



**Medicaid Advisory Committee
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 16, 2026**

The Beneficiary Advisory Committee (BAC) met on Thursday, July 16, 2026, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. CST at the Bennett Martin Public Library in Lincoln, Nebraska. The meeting was in-person and members of the public were able to join virtually. A call-in option was also available.

BAC members in attendance: Allison Sothan, Amber Corbin, Mary Phillips, Renae Wacker, Vaness Chavez-Jurado

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) employees in attendance: Akshay Nathan, Amber Root-Johnson, Bailey Graden, Celia Wightman, Crystal Wheeler, Jacob Kawamoto, Jennifer Anders, Kelsi Rodriguez-Cangas, Kimberly Vaughn

Members of the public in attendance:

Adrienne, Alissa Kern, Amy Graham, Candi Koenig, Carol Salber, Collin, Curt Safranek, Deb, Anderson, Dee, Donna Barker, Emily Schwanke, Jennifer Barry-Henning, Katherine Houlden, Kathy Rohloff, Kelsey Arends, Kylie, Laurie Rolfsmeyer, Linda Yoble, Lynn Ford, M, Marcy Berry, Paula Shulz, Peggy stone, Phil Galewitz, Philip Gray, Rachel Metry, Sarah, Scott Stempor, Stacy Malone, Stephanie, Stu, Susan Browne, Terri Barry, Tina Gastineau, Tori

BAC members not in attendance: Alissa Kern, Arvoni Johnson, Erica Spears, Franck Toe, Lori Wachter

There were three call-in numbers in attendance.

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Mary.

- The Open Meetings Act was made available for attendees.
- Mary welcomed the meeting attendees
- Celia reminded the committee of the Conflict of Interest policy. Conflict of Interest forms were available at the meeting.
- Celia ran through roll call.

II. Follow Up Items

Review and Approval of May 21, 2026, Draft Minutes

No edits were suggested to be made to the minutes. Amber moved to approve the minutes and Allison seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to approve May meeting minutes.

MLTC Follow-ups from the May Meeting

MLTC informed that committee that a MAC/BAC flyer has been created. Paper copies were available at the meeting and Celia emailed out a pdf version.

III. Announcements

MLTC Announcements

- Jacob Kawamoto has been promoted to Deputy Director of Policy & Plan Management
- The MAC/BAC Annual Report is posted on the [website](#)
 - The report includes information from the July 2025 meeting to the March 2026 meeting
- The July 2026 updates to the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Medicaid Service Definition can be viewed [here](#). Public comment ran from December 2025-January 2026.
- MLTC staff informed the committee that the Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) meeting in November may need to be extended by 30 minutes. This would allow for adequate time on the agenda to discuss all relevant end of year materials.
 - *Note: At the MAC July 16, 2026, MAC meeting, the MAC voted to extend the November meeting.*
- Nebraska State Plan Amendment (SPA) and Waiver Updates
 - NE 26-0005: Certified Lactation Consultants – Prenatal Plus Program
 - Effective July 1, 2026, certified lactation consultants (CLCs) will be added as an approved provider type for breastfeeding instruction sessions under the Prenatal Plus Program.
 - NE 26-0006: Enhanced Primary Care (EPC) Program
 - Effective July 1, 2026, the Nebraska Medicaid EPC program will be discontinued.
 - EPC provider claims incurred through June 30, 2026, will be reimbursed using the EPC fee schedule rate. Effective July 1, 2026, EPC provider services will be reimbursed primarily through the Physician fee schedule.
 - No action is required from participating EPC providers
 - NE 26-0007: Nursing Facility Inflation Factor
 - Effective July 1, 2026, the inflation factor for the nursing facility rate period is -2.07%
 - NE 26-0008: Intermediate Care Facility Inflation Factor
 - Effective July 1, 2026, the inflation factor for intermediate care facilities for individuals with developmental disabilities (ICF-DD) is 24.0%
 - NE 26-0009: Inpatient Hospital Rates
 - Effective July 1, 2026, MLTC will update the Medicaid State Plan to reflect updated effective dates for payment rates for psychiatric residential treatment facilities and transplant diagnosis-related group direct medical education payments
 - NE 26-0010: Outpatient Hospital and Professional Provider Rates

- Effective July 1, 2026, MLTC will update the Medicaid State Plan to reflect current payment rate effective dates for state fiscal year 2027
- There are no waiver updates at this time

BAC Member Announcements

Mary shared that the BAC was mentioned during an Olmstead committee meeting as a resource for people to talk to and share their experiences.

