



HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 2, 2022
Roughrider Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Representative Robin Weisz, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Robin Weisz, Mike Beltz, Ruth Buffalo, Gretchen Dobervich, Clayton Fegley, Zachary Ista, Jim Kasper*, Lisa Meier, Marvin E. Nelson, Bob Paulson, Karen M. Rohr; Senators Howard C. Anderson, Jr., Tim Mathern, Dave Oehlke

Members absent: Representatives Pamela Anderson, Greg Westlind; Senator Kristin Roers

Others present: See [Appendix A](#)

**Attended remotely*

It was moved by Senator Mathern, seconded by Representative Meier, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the December 16, 2021, meeting be approved as distributed.

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER STUDY

Ms. Elinor Higgins, Policy Associate, and Ms. Rebecca Cooper, Policy Associate, National Academy for State Health Policy, provided an overview ([Appendix B](#)) regarding community health workers (CHWs).

Ms. Krista Fremming, Health and Human Services Program Administrator, Division of Medical Services, Department of Human Services, provided information ([Appendix C](#)) regarding Medicaid reimbursement for CHWs. She indicated, due in part to limited resources, the Department of Human Services would rely on a directive from the Legislative Assembly to implement Medicaid reimbursement for CHWs.

Ms. Allison Myers, PhD/MPH, Director, Oregon State University Center for Health Innovation, and Ms. Oralia Mendez, MPH, CHW, Manager, Workforce Development and Community Programs, Oregon State University, provided information ([Appendix D](#)) regarding CHWs in Oregon.

Ms. Mendez noted the starting wage for a CHW typically ranges between \$18 to \$20 per hour, with a maximum wage of approximately \$32 per hour.

Ms. Myers explained although a person from out of state could receive CHW training in Oregon, the typical student plans to practice in Oregon upon completion of training because the training is tailored to Oregon's practice requirements.

Mr. Ben Tiensvold, Community Outreach Coordinator, Community Health Worker Collaborative of South Dakota, provided an overview ([Appendix E](#)) of South Dakota's CHW program. He noted:

- South Dakota implemented the Medicaid CHW program through an agency-initiated state plan amendment.
- Currently, 85 community health representatives and 25 certified CHWs work in tribal communities in South Dakota.
- By June 2022, it is expected there will be 130 CHWs in the state, progressing towards a statewide goal of having 300 CHWs in the state.

Mr. Adam Parker, Chairman, North Dakota Emergency Medical Services Association's Advocacy Committee, provided information ([Appendix F](#)) regarding community paramedics. He noted there are approximately 15 to

20 community paramedics in the state. Initially the community paramedics were distributed evenly between rural and urban communities, but now are distributed more heavily to the urban communities.

Ms. Wendy Schmidt, Senior Learning and Development Specialist, Sanford Health Bismarck, noted Sanford's community paramedic program has realized a 71 percent drop in emergency department visits and a 67 percent drop in inpatient admissions.

Ms. BreAnn M. Raymond, Family Nurse Practitioner, Northland Health Centers, provided information ([Appendix G](#)) regarding the need for CHWs.

DRUG PRICING STUDY

Mr. Drew Gattine, Senior Policy Fellow, National Academy for State Health Policy, provided an overview ([Appendix H](#)) of the prescription drug supply chain.

Ms. Leah Lindahl, Senior Director, State Government Affairs, Western Region, Healthcare Distribution Alliance, provided information ([Appendix I](#)) regarding the roles of prescription drug distributors and pharmacy services administrative organizations in the prescription drug supply chain and in prescription drug pricing.

Ms. Janelle Moos, Advocacy Director, AARP North Dakota, introduced Mr. James McSpadden, Senior Policy Advisor, AARP Public Policy Institute.

Mr. McSpadden provided information ([Appendix J](#)) regarding prescription drug pricing.

Mr. Gattine provided information ([Appendix K](#)) regarding legislation affecting prescription drug prices and he provided an overview of the federal 340B drug pricing program.

Mr. John Arnold, Deputy Insurance Commissioner, provided information ([Appendix L](#)) regarding the role the Insurance Department could play in regulating pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). He noted the Insurance Department is reluctant to regulate PBMs, in part due to the significant funding and expertise required to regulate PBMs and regulation of PBMs also would be outside the department's core role of consumer protection.

Representatives of health insurance carriers, Mr. Matt Schafer, Government Relations Director, Medica; Mr. Danny Weiss, Executive Director of Pharmacy Benefits, Sanford Health Plan; and Ms. Megan Houn, Government Relations Director, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota, provided information ([Appendix M](#)) regarding the price upon which prescription drug copays, coinsurance, and deductibles are based.

Ms. Houn noted for Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota fully insured plans, all rebates are passed through to members. She noted under the current model, rebates are used by employers and plans sponsors to lower premiums.

Mr. Alex Sommer, Principal Government Affairs Lobbyist, Prime Therapeutics, noted North Dakota Century Code Section 19-02.1-16.5, which was enacted in 2021, addresses some of the 340B drug pricing program concerns raised by the committee.

Mr. Mike Schwab, Executive Vice President, North Dakota Pharmacists Association, noted Section 19-02.1-16.5 prohibits PBMs from interfering with the relationship between a covered entity and a contracted pharmacy. He noted according to Mr. Adam Fine, growth in the 340B drug pricing program can be attributed to large chain pharmacies and PBMs and primarily is found in specialty pharmacies and specialty drugs.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND DIRECTIVES

The committee will seek additional information regarding community paramedics, including the status of administrative rules.

Representative Dobervich will work with Legislative Council to prepare a bill draft providing for Medicaid reimbursement of CHWs.

Chairman Weisz informed the committee the next meeting likely will be scheduled for June 2022.

No further business appearing, Chairman Weisz adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

Jennifer S. N. Clark
Senior Counsel and Assistant Code Revisor

Samantha E. Kramer
Senior Counsel

ATTACH:13