

Health Care for All Colorado Foundation
Board Meeting Minutes – October 28, 2019

Conference Call: 605.468.8012 Conference Code: 941668

Present via Phone Conference: Donna Smith, Shelley Cohen, Michele Swenson, Administrator Susan Gilbert, Robert Messman, Vincent Markovchick, Tom Gottlieb, Elinor Christiansen
Absent: Eldon VanDerWege

Meeting convened at 3:00 pm by co-president Donna Smith

September Meeting Minutes – Approved unanimously.

Financial Report for Quarter July-September

RM: Financial Statements: 2 profit & loss statements, one labeled 'Balance' sheet. Expenses -

RM: HCACF paid \$250/mo rent starting in September.

MS: Where is account of check to Denver Open Media? RM: perhaps didn't clear until October.

MS: Questions regarding \$16,000-20,000 credits to checking account. RM: These represent mature Treasury bill rollovers. August - ~ \$18,000 represents reinvestment in T-bills, after subtracting amount to add to account balance.

Report: Healthcare NOW National Strategy Conference - Oct. 18-20, 2019

DS: Donna & Tom represented HCACF; Nathan Wilkes, HCAC Advocacy. Arrived Friday Oct. 18

- Plenary- Rose Roach, Exec Dir Minnesota Nurses Association; Exec Dir of Flight Attendants' Union presented
- Saturday: Donna was part of Plenary – Discussed healthcare policy in 2020 election.

Workshops

- Canadian doctor: spoke of efforts to protect Canadian system. Canadian MFA does not cover drugs; considering negotiation of cost.

Presidential politics discussions

- Michael Lighty supporting B. Sanders – Sanders paved way for current discussions about MFA – introduced MFA bill in Senate.
- Sanders Campaign has had age effect – lowered age range at conference by half – large contingent of Democratic Socialists of America.
- Patient story – man's son lacked psychiatric medication, committed suicide.

Values-Based Movement panel in states

- Work with Jeannie Nicholson - values discussion.

Sunday Breakout – issues in states

- Darius, African American – influence of intersection of race & healthcare in U.S. in communities of Latino, Asian, Black, etc.

Donna present at HCNOW Board meeting on Sunday regarding HCNOW plans for coming year.

DS: "Good conference" – very busy. UHCAN – Ohio representative Deb Silverstein – Ohio

DS: Rep Ro Khanna (Calif) – sponsoring bill to allow states to develop MFA, would replace waiver process of several years ago, which allowed states to retain federal funds from other programs. Rep. Jim McDermott previously sponsored. Rep Jayapal now has his seat (prime sponsor of federal MFA bill). PDA will be pushing House members to co-sponsor Rep. Ro Khanna's bill. A great project for HCAC Advocacy to work on.

DS: Public Citizen had forum Saturday night. Eagan not present, cohort Melinda was.

HCNOW tries to alternate annual conference between 2 coasts & middle of country – don't know where it will be next year. Mark Dudzic present with Labor faction of MFA.

DS: Panel on Values Based Communication –Warren George funded a survey of Oregon voters on universal healthcare with his own money (\$32,000) – survey at <https://variedstrengths.com/> - designed questions with clarity, resulting in clarity of responses – e.g., "Would you be willing to spend 2-3 times more in state income tax for a universal healthcare system for Oregon?" Results: 28% - "Yes"; 35% - inclined to support = 60%. Small % said "No".

DS: It is time to lift up younger folks to become leaders of movement. John Conyers died yesterday – strong advocate for SP/MFA for many years. Bob Sisler/Mi was close to Rep. Conyers, who just turned 90.

[Following account of Oregon Conference edited by Tom Gottlieb]:

TG: Sought out individuals at conference doing work related to financing health care reform.

- Had 15-minute meeting with Richard Master - Business for Medicare for All (<https://www.businessformedicareforall.org/>). Richard Master seeks change in funding of healthcare, is working with Wendell Potter. Both WP and RM have developed a group to provide a financial plan for M4A. RM expressed interest in the work done by PNHI (4 papers). TG expressed interest in engaging with Business for Medicare for All.
- TG met with Alex Lawson of Social Security Works, who is interested in financing of MFA and expressed interest in the work done by PNHI (HCACF)
- Public Citizen had representation at the conference, however, none of the experts on the financing of health care services. TG obtained names with whom to connect.
- Contact with Bill Semple – It appears that coordinating efforts with CFUHC might be difficult.