IV. InterRAI Discussion

Crystal Wheeler, an administrator within the Division of Disability and Aging (DDA), previously called the Division of Development Disabilities (DDD) gave a presentation on the InterRAI Assessment. The slides for this presentation can be found on the BAC webpage.

BAC members and members of the public had the opportunity to ask questions to Crystal and Medicaid and Long-Term Care (MLTC) staff :

- Q: Who are the hearing officers when someone requests a fair hearing for their InterRAI assessment results?
 - A: The hearing officers are DHHS staff. They are not within a certain division (such as MLTC or DDA)
- Q: After the hearing officers, who makes the final decision?
 - A: DDA Director Tony Green.
- Q: Do expect DHHS to follow their policies around the InterRAI?
 - A: Yes.
- Q: Is there a policy administrator that works with DDA?
 - A: DDA has a policy administrator, Collin Large.
- Q: Do comments left on the InterRAI Assessment affect the overall score?
 - A: No.
- Q: How far back are reviews on Therap?
 - A: For most people, they will look back one year. For some instances, they will look back three years.
- Q: Is is correct that some questions ask respondents to look back at the last three days?
 - A: Yes, there are multiple options that include examples like: One out of the last three days; Two out of the last three days; Present but not during the last three days.

MLTC staff gave an update on the Medicaid work requirements and introduced Medicaid eligibility changes for noncitizens. The slides for this presentation can be found on the BAC webpage.

Medicaid Work Requirements (MWR)

- Data Reporting

- MLTC is gathering data and will bring it to the group when it's ready.
- Interim Final Rule (IFR)
 - MLTC has been reviewing the IFR. At this time there are no significant changes that need to be made to the way Nebraska Medicaid is operationalizing MWR.
- Processing MWR Renewals
 - MLTC has begun reviewing renewals for compliance with MWR.
- County-based temporary hardships
 - CMS has approved the high unemployment exemption for Dawson county.
 - CMS has approved the major disaster exemption for 5 counties – Arthur, Garden, Grant, Lincoln, Morrill

Medicaid Eligibility Changes for Noncitizens

- Effective, October 1, 2026, certain noncitizens will no longer be eligible for Medicaid.
- These noncitizens who meet all other eligibility requirements (such as income requirements), will still qualify for Medicaid after September 30, 2026
 - Lawful permanent residents, also known as green card holders, who have met the five-year waiting period or can be credited with 40 working quarters
 - Lawful permanent residents who used to be in one of the following groups:
 - Refugees
 - Asylees
 - Victims of trafficking and their spouse, child, sibling, or parents
 - Veterans or active-duty military and spouses or unmarried dependents who also have qualified non-citizen status
 - Amerasian immigrants
 - Iraqi and Afghani special immigrants
 - Certain Ukrainian and Afghan parolees
 - People whose deportation is being withheld
 - Cuban and Haitian entrants
 - Compact of Free Association (COFA) migrants, including individuals from Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau
 - Lawfully present non-citizens who are:
 - Pregnant, or
 - Under the age of 19
- There may be other options for medical assistance available to those who lose their Medicaid coverage
 - 599 CHIP
 - Emergency Medical Services for Aliens (EMSA)

- Noncitizens who may be affected should
 - Make sure Nebraska has their current mailing address and phone number.
 - Respond to any requests for information from DHHS.
 - Schedule all medical, dental, and behavioral health appointments and refill prescriptions now.

Questions and Answers

- Q: So far, is Dawson County the only county that has a work requirements short-term hardship exemption for high unemployment?
 - A: Yes, short-term hardship exemptions are based on the county's high unemployment percentage. A county's unemployment rate is determined using the Bureau of Labor statistics. If a county's unemployment reaches a threshold of 8% of 1.5 times the national average, the exemption has to be requested by the state and approved by the Centers of Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).
- Q: What is the notice period if a work requirements short-term hardship is ending?
 - A: There is a requirement when there may be adverse action that a 10 day notice is sent to a member.
- Q: Do you have the number of people who have been disenrolled due to Medicaid work requirements?
 - A: At this time, we don't have data available to share. MLTC will share this data with the MAC and the BAC when it is available.
- Q: For changes to Medicaid eligibility for noncitizens, is October 1 the date that all Medicaid members and applicants would be impacted, or is the change being implemented on a rolling basis with members' renewal cycles.
 - All Medicaid members and applicants who are no longer eligible due to their immigration status will lose or be denied Medicaid coverage on October 1, 2026. The change is not occurring in time with members' renewal cycles.

