status</u>	Employed in past 12 months	0
<u>Primary disability</u>	Physical/mobility	4
	Psychiatric disability	3
	Medical condition	0
<u>Service use</u>	Saw provider in past 4 months	5
	Uses medical equipment	2
	Needs personal Care/ADL help	2
	Uses LTSS	3
	Hospital/ER visit in past year	0
<u>Homelessness</u>	Homeless in past year	0

Participant feedback on the group was positive. All of the participants strongly agreed that they understood the focus group questions, that their opinions were respected, and that they felt comfortable in the discussion.

As noted above, with a small number of participants, focus group findings are not expected to be representative of an entire population. However, participants in this group were racially diverse and included individuals with both psychiatric and physical disabilities. Other focus groups will be conducted with the following groups: members who have elected not to enroll in One Care; members who have been auto-assigned into One Care; Spanish-speaking members; and members with intellectual disabilities and their caregivers/family members. A final comprehensive report of focus group findings will be available when all groups have been completed.

EIP Workgroup Members:

One Care Implementation Council representatives – Dennis Heaphy, Ted Chelmow, Olivia Richard, Jeff Keilson

MassHealth representatives – Michele Goody, Dorothée Alsentzer, David Healey

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