

Universal Health Care Commission Meeting Summary

October 13, 2022
Health Care Authority
Meeting held electronically (Zoom) and telephonically
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Note: this meeting was video recorded in its entirety. The recording and all materials provided to and considered by the commission is available on the [Universal Health Care Commission webpage](#).

Members present

Vicki Lowe, Chair
Bidisha Mandal
Dave Iseminger
Senator Emily Randall
Estell Williams
Jane Beyer
Joan Altman
Representative Joe Schmick
Representative Marcus Riccelli
Nicole Gomez
Stella Vasquez

Members absent

Senator Ann Rivers
Karen Johnson
Kristin Peterson
Mohamed Shindane

Call to order

Vicki Lowe, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

Agenda items

Welcoming remarks

Chair Lowe began with a land acknowledgement and welcomed members of the Commission to the eighth meeting. Chair Lowe provided an overview of the agenda and shared the goals of the meeting.


Meeting Summary review from the previous meeting

The Commission Members present voted by consensus to adopt the Meeting Summary from the Commission's August 2022 meeting.

Public comment

Chair Lowe called for verbal comments from the public.

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Kathryn Lewandowsky, Whole Washington, urged that the universal health care system should cover all Washington residents regardless of immigration status.

Marcia Stedman, Health Care for All Washington, encouraged adding more Commission meetings, creating FTAC subcommittees, and securing more staff and funding to support the Commission's work.

Maureen Brinck-Lund, Coalition for Health Care as a Human Right, stressed the importance of including patient input in every phase of creating a universal health care system.

Kelly Powers, Health Care for All Washington, recommended that FTAC be broken into focused groups to meet more frequently with adequate staffing to deliver impactful and timely results.

Consuelo Echeverria noted that "governance" should be one of the first design components of the universal system as reflected by remarks from the Commission and the public.

Marguerite Dekker, North Seattle Progressives, suggested that the Commission be bold in getting more funding and staffing to support this urgent work.


Sarah Weinberg, retired pediatrician, supported implementing Model A (UHC Work Group) and the government must be responsible for providing adequate funds to take care of the needs of patients and health professionals.

Aaron Katz, retired faculty, UW School of Public Health, suggested that the Commission develop a shared vision for their work in the upcoming year to bind Commission members together in a common direction.

Presentation: Liz Arjun and Gary Cohen, Health Management and Associates (HMA) facilitated the adoption of the report to the Legislature, proposed a potential 2023 workplan, and reviewed the draft finance technical advisory committee (FTAC) charter and FTAC application process.

The Commission's work over the past year focused on the development of the legislative report. Chair Lