

Policy Examiner

Dispatches about the Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care



Commission Elects First Leaders

JANUARY 12, 2015

The Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care voted to stick with its current leadership team when it met on January 12.

Bill Lindsay was elected chairman by a 9-3 vote over Cindy Sovine-Miller. Commissioners elected Sovine-Miller as vice chair. The two had been serving as interim chair and vice chair for the first five months.

They will serve one-year terms, but they can run for re-election throughout the commission's three-year lifespan.

Lindsay is president of Lockton Benefits Group in Denver, an insurance brokerage firm. He also chaired the 208 Commission, the state's last major task force to look at health care reform. He said his experience would help the commission make a true contribution to the state.

"I believe this commission has the ability to make a difference. It also has the ability to create more problems than the system has now," he said, drawing laughs from fellow commissioners.

Sovine-Miller said she might lack Lindsay's experience, but as a small business owner, she could take a neutral view because she works outside the health industry.

"I'm running because I'm able to ask very direct questions that need to be asked, and I don't have any fear of having

that conversation," she said.

The election of permanent leaders clears the way for the commission to begin the substantive work of analyzing health care costs. Some commissioners are

frustrated that organizational tasks have taken so long.

Lindsay said he was happy that the leadership and staffing decisions had been made.

"Now we are prepared. We have bylaws, we have committees. We have charters. We have our staffing in place. Now the real work of this commission will begin," he said.

Keystone, CHI to Provide Assistance

Also at the January meeting, the commission agreed to two contracts for staffing and research tasks. The Keystone Center will take on the work of organizing meetings, publicizing the commission, and other administrative duties. The Colorado Health Institute will provide research and analysis of health data.

Commissioner Dorothy Ann Perry expressed concern that staffing needs would eat up the \$400,000 budget, leaving nothing to pay for public meetings around the state.

But Lindsay assured commissioners that they would be able to travel, even as the commission awaits completion of the formal budget by the interim planning committee.

The Keystone Center's proposed contract is for \$160,000 for the first year, and CHI's proposed contract is for \$126,000.

Lindsay said the \$400,000 appropriation from the legislature will not be enough to fund the commission for all three years. Part of the Keystone Center's duties will include fundraising.



Bill Lindsay,
chair



Cindy Sovine-
Miller, vice chair

Reporting on Ourselves

The Colorado Health Institute began tracking the Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care at the group's first meeting in August 2014. Our aim is to produce a record of the work over the next three years for use by anyone who wants to know about the commission.

At the January 12 meeting, commissioners voted to contract with CHI for data and analysis. These reports are not part of that contract, and they are written by different staffers than the ones who will perform the analysis. They are funded by CHI's core funding, not the Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care.