



**Delaware Health Care Commission (DHCC) Meeting
February 5, 2026
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**

Meeting Attendance and Minutes

Commission Members Present In-Person: Dr. Neil Hockstein (Chair), Cabinet Secretary Christen Linke Young (DHSS), Dr. Kathy Matt, Nick Moriello, Dr. John Powell, and Dr. Stephanie Traynor (DSCYF)

Commission Members Attending Virtually: Mike Quaranta, Cheri Doyle, Insurance Commissioner Trinidad Navarro (DOI), and Kylie Taylor-Roberts (DOF)

Commission Members Absent: Dr. Jan Lee

Meeting Facilitator: Dr. Neil Hockstein

Health Care Commission Staff: Elisabeth Massa (Executive Director), Latoya Wright (Manager of Statistics and Research), Colleen Cunningham (Social Services Senior Administrator), Kaitlyn Arthur (Public Health Administrator I), and Modupe Opawumi (Social Service Administrator)

Anchor Location:

Department of Health and Human Services (DHSS)
Herman M. Holloway Sr. Health and Social Services Campus
Main Building, Conference Room 2
1901 N. DuPont Highway
New Castle, DE 19720

Call to Order

Dr. Neil Hockstein called the meeting to order at approximately 9:02 a.m.

Approval of December 4, 2025, Draft DHCC Meeting Minutes

Dr. Hockstein asked the commissioners if there were any objections to the draft December 4, 2025, meeting minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Cabinet Secretary Christen Linke Young made a motion to approve, and Mr. Nick Moriello

seconded the vote. No objections were made, and the commissioners approved the minutes. The minutes are available on the Delaware Public Meeting Calendar.

Governor's Recommended Budget

Melissa Marlin, Deputy Director of Budget Development and Planning, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), provided an overview of the Governor's FY 2027 recommended budget, highlighting:

- Budget development guided by efficiency, transparency, and responsible fiscal management
- Key investment areas: children, housing, healthcare, and workforce
- Operating budget growth maintained below 5%
- Initial projected deficit of over \$500 million due to cost drivers (e.g., Medicaid, personnel, education)
- Gap closure strategies included agency reductions, use of special funds, and revenue measures

With Regards to healthcare investments, Ms. Marlin shared the FY 2027 budget includes the following:

- \$139 million for Medicaid (rate adjustments, long-term care, biomarker testing)
- Additional funding for correctional healthcare, SNAP administration, and public health initiatives

Ms. Marlin also highlighted other funding items in the Governor's budget includes:

- Education, housing, workforce development, and public safety
- Revenue package includes business fees, unclaimed property adjustments, and tobacco tax increases

Ms. Marlin shared a summary of the FY 2027 General Fund Operating Budget which includes \$29.0M in one-times, Grants-in-Aid (\$85.5M), and Bond and Capital Improvements Act (\$934.4M).

Ms. Marlin concluded her presentation with next steps. The Joint Finance Committee will begin February. The DHSS JFC meetings are on February 24th and February 25th. Bond hearings will be at the end of April. The JFC will come back at the end of May for markup, which will be guided by the DEFAC meetings in March, May, and June.

Dr. Hockstein asked if there were any questions. Cheri Doyle asked about Rural Health Transformation Program dollars and how do we ensure the projects we invest in are sustainable. Dr. Hockstein responded sustainability is an important part of each of the initiatives and working to ensure there are no fiscal cliffs with each of the projects.

Hearing no additional questions, Dr. Hockstein thanked Ms. Marlin for presenting and sharing an update to the Commission. Ms. Marlin's presentation is available on the [DHCC website](#).

Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) Update

Dr. Hockstein provided an update on Delaware's application for the federal five-year Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). Delaware's application was submitted to CMS on November 5, 2025, and federal government announced on December 29, 2025, that Delaware would receive \$157.4 million for year 1.

Delaware's projects address several thematic areas:

1. Addressing health care workforce needs
2. Preventing and managing chronic disease, including through addressing the social driver of health
3. Expanding access to care
4. Preparing the health care system for the future

The 15 initiatives are organized across four primary areas:

- **Health Care Workforce Development:** Creating Delaware's first 4-year medical school, supporting medical students, supporting non-physician clinicians, and expanding training programs, supporting medical residents, and workforce data.
- **Prevention and Social Drivers of Health:** Hope Centers, Food is Medicine infrastructure, continuous glucose monitoring, telehealth, and remote patient monitoring
- **Access Projects:** Health hubs, school-based health centers, and libraries
- **Future of Health Care:** Value-based care transformation, real-time insurance verification and prior authorization

Dr. Hockstein shared RFPs would soon be released for some of these projects. He opened the meeting to questions. Nick Moriello inquired about the revised budget submitted in January, Dr. Hockstein shared CMS is in the process of approving the reallocation of funds for each project and added dashboards will be created to show how funding streams are being used.

Commissioner Trinidad Navarro asked the following questions:

- Are there conditions associated with future RHTP dollars from the federal government?
- Has a location been picked for the medical school, what happens when funding dries up?
- If Delaware does not spend all the grant money, are the funds put in reserve, can Delaware spend from other unspent funds from other states?
- There are already school-based wellness centers, concern we could lose spending on them now.
- Looking to legislate insurers to use prior auth portal?

