



Delaware Health Care Commission (DHCC) Meeting

April 3, 2025

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Meeting Attendance and Minutes

Commission Members Present In-Person: Dr. Neil Hockstein, Dr. Jan Lee, Cheri Clarke Doyle, Dr. Kathy Matt, Nick Moriello, Cabinet Secretary Josette Manning (DHSS), Insurance Commissioner Trinidad Navarro (DOI), and Mike Quaranta

Commission Members Attending Virtually: Dr. Stephanie Traynor (DSCYF) and Cabinet Secretary Michael Smith (DOF)

Meeting Facilitator: Dr. Neil Hockstein, Chair

Health Care Commission Staff: Elisabeth Massa (Executive Director), Latoya Wright (Manager of Statistics and Research, Colleen Cunningham (Social Service Senior Administrator), and Sheila Saylor (Public Health Treatment Program Administrator)

Anchor Location:

Department of Health and Human Services (DHSS)
Herman M. Holloway Sr. Health and Social Services Campus
Main Admin Building – Conference Room 198
1901 N. DuPont Highway
New Castle, DE 19720

CALL TO ORDER

- After confirming a quorum, Dr. Hockstein called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m.
- Dr. Hockstein started the meeting with a few opening remarks and welcomed new DHCC Commissioner John Powell, a Delaware native and physician recently appointed as Physician In Chief at Beebe Healthcare. Dr. Powell represents one of the Governor appointed seats on the Commission. The other commissioners introduced themselves, representing a range of healthcare, government, and business backgrounds, emphasizing collaboration and shared commitment to improving Delaware's healthcare system.
- Nick Moriello shared April is Autism Awareness Month.

BOARD BUSINESS

ACTION ITEM: Approve March 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Dr. Hockstein asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Jan Lee made a motion to approve, and a second was made by Mr. Moriello. No objections were made. The commissioners approved the minutes which are available on the [DHCC website](#).

Before starting the first update on the agenda, Dr. Hockstein shared a brief history of the DHCC which was founded in 1990 to develop pathways to affordable healthcare for Delawareans. Since then, the state's population has grown and aged significantly, with healthcare challenges evolving alongside demographic changes. The statute, § 9903. Duties and authority of the Commission, states the Commission may pilot programs, advise, and foster creative thinking.

Dr. Hockstein asked the commissioners to think about the quadruple aim: cost, access, quality and provider or caregiver well-being, in relation to short, intermediate, and long-term solutions. After the meeting updates, he would like the Commission to have an open conversation about what are the things the Commission can do to make health care in Delaware better.

UPDATES

Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Legislative Update

James Berryhill, DHSS Legislative Director, provided an overview of current state bills impacting healthcare, including:

- HB 21 – Ban on Tianeptine ("Gas Station Heroin")
- HB 54 – Creates the Office of Suicide Prevention
- HB 87 – Expands Suicide Prevention Coalition
- HB 5 – Regulation Sunset Process
- HB 78 – Expands Public Access to Meeting Recordings
- HB 140 End-of-Life Options Law
- SB 67 – Updates Background Checks for Home Care
- HB 56 – Requires Coverage for Medically Necessary Skin Removal
- SJR 2 – Study Medicaid Coverage for Community Health Workers
- HB 46 – Parental Consent for Abortion in Minors
- HB 70 – Lead Safety in Older Rental Units
- HJR 1 – Small Restaurant Regulatory Reform Task Force
- SB 41 – Bans Red Dye 3 in Food
- SB 72 – PFAS ("Forever Chemicals") in Drinking Water
- HJR 2 – Explore Restaurant Meals Program for SNAP
- SB 65 – Withdraws Delaware from RGGI
- HB 50 – LIHEAP+

Insurance Commissioner Navarro added Department of Insurance is working on a few other bills that have not been introduced.

Federal Update

Steven Costantino, DHSS Director of Healthcare Reform and Financing, provided an update on federal funding issues, particularly the abrupt termination of approximately \$38 million in COVID-related add-on funds (ARPA funds) that supported substance abuse services, equity work, and a wide range of services in Delaware. The funds were scheduled to conclude at the end of the year. Delaware has joined 23 other states in a temporary restraining order (TRO) against President Trump, the Office of Management and Budget, and federal agencies.

Dr. Hockstein asked what the plan was when the funds were to sunset in 9-months. Mr. Costantino explained DHSS was going to phase-out and decide what services were critical. Cabinet Secretary Josette Manning shared while there is an end date to grants, there is often an expectation grants will be extended, and sometimes an expectation that the state will pick up the program. This sudden cut led to operational and staffing challenges, including State merit employee positions impacted, however, efforts are underway to transition staff and maintain services. DHSS continues to work closely with the Department of Human Resources and Office of Management and Budget.

Mr. Costantino provided an update on the Congressional reconciliation process – the House resolution is to reach \$880 billion in cuts across the country, and the Senate resolution is a little less. There is uncertainty about future federal Medicaid funding under the ongoing congressional reconciliation process. Potential changes include work requirements for Medicaid expansion populations, adjustments to provider taxes, and rescission of Biden administrative rules (ex. eligibility rule). The minimal impact to Delaware is estimated \$240 million, but unclear which items will be affected. The State is preparing for a range of possible outcomes. In the spring and summer, the Congressional Committees will draft legislation in the House and Senate and vote on the reconciliations. September 30, 2025, is the deadline for action. Delaware's DHSS budget is approximately \$5.5 billion authorized funds, with about \$2.5 billion in state funds.

