

ALABAMA MEDICAID AGENCY
Medical Care Advisory Committee

MINUTES
May 22, 2025

Present:

Commissioner Stephanie McGee Azar
Monica Abron
Jean Brown
Cathy Caldwell
Barry Cambron
Ginger Carmack
Melanie Cleveland
LaTonda Cunningham
Mary Hayes-Finch
Jennifer Harris
Nick Hines
Nate Horsley
Travis Houser
Beth Huckabee
Kara Huls, MD

Mark Jackson
Brian Massey
Joyce McColley
David McIntosh
Paul McWhorter
Sheila Moody
Kelli Littlejohn-Newman
Marsha Raulerson, MD
Christine Rembert, MD
Kristi Segrest
Shannon Shelley-Tremblay
Mason Tanaka
Judy Thomas
Darlene Traffanstedt, MD
Alexander Willis

Call to Order/ Opening Remarks at 10:00am:

Commissioner Stephanie McGee Azar welcomed everyone to the MAC meeting and opened with introductions. She began by sharing retirement of Gretel Felton and introduction of Judy Thomas as the new Deputy Commissioner of Beneficiary Services. Commissioner then gave budget update. For Fiscal Year (FY)26 Medicaid requested \$1.184 billion at the recent Budget Hearing, which is largest budget request Medicaid has had before it. Federal COVID dollars have come to an end which is why request was higher. Medicaid was fortunate to have \$1.179 billion appropriated (\$5 million less than requested). Optimistic and hopeful that the difference will not cause issues with the way the budget is trending, but it is still unknown. There are two unfunded legislations passed which require coverage of Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnancy (PEP) and coverage of Cologuard type screening products for budget year 2026. The Agency is optimistic that these unfunded mandates will not cause too much disruption to the approved budget.

Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) and Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC)

Stephanie Lindsay, Executive Sponsor for the MAC/BAC, explained that Administrative Codes relating to the MAC and BAC were filed last month and questions were asked. In 2022, CMS finalized the Access Rule which requires Medicaid to have a Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) and a Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) by July 9, 2025. The Access Rule also requires states to form an advisory group outside of MAC/BAC but that is not required until

July 9, 2026. The provisions of the Access Rule require Medicaid to rename and expand the scope of states' Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC). Current MCAC will now be MAC and meet quarterly. Access Rule also requires states to establish a BAC comprised of Medicaid beneficiaries, their families, or caregivers. The Agency is asking the MAC for recommendations for candidates that will participate. Two MAC meetings will be open to the public. BAC meetings could potentially be open, but it is up to the Council. All information including proposed bylaws, applications, etc. will be available on Medicaid's website. Meetings will begin in September.

Hysterectomy Process Updates

Dr. Darlene Traffanstedt outlined changes to hysterectomy process to be accompanied by new consent forms. The Agency is changing the processes for how medical necessity reviews are completed. Currently post-procedures pre-claims adjudication for all hysterectomies. Going forward it will be on those in unusual circumstances. Claims for routine procedures will now be processed upon receipt of a completed consent form. Federal law requires the form before claims payment. This is effective October 1, 2025, with a grace period for the form until January 1, 2026. A Provider ALERT will be sent out in early fall.

Updates to access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorders

Dr. Darlene Traffanstedt updated the committee on the access to medications for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) project. Agency has been working on this project for over a year and it will be completed in 2 phases. Phase One was started January 2025 which was to move from a manual Prior Authorization (PA) process to an electronic process along with removing some of the requirements for additional information from Providers for PAs to be approved. Phase Two was soft launched May 12, 2025, and an ALERT will go out in early June to fully explain the second phase. The major change is to treat individuals who have not been on medications for OUD in the previous 90 days to get their first fill without a PA, increasing access and not delaying treatment. Official effective date of change is July 1, 2025.

Maternal Hypertension Project

Dr. Darlene Traffanstedt announced that the Agency will be participating with the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on a two-year project related to Maternal Hypertension. This project, launched in January 2025, requires the agency to design a quality improvement project around maternal hypertension. The project is being built around remote patient monitoring and those with a discharge diagnosis of hypertension. More information will come as the program is rolled out.

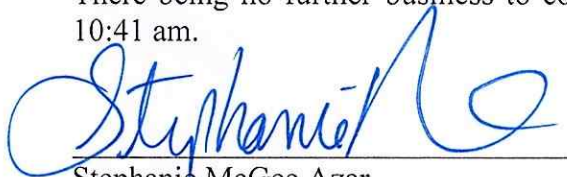
Health Systems

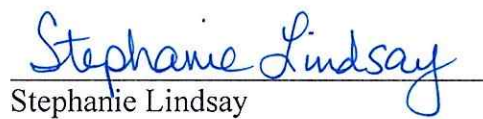
Barry Cambron provided an update on Transforming Maternal Health (TMaH) grant which state was awarded. The state will be awarded close to \$16.5 million over a 10-year period. The goal of this project is to improve maternal and child outcomes. Key items include care delivery and payment reform with an emphasis on care coordination and broader access to services such as doula or midwifery services. The first stakeholder meeting is in June 2025 with "Leadership Committee" which is different maternal care providers in state. Follow-up meeting will be in July with "Cross Agency Committee" which includes other state agencies, professional and provider organizations.

Barry Cambron then discussed the Justice Involved Youth (JIY) initiative which is now federal law. This law requires the Agency to pay for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) services as well as Targeted Case Management for incarcerated youth post adjudication. EPSDT services are to be provided 30 days prior to release or as soon as practical and case management services are to be provided 30 days pre and post release. Phase One of implementation is working with Alabama Department of Youth Services (DYS) on how to deliver these services to the 5-6 facilities with statewide coverage. An ALERT and webinar will be released targeting EPSDT providers. Phase Two is working with remaining DYS facilities (12 or so) and other carceral facilities (Alabama Department of Corrections (DOC), county, and municipal jails). Agency recently applied for support grant for JIY. This would be a 4-year grant totaling \$5 million and states will be notified in July, if awarded. This grant will assist with implementation of the program.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:41 am.


Stephanie McGee Azar
Commissioner


Stephanie Lindsay
Recording Secretary