Dr. Hockstein commented with prior authorization, once a vendor is determined, the Department of Insurance would be included in the discussions. For school-based centers,

they do want to support where there is a need demonstrated. In terms of giving the money back, CMS will reallocate funds. It will be a very collaborative process with CMS, and the State will need to be very vigilant with the money. With regards to the medical school, the grant prohibits new construction. When one thinks about a medical school, it is not building a building but educating people. That can be done by existing infrastructure adapting for new use. Permitting should not hold it up. Secretary Young added they were on alert with the Notice of Funding Opportunity regarding conditions associated with RFTP dollars.

In summary:

- Unlike traditional grants, RHTP requires ongoing CMS approval for funding draws, with continued funding contingent on meeting performance benchmarks.
- Importance of avoiding long-term fiscal cliffs
- CMS oversight and monthly reporting requirement
- Funding distribution tied to performance metrics
- Use of existing infrastructure (no new construction permitted)
- Concerns raised regarding potential future federal conditions and sustainability of programs

The RHTP presentation is available on the [DHCC website](#).

DHCC Health Workforce Subcommittee 2026 Goals

Dr. Kathy, DHCC Health Workforce Subcommittee co-chair, provided an update on the work of the Subcommittee, highlighting ongoing efforts to address healthcare workforce shortages in Delaware through a coordinated, multi-pronged approach. She noted that subcommittee meetings are open to the public and encouraged broader participation. The Subcommittee has four areas of recommendations: expanding breadth and capacity of training programs for health care providers, legislative and regulatory initiatives, innovation and technology, and health care workforce data collection.

Dr. Matt emphasized the importance of maximizing existing educational infrastructure to achieve near-term gains in capacity for the workforce. Key strategies include:

- Expanding enrollment in existing accredited programs
- Re-establishing discontinued programs, particularly in dental education
- Addressing shortages of faculty and clinical preceptors, which limit program growth
- Enhancing clinical training opportunities through partnerships with hospitals and community-based providers

The Subcommittee is also exploring innovative training pathways, such as accelerated programs and “earn while you learn” models, which allow students to gain practical experience while completing their education. Examples were shared of hospital-based programs that provide financial support to students in exchange for service commitments, improving both recruitment and retention.

Dr. Matt reported ongoing collaboration with legislators to develop policy solutions that support workforce growth. Areas under consideration include:

- Scope of practice reforms to expand the roles of non-physician providers

- Telehealth reimbursement policies
- Licensing reforms and interstate compacts to improve provider mobility
- Standardization of clinical training requirements

She noted that stakeholder engagement is critical to ensure legislation is effective and avoids unintended consequences.

The Subcommittee is examining ways to incorporate technology into workforce development, including expanding telehealth, online education, and simulation-based training. These approaches are intended to increase access to training and improve efficiency without compromising quality.

Dr. Matt highlighted the role of Delaware Health Force in collecting and analyzing workforce data. Updated mapping tools demonstrate significant shortages in key areas, including primary care and dentistry, particularly in underserved regions. She emphasized the importance of establishing baseline data and tracking progress over time to inform policy and investment decisions.

Dr. Matt underscored that addressing workforce shortages will require a combination of program expansion, policy changes, and innovative solutions, supported by strong data and collaboration across sectors. She noted that investments through the Rural Health Transformation Program present a significant opportunity but must be implemented thoughtfully to ensure long-term impact. Expanding the workforce will require a multi-faceted approach, combining program expansion, policy reform, and innovation. Sustained collaboration across healthcare providers, educational institutions, and policymakers is essential.

Dr. Matt's presentation is available on the [DHCC website](#).

Public Comment

Mr. Moriello shared the month of February was red for American heart month and heart disease prevention month. Dr. Hockstein commented he heard a recent podcast on heart disease and that many people find out about their cardiovascular disease unfortunately in ERs.

Chris Frazer, Westside Family Healthcare, thanked Dr. Matt for the call-out of federally qualified health centers as a great place to train. He emphasized the important role of health centers in supporting workforce development, particularly as clinical training sites. Mr. Frazer noted Westside is intentionally designing new facilities with training in mind, ensuring they can effectively support both patient care and education. He highlighted the importance of engaging patients and communities in this effort, encouraging broader understanding that healthcare settings serve as learning environments. He expressed support for the Rural Health Transformation Program and the opportunity it presents to strengthen workforce training and expand access to care statewide.

Adjourn

Dr. Hockstein asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Moriello made a motion, seconded by Secretary Young. All commissioners were in favor, and the meeting adjourned.

Public Attendees

In-Person:

Tim Gibbs	Delaware Health Force
Chris Frazer	Westside Family Healthcare
Maggie Norris-Bent	Westside Family Healthcare
Dava Newnam	DHSS

Virtual:

Julie Devlin	DHSS
Jessica Luff	DOI
Susan Austin	DHSA
Rita Landgraf	University of Delaware
Cristine Vogel	DOI
Mark Thompson	Medical Society of Delaware
Wayne Smith	Smith Capitol Advisors LLC
Jen Rini	DHA
Margherita Hannah	ChristianaCare
Christina Haas	DOI
Zaire Blackwell	Delaware State University
Natalie DiSabatino	DOI
Tanner Polce	
Ceil Tilney	
James Berryhill	DHSS
Sherry Nykiel	DHSS
Timothy Mastro	DHSS
Rachel Hersh	LaRed
Carling Ryan	DHA
Lori Ann Rhoads	Medical Society of Delaware
Delaney McGonegal	Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers
Suzanne Milewski	OMB