

Policy Examiner

Dispatches about the Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care



Panel Takes Its Time Setting Bylaws

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For good reason, Hollywood studios don't make action blockbusters about parliamentary procedure.

Writing bylaws might not be exciting, but members of the Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care (CCAHC) are taking the exercise seriously, because it will set the rules they use to tackle their high-profile work. Commissioners devoted most of their September 22 meeting to talking about proposed bylaws.

The commission was designed to include representation from all parts of the health care economy – groups that so far have not been able to agree on the best way to tackle health care costs. The bylaws are intended to make sure minority voices on the commission are heard, while still allowing for meaningful recommendations to the legislature.

Commissioners did not vote on their bylaws. Instead, each commissioner will get to study them for the next month, with adoption planned at the October meeting, with possible dates of October 27 or October 30 being considered.

Some of the big issues the bylaws will address:

- **What is the commission's mission?** Proposed bylaws say the mission is "to ensure that Coloradans have access to affordable health care." But in a sign of how politically charged the issue will be, Commissioner Linda Gorman said the word "access" raises red flags among conservatives, and the panel should stay focused on affordability.
- **Who speaks for the commission?** Acting Chairman Bill Lindsay stressed the need to speak with a unified voice about the formal actions of the commission. All commission members should be free to voice their opinions to the press and public, he said, but they should take care to stress that they are speaking for themselves and not the commission.
- **Who can vote?** The 17-person commission includes five ex-officio members from Gov. John Hickenlooper's

Website is Live

The Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care finally has a website, at least a temporary one.

For now, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is hosting the site. It's a bare-bones affair, with meeting agendas and minutes, plus a list of commissioners. Commissioners expect to set up their own website later. Until then, followers of the commission should bookmark this address:

www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/CCAHC

administration, who by law do not get to vote on the final recommendations. However, there was dispute over whether ex-officio members should be able to vote on issues in the subcommittees to which they will be assigned.

- **How can they vote?** Gorman pushed for commissioners to be able to vote by proxy when they can't attend a meeting. Lindsay argued against proxy votes, saying commissioners could use them to establish voting blocs before meetings began.
- **What constitutes a majority?** The legislation that established the commission, SB 187, specifies that it will take a two-thirds majority vote to make a recommendation to the legislature. Lindsay, though, thinks the commission ought to be able to make internal business decisions on a simple majority vote, if the commissioners can't make a decision by consensus.

Next Up

At the October meeting, commissioners would like a briefing from the Attorney General's office about the state's open meetings and ethics laws. The panel might contract with the attorney general to provide legal services, which the office does for other state boards.