

Policy Examiner

Dispatches about the Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care



Bylaws Set Stage for Upcoming Work

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The Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care finally agreed on its ground rules October 27, clearing the way for commissioners to begin their substantive work.

During their third meeting, commissioners unanimously approved bylaws, a statement of operational principles and a policy on conflicts of interest. For the second consecutive time, most of the monthly meeting was consumed by debate over the bylaws.

“No one is more frustrated than the people up here that we have spent the amount of time we have on bylaws. On the other hand, you can’t build the house before you build the foundation,” said Bill Lindsay, the group’s interim chairman.

Getting the rules right was important to Commissioner Linda Gorman, director of health care policy at the Independence Institute. Gorman served on Colorado’s last high-profile health group, the 208 Commission. She thinks minority opinions – specifically her free-market point of view – were ignored by the 208 Commission, and she does not want the same thing to happen this time.

But other commissioners, including Sue Birch, stressed the need for a coherent report that legislators can use to craft laws.

“There should be some succinct reporting,” Birch said. “This thing cannot go on and on and on.”

Birch is executive director of the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing and serves as a non-voting member on the commission.

Regular Meetings Scheduled

The Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care will begin meeting monthly on the second Monday of each month, starting November 10. A location has not been determined.



An audience of nearly 40 packed into a small room at the Daniels Fund for the commission’s October 27 meeting. Commissioners hope to hire a staff soon to handle logistical details, like booking larger meeting rooms.

Gorman also urged more deliberation in developing a preliminary work plan.

“I’m really concerned the agenda’s going to get set in a particular way, and I don’t want to see that happen,” she said.

The legislature designed the commission to exist for three years. Its first report is due November 15, 2015.

Not all the organizational work is done. The commission still needs to elect officers for the next year. The chair and vice-chair will serve one-year terms, but they can be re-elected.

Commissioners also want to hire a staff to handle organizational details and provide data analysis. Lindsay said those functions could either be handled by a single person or group, or divided among separate entities. The group’s ad-hoc planning committee will put out a request for information during the next month.

The commission’s new bylaws require the agenda to be published at least 72 hours in advance on the website, <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/CCAHC>.