

**Clackamas County
Benefits Review Committee
Meeting Summary for June 20, 2024**

This document is intended to be a meeting summary. These meetings are recorded.

Voting Members Present: Robert Skinner, Chuck Kerns, Greta Nickerson, Lauren Haney, Kristi Durham, Ariel Owens, Paula McDonald, Gretchen Pacheco, Rob Sadowsky

Voting Members Not Present: Rachelle Bonsi, Fred Yungbluth, Alex Gonzalez, Jon Santana, Jennifer Harvey, Darrel Mally, John Lee, Deena Mehdikhan

Minutes: Toni McGarvey

Facilitator: Cory Mathews

Attendance and Minutes:

Recordings will be provided upon request within one year of the meeting.

Mercer: Presentation Experience Report Through April 2024:

Mercer Presenter: Joe Bober

1. Review of Experience Report utilization for general county and other population groups. Here are the summary highlights:
2. Seeing increase in utilization of services across the board. Will review again when May and June numbers come in.
3. Paula: Are we seeing larger claims and/or under-utilization of preventative services.
Joe: Both are in play
4. Greta brings up discussion of showing/not showing "claimant type" on claims review.
Joe mentions that he can remove it.
Kristi says that as long as Mercer can still track for review for new plan year, then fine removing it from reporting.
5. Joe: Heads up that Kaiser is showing potential for a 15-16% range on renewal. There is an increase on utilization as well.
6. Will review again in July.
7. Cory: Circle back to the privacy of information raised by Greta and discussed.
Kristi: Does not require a vote, more an administrative change. Asked Mercer to continue tracking those demographics but remove from report.
Joe confirms he will remove, but data will be retained for use in renewal

County Update:

Presenter: Kristi Durham

1. Within CBA contracts we have language stating the BRC will make all decisions within 120 days of the next calendar year, and completed well before OE to give all entities (Mercer, County, Carriers, etc.) time to process renewal data for coming year.
2. BRC can waive 120 day requirement if needed, as a collective.

3. Paula: So we should have things decided by August? Next month do we really need to lean in and make decisions so that we can close BRC potentially in August.
Kristi: Yes that is correct, we need to utilize the weekly meetings in August to stay on schedule.
4. Darryl: Is there work to be done between sessions, or is the work done in-session?
Kristi: All work can and should be completed during BRC sessions, except for Mercer who works on items outside of BRC.
Billie: Perhaps though BRC voting members are checking in with their constituents, those they represent, about options for renewals (co-pays, additional services or options)
5. Greta: If you miss any upcoming meetings, read the minutes to keep up with materials and be ready for next session.
6. Billie: No proxy voting due to public meeting law, so please plan for your presence (for quorum)
7. Kristi: Item 2, we are working to have a replacement for the position vacated by Eric Sarha. Hopefully they will join in July.
8. Kristi: Item 3, our work with our TPA, Businessolver, has been extended. The August soft-launch has been moved due to the extent of the internal work needing to be done. We will share again when the project restarts in 2025. TPA will handle the transactional pieces of the benefits program, using a platform created with the look and feel of the county interface.

BRC Meeting Schedule, In-Person Discussion:

1. Available dates for hybrid in-person/Zoom 7/18, 8/8, 8/22, 8/29 (Meeting Room 369 A/B)
2. Discussed last year as a desired option during the month of August for renewal discussions.
3. Any meetings will offer Zoom link for remote.
4. Please report to Toni, after receiving meeting materials for in-person days, whether or not you will be attending hybrid or in-person.

Review and Approval of BRC Meeting Minutes:

1. No corrections or additions to minutes submitted.

VOTING: To accept and approve minutes from BRC Meetings from October 2023 through May 2024, as written.

Greta Nickerson moves to approve backlog of minutes from October through May

Paula McDonald seconds motion

Yay/Nay Count: 10 Yes (Unanimous), 0 Nay

Motion passes to accept minutes

Member Reports:

1. Greta: Update on dental scheduling dilemmas. Can only cancel appointments, cannot reschedule – instead you go on a waitlist. You can randomly call and see if there are openings or wait for a call back (Greta) has currently been waiting over a month to reschedule.
2. Keith continues to track all our concerns and takes them all back to Kaiser as feedback from their constituents. Kaiser continues to state they are making progress on solutions, but we have been hearing the same thing for years.
3. Greta: I could ask for an emergency appointment, but this is not a true emergency.
4. Greta: They also do not ask for preferred location or offer any other facilities. They just confirm nothing available. Do not seem to be amenable to offer more support during scheduling phone calls.

5. Keith: There should be availability to go to the facility of your choice. When we have Kaiser present, they need to hear these specifics from the county, their customer. I hear you loud and clear and will continue to supply them with feedback.
6. IMPORTANT NOTE: Kaiser Dental will be at the next meeting on July 18th.
7. Gretchen: We have been raising these concerns since at least 2014.
8. Kristi: These concerns pre-date and now post-date COVID restrictions. They are not truly acknowledging the challenges we are experiencing, until someone walks away. How do we do something different than just sharing our experience?
9. Keith: Kaiser does value our feedback and partnership. But specifics like Greta is experiencing regarding access is difficult to refute – these personal experiences are powerful. They do not want to lose customers, members, which would affect their pricing. Not sure if they are inefficiencies or low staffing issues. Will keep probing.
10. Keith: I have had to take people out of network before due to lack of response in getting a patient in. We will continue to express our concerns.
11. Darryl: Also lacking in mental health services.
12. Keith: Yes, all providers are challenged right now for mental health providers. No excuse, just the reality of what we are hearing.
13. Billie: Please keep submitting any questions for providers to me via email. We will be sending those off in the coming week. Due date is end of day Monday (6/22/24).
14. Ariel expresses concerns with scheduling dental appointments as well. Maybe Kaiser needs to look at partnering with other agencies (ie Willamette Dental)
15. Rob: I would like to share troubles with scheduling physical therapy appointments as well.
16. Keith: all good feedback that I will take back to Lilian at Kaiser.
17. Daryl: What are our options for getting Kaiser to hear and respond?
18. Keith: Keep being vocal about our concerns. Maybe we have to give more of an ultimatum for them to make changes. Mercer has the ability to communicate with Kaiser.
19. Kristi: We could do an optional dental program for Kaiser medical participants, and stop driving business to the business unit that isn't delivering. And get better options for our employees in the process. County currently pays all the dental for employees, and employees are having trouble accessing Kaiser dental services. I've been hearing of these problems since 2016.
20. Keith: I will talk with Kaiser, escalate this matter, and return to the BRC with results/feedback. Will also mention specifically Greta's issue with dental appointment scheduling.
21. Cory encourages further discussion, and reminder to the BRC members to continue to bring this level of reporting to the meetings. This is what makes a difference.

Meeting Adjourned:

Cory Mathews adjourns the meeting.

Next meeting: July 18th, 2024