Health Workforce Subcommittee Update

Commissioner and Workforce co-chair Dr. Kathy Matt and co-chair, Nichole Moxley, provided an update on the DHCC Health Workforce Subcommittee activities. The co-chairs emphasized the Subcommittee is focused on action to make things happen for example, specifically looking at data/surveys and licensure. There is a need to refine the data further to provide more information on the current workforce and their statewide distribution as well as information to enable forecasting of the future workforce needs. This data is crucial for workforce planning and addressing shortages. Legislation is being developed to embed these surveys into licensing processes, modeled after successful approaches in other states like Indiana. The Subcommittee is also focused on expanding training opportunities and clinical preceptor sites, partnering with educational institutions and workforce agencies to




build capacity. Dr. Matt and Ms. Moxley shared there are two events scheduled: 2025 Delaware Healthcare Workforce Summit and the 2025 Rural Healthcare Conference.

The Subcommittee update is available on the [DHCC website](#).

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

DHCC Strategic Planning

Dr. Hockstein led a discussion around the "quadruple aim" framework: improving access, reducing cost, enhancing quality, and supporting provider well-being, with recognition that these goals are interconnected. The 12 boxes in the slide below are intentionally left blank, and he asked the commissioners to think about and develop solutions – short and long-term wins. He opened the floor to foster creative thinking amongst the commissioners.

DHCC STRATEGY			
	Short	Intermediate	Long
Access 			
Cost 			
Quality 			
Provider Wellbeing 			

- Mike Quaranta discussed the costs of medications and innovative approaches such as pharmacogenetic testing (PGx) as tools to improve medication effectiveness and reduce costs by personalizing prescriptions.
- Nick Moriello added prescription coverage is not something the Commission has tackled in the past, however, is something that should be considered. Also, in terms of strategy around long-term goals, access and workforce goals are going to be remain important and the work of the Subcommittee is critical. There is room to improve and expand. He views the Commission as a “public policy/advocacy group.”
- Commissioner Trinidad Navarro shared PBMs have been an unregulated industry for years. Legislation has passed regarding the register of PBMs, and the Department of Insurance is reviewing prior authorization and claw backs.
- Dr. Hockstein shared information about “employer directed health care” where a particular group of disease processes are treated in the most cost-effective way. If there was a menu of certain drugs that could be attained through certain suppliers across the State, the Commission could carve out where less money can be spent.
- Mr. Moriello added that in addition to being policy advocates, it would be great if the Commission could become a “technical sounding board” and in a position where the General Assembly comes to the Commission to vet ideas before they advance with legislation, ultimately helping to prevent unintended consequences.

- Dr. John Powell commented regarding meeting cadence, in-person meetings are great and as a Commission he would advocate the Commission meeting nearby Legislative Hall in Dover when the General Assembly is in session.
- Mr. Quaranta commented the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) comments/takes a position on legislation. Secretary Manning shared last year DHSS proactively monitored over 200 bills. DHSS is proactively trying to move legislation, but also playing defense. DHSS's position is also the Governor's position. She suggested a goal of the Commission could be to be more of an advisory group that is respected by the Legislature.
- Dr. Hockstein commented the "Joint Advocacy Agenda for a Healthy Delaware" did not include the Commission. He suggested there needs to be a reboot to have a seat at the table.
- The commissioners discussed access which included the Conrad 30 waiver program, building a medical school in Delaware, student loan repayment, tax incentives, and how to make Delaware the friendliest place to practice.
- Dr. Lee added one aspect of cost and provider well-being is "death by a thousand cuts." Regulations and reporting are an incredible burden on the back of the practices. She suggested the cost of administrative burden should be prioritized.
- Dr. Hockstein requested for the next Commission meeting, he would like to see the Commission have action items and be able to discuss what the Commission can do collectively to move the needle.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nora Hoban, the Chief Executive Officer of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Center, provided public comment around innovations happening in Maryland and Delaware in relation to the quadruple aim.

Tim Gibbs, Director and Principal Investigator for Delaware Health Force, commented the DHCC Strategy matrix could use the tool Miro, a collaboration platform. He would be happy to share with the Commission.

ADJOURN

Hearing no additional public comments, Dr. Hockstein asked for a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned.

PUBLIC ATTENDEES

In-Person

Steven Costantino	DHSS
James Berryhill	DHSS
Julie Devlin	DHSS
Lauren Butscher	DHSS

Virtual

Margaret Bailey	
Corinne Armann	
Richard Holaday	DHSS
Susan Jennette	DOI
Krishna Upadhya	DHSS
Stephen Cha	DHSS
Jessica Luff	DOI
Christina Miller	DOI
Anthony Onugu	United Medical LLC
Brian Frazee	Delaware Healthcare Association
Nicole Freedman	Morris James
Tomi Morris	
Christina Bryan	Delaware Healthcare Association
Richa Shah	United Medical LLC
Lisa Gruss	Medical Society of Delaware
Christina Haas	DOI
Judith Butler	League of Women Voters
Jen Rini	Delaware Healthcare Association
Pamela Kreider Gardner	Delaware Health Sciences Alliance
Tim Gibbs	Delaware Health Force
Paula Roy	
Wayne Smith	Smith Capitol Advisors LLC
Nora Hoban	Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Center
Pascha	
Delaney McGonegal	Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Center
Maggie Norris-Bent	Westside Family Healthcare
Tai Perry	
Chris Otto	Delaware Nurses Association
Stephanie Hartos	DHR
Sherry Nykiel	DHSS
Beste Kuru	United Medical LLC
Ceil Tilney	