

OHA Advisory Committee Meeting
April 28, 2020
12:00 p.m. to 12:30 pm
Via Phone
Minutes

Meeting convened at 12:03 pm

Attendance: **Members in attendance** – Lynne Ide, Mark DeWaele, Steve Wanczyk-Karp,
 Members not in attendance – Susan Halpin, Dina Berlyn
 OHA Staff – Ted Doolittle, Valerie Wyzkowski, Sean King, Adam Prizio, Denise
 Ramoutar and Sherri Koss

1. Welcome & Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Motion to approve April 28, 2020 agenda; Steve Wanczyk-Karp motioned to approve and Lynne Ide seconded; No discussion, no nays, motion carried unanimously
- Motion to approve January 30, 2020 minutes; Mark DeWaele motioned to approve and Lynne Ide seconded; No discussion, no nays, motion carried unanimously

2. Administration Report

a) **Budget**

- Our offices completed our move to 153 Market Street, Hartford, CT during the first quarter of 2020.
- Cubicles finally built out and completed and once staff return to the office they will be able to move into their permanent spaces
- Working to add barrier so that only OHA staff can get into our space due to the nature of our work; Working with OPM about this
- Still working on some logistical issues such as faxes not working as they should be
- Rent was supposed to be less but we now have to pay for parking, unlike the old building; OPM adjusted our new rent to accommodate

b) **Personnel**

- Stable for the past 6 months
- All staff are up to speed, no new employee training going on at this time
- When COVID19 came around the State loosened the requirements on teleworking; needed a State laptop to telework. That was changed in reaction to the pandemic.
- In the future desktops will be replaced with laptops. Taking advantage of the reduction cost in rent for this fiscal year, Ted received permission to transfer some money to order laptops for all staff.
- Working on State issued laptops more secure than staff's home computers.
- When COVID19 restrictions end, staff will return to working at the office, and the prior telework rules will presumably come back into force. Under the pre-existing rules, those eligible for telework will be allowed to apply, if they have a laptop by then.
- Ted is not requiring staff to return to the office unless and until state employees are required to return to work sites. OHA will take our cue from the Governor's office.
- Shout out to IT staff for getting us up and running remotely
- All staff except Ted working at home under the loosened telework restrictions
- Residual presence is needed at the office for items such as opening and scanning the mail, some faxing, and restarting people's desktops, since the machines at the office have to be on to allow staff to remote in from home. Ted has been coming in every day to insure that these matters are covered. He did not feel comfortable requiring anyone else on the staff to come

in. All other staff visits to the office since the COVID19 restrictions went into place have been isolated instances, sometimes very brief as to pick something up quickly, and completely voluntary.

- Ted asks if any questions; none

3. Data Reports

- Ted reviews the data report with the committee, had about 800 cases, slightly down
- Ted attributes drop in case volume to COVID19, consumers are not leaving their homes and seeking medical attention, especially elective things
- Also, all healthcare services go down in recessions
- Savings per case remains healthy
- This moderate dip in volume was welcomed as it helped give staff the time to work on other priorities that had been put off, such as the new OHA website and an update to the OHA Policy & Procedures manual.

4. Other

- Every two (2) years every State agency gets audited by the Office of Public Accounts; this is occurring now
- Things they commonly look at include the timeliness of filing of the various reports are required to the legislature and Governor. OHA historically has filed all its required reports, but some of these have been filed late, in some cases due to the press of other business, but in some cases due to the fact that historically some of the more minor reports due in January have been incorporated into the two main OHA reports, which are due in March and September.
- Ted suspects that as part of their final report, the auditors will ask OHA to request from the legislature that some of the due dates of its more minor reports be changed to align with the filing of the two main reports to promote timely filings
- OHA files two (2) main reports:
 - Administrative Report to the Governor (due September)
 - Annual Report (due March)
 - Other minor reports (*e.g.*, the report on the Behavioral Clearinghouse project which has never been funded) are due in January and have always been incorporated into the March report, which makes timely filing impossible
- New website will go live this week
- Also, the rewrite of our policy and procedure manual should be completed within the next few weeks

Questions

- Lynne asks, have we started seeing cases related to confusion regarding testing/treatment or is it too soon? Ted responds, in terms of finances hospitals supposed to be getting reimbursed for uninsured by the federal government; but this program has yet to launch, and hospitals at this point seem to be waiting to see where that goes before they start sending bills to self-pay patients. Thus problems may emerge later but have not yet started. If it becomes an issue OHA will want to get involved.
- Val shares that we have seen a few Telehealth calls come in concerning coverage for telehealth. These seem to have been resolved and it was more of an educational matter for providers and insurers regarding the new more liberal telehealth payment policies. Nothing in the last week or two. We are seeing more issues with people getting Mental Health inpatient services as places are slowing down their admissions. Ted also states that telehealth is supposed to be covered by private payers under the COVID19 response rules.

- Sean states that we engaged with Anthem to make sure that they were providing full scope of telehealth benefits required under federal direction and the Governor's Executive Orders. Understands that Anthem has properly updated their guidance to providers and have not heard any further Anthem-specific complaints from the provider community. One other provider issue Sean is looking into involves Cigna possibly not be paying for a broad a range of telehealth services in physical therapy.
- Lynne confirms that Ted sits on the AHCT Board of Directors meeting; Lynne reports that Universal Healthcare Foundation of Connecticut is very concerned about when a person loses coverage because they lost their job. People don't have knowledge about their options, such as applying for Medicare or QHP versus accepting COBRA through employer. Are there any conversations about educating consumers about how AHCT is always open for business if you lose your insurance at any time. People should explore options there before taking COBRA. Ted responds that this is a great thought and will chat about this internally. Lynne feels there are proactive steps that can be taken by AHCT. Ted will raise issue with AHCT and the Governor's office. Maybe this could be a possible part of one or more of the Governor's briefing to get the word out. Val adds that she has been working a lot with DCF and DDS and people are using these agencies that never had before because they've lost their jobs. She is doing a lot of education with other State agencies so they have the information to provide to the clients they are seeing. They are having weekly meetings regarding this and other services that people never had to request before.

5. High Deductible Health Plan Task Force Update

- Final Report was submitted to the legislature in February; haven't been able to follow up on this due to the COVID19 outbreak. Doesn't feel there will be any headway this session or during the special session.
- Ted Thanks Val, Adam, Sean and Sherri for all the work they did on this Task Force.

Lynne Ide motioned to adjourn and Steve Wanczyk-Karp seconded; no nays; no discussion motion carries unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 12:36 pm.

**The next meeting is scheduled for
Tuesday, July 28, 2020
12:00 – 12:30 PM**