V. Yearly Committee Feedback

Survey

MLTC staff brought the following questions as a printed survey. BAC members were asked to complete the survey and return the answers to MLTC staff.

1. I feel my time on this committee is making a real difference for Medicaid members in my state.
 - a. 1 – Strongly Disagree
 - b. 2 - Disagree
 - c. 3 - Neutral
 - d. 4 - Agree
 - e. 5 -Strongly Agree

2. State leadership has fostered an environment of respect, trust, and openness in the meetings.
 - a. 1 – Strongly Disagree
 - b. 2 - Disagree
 - c. 3 - Neutral
 - d. 4 - Agree
 - e. 5 -Strongly Agree
3. I have a better understanding of how the Medicaid program works than I did before I joined the committee.
 - a. 1 – Strongly Disagree
 - b. 2 - Disagree
 - c. 3 - Neutral
 - d. 4 - Agree
 - e. 5 -Strongly Agree
4. What do you think is the most impactful thing the committee accomplished this year
5. What is one thing you would like the committee to do differently next year?
6. Do you have any additional feedback to share at this time?

BAC members who still wish to complete the survey can email their responses to DHHS.MACandBAC@nebraska.gov or bring a copy to the September BAC meeting.

Opportunity to Share Experiences

Jacob shared that BAC members who would like the opportunity to attend a DHHS meeting and share their experiences with how DHHS eligibility workers and programs have positively impacted them or their families can reach out to DHHS.MACandBAC@nebraska.gov.

VI. Open Discussion / Public Comment

Access to Care in Western Nebraska

Donna Barker read from a report that she wrote titled “Medical Access Barriers for Disabled Residents in Western Nebraska” and shared the report with the committee. If you would like a copy of the report, please email DHHS.MACandBAC@nebraska.gov.

- Other online attendees also shared experiences where they have struggled to be approved for medical out of state, even if it was physically closer to them than in-state options.
- Q: What is the process for getting authorized for out of state care when medically necessary?
 - A: MLTC staff will look into information on the process for requesting this, as well as how the prior authorization process can be improved.

InterRAI Assessment

Several individuals shared concerns about changes to the InterRAI assessment, including:

- Comments on the assessment not counting toward the results
- Concerns about how the CaseMix Index impacts the results
- Their/their families’ lived experience and how they have been impacted by the changes to the assessment.

Adrienne Downs asked on the record that the committee adopts an addendum or minority report to add the May 2026 meeting description to the first [MAC and BAC Annual Report](#) so that it would include discussions about the InterRAI Assessment during the May 2026 BAC meeting.

- Note: The May 2026 meeting information is not included in the Annual Report because MAC and BAC members voted to approve it as written at the May 21 meetings. This is because the report was due to be posted prior to the July 16 BAC meeting.

Adrienne Downs also requested that an email with information and resources about the InterRAI assessment be shared with BAC members.

New Subcommittees

Based discussions and public comments at the May BAC meeting and previous meetings, BAC members voted to create two new subcommittees. The purpose of a subcommittee is to gather information create a report that can be brought back to the BAC. The two new subcommittees will conduct research on:

- The InterRAI assessment:
 - Amber moved to create the subcommittee. Renae Wacker seconded the motion. Committee members voted unanimously to create a subcommittee.
- Access to care in Western:
 - Amber moved to create the subcommittee. Renae Wacker seconded the motion. Committee members voted unanimously to create a subcommittee.

VII. Confirm the Next Meeting Time and Location

MLTC confirmed that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 17 2026, from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Omaha, Nebraska at the South Omaha Library. There **will not** be a virtual option for this meeting for BAC members. Members of the public will be able to join virtually.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by the Committee at 2:41 p.m.