

Policy Examiner

Dispatches about the Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care



Colorado Reform Efforts in Spotlight

MAY 11, 2015

An array of efforts to contain costs and improve quality in health care are moving forward in Colorado. Some are targeted, some are wide-ranging, but none is the game changer that legislators want to see from the Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care.

The commission got a brief overview of several existing programs at its May 11 meeting. Chairman Bill Lindsay scheduled presentations from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), the Colorado State Innovation Model (SIM) and the Center for Improving Value in Health Care (CIVHC).

Lindsay plans to arrange regular briefings for commissioners so they can understand efforts that are underway and how – or if – they can fit into a comprehensive state strategy to reduce health care costs.

During the presentations, commissioners learned about:

- The Comprehensive Primary Care initiative.
- Rocky Mountain Health Plans' SHAPE demonstration, which is using a global payment model for integrated behavioral health and primary care.
- Medicaid's Accountable Care Collaborative, the state's pioneering effort to improve health outcomes and lower costs in the public insurance program.
- SIM, a \$65 million federal award that Colorado will use to integrate behavioral care into primary care for 80 percent of Coloradans by 2019.
- Gov. John Hickenlooper's "The State of Health" plan.

Commissioners continue to work in three committees to organize the long-term agenda and share their work with the public.

The commission plans to launch an independent website within a month. The current website, www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/CCAHC, is a bare bones page hosted by CDPHE.

The research committee has identified topics its members want to examine, said committee Chair Ira Gorman. The

Legislature Assigns New Task

Lawmakers added to the commission's workload through House Bill 1083, which calls for a study of the costs of physical rehabilitation services and whether cost sharing discourages patients from getting rehab. A report is due November 1.

Some commissioners said physical rehabilitation is a narrow issue that could distract from the panel's mission of addressing overall health care costs.

Chairman Bill Lindsay said the commission will address the directive from the legislature separately from its overall mission in order to avoid confusion.

He has contacted two actuarial firms that he thinks would be able to complete the study.

"The real question is the cost," Lindsay said.

Legislators included \$25,000 to pay for the study.

committee's charge is to study cost drivers and forward its findings to the full commission for debate and action.

"We're now ready to start tackling specific issues. We've had some very interesting philosophical discussions, but now we're ready," Gorman said.

The research committee has been working with the Colorado Health Institute (CHI) to examine health care costs. (This publication is produced separately from CHI's contract with the commission, using CHI's general funding.) On May 11, the research committee decided that, in addition to CHI's research, each member would choose a topic and make a presentation to the committee at a future meeting.

The commission meets the second Monday of every month from 12:30 to 3 p.m. At least through July, it will meet at COPIC, 7351 E. Lowry Blvd., in southeast Denver.