And more . . .

SC & RM: Thanks to Tom & Donna for attending conference. RM: Suggest making a list of folks to connect with from conference – perhaps for follow-up by HCAC Advocacy, etc. SC: Invite some of contacts, perhaps to attract more people to future Colorado conference. RM: Perhaps invite some to be on panels during spring event.

EC: Elinor joined conference call halfway into call.

Event Planning:

DS: Rep. Jayapal's schedule is time -limited. She cannot commit to a date yet; the Congressional calendar is not set until December.

EC: We should begin preliminary meetings regarding Spring event.

End-of-Year Letter:

DS: Jeannie Nicholson is working on obtaining permission to include a healthcare story in the EOY letter. Donna will write up a story if this not received.

Medicare Advantage Project

DS: Eagen Kemp & Donna writing drafts. Updating draft around Trump administration's executive orders.

RM: Looking at Medigap plans on CMS site. The site requests a zip code; when entered, all zip codes turn up "invalid". Have to click on "city" in small print, not "Get Started" button.

RM: Misleading deductible for Plan G – says the cost is \$15,000 – the website inserts \$800-900/mo of added drug costs to inflate the cost, resulting in misleading cost.

DS: CMS website getting worse.

RM: In the spring of 2018 Trump administration began changing website. First option listed when researching Medigap plans: "Do you want a MA plan?" Confusing to seniors, who resort to what appear to be the cheapest plans – which ultimately are not. When leaving a MA plan – underwriting is required to get into a Medigap plan.

DS: Vince & Donna will update MA report.

Pharmaceutical Research & Policy – Draft Paper (Edited by TG)

TG: Two questions are asked:

1. Is the National Outpatient Prescription Drug Plan document readable?
2. Is an introductory document needed to reach a broader audience beyond the researchers?

Two statements are added:

1. A financial plan structure is required utilizing an Expanded Medicare framework
2. Without a financial structure the content of manufacturer to patient discounts cannot be discussed.

RM: Medicare negotiates hospital drugs, often way down. VM: Medicare can't negotiate. RM: Regarding Cancer Drugs – Medicare approves certain amount, Medigap picks up the balance.

TG: True with single-source drug, not multi-source drug. Simplicity - one can eliminate Patient Benefit Managers, which are no longer needed.

RM: Suggest using an example of a patient buying a drug – before & after implementation of the proposed plan - as illustration.

TG: Summary of structure of the pharmacy benefit plan

1. Medicaid model for pricing drugs is used (negotiating drug price)
2. VA model cannot be used (VA owns the purchasing, distributing, and dispensing mechanisms and eliminates decentralized private pharmacies)
3. Pricing of drugs are accomplished by utilizing market principles of price and volume to determine price a) between manufacturer and distributor and (b) between distributor and private pharmacy.
4. Benchmarks used by Medicaid are no longer needed, i.e. Professional services for Medicaid patient will be provided through Medicare for All including Medicare Part D.
5. PBM's are no longer needed

TG: Answer to two questions:

1. Is the National Outpatient Prescription Drug Plan document readable? NO!!
2. *Is an introductory document needed to reach a broader audience beyond the researchers?*
YES!!

DS: Would like introductory paper – difficult to dig through the paper. For broader support, it needs simplification. RM: Agree with that. A simpler version of the current paper is needed.

EC: Diagram simplifies the issue.

DS: Perhaps we could do a special meeting/call on this paper.

Meeting Spaces

TG: Panera restaurants has free conference rooms throughout city.

SG: Panera a great place, but cannot reserve rooms in advance – 1st come, 1st serve. Other places can be reserved.

TG: Has met with legislative representative at Panera's early in the morning, with 15 people attending.

SC: Some libraries have conference rooms.

TG: Suggest that HCACF Board meet the first week in December [subsequently changed to second Monday, December 9] to cover Nov-Dec. meetings- General agreement among members present.

RM: Any feedback from Sanders office about "buyout concept?" DS: Not yet; Sanders' health issue may have delayed response.

DS: Meeting adjourned at 4:05pm.

Next Meeting: Monday, December 9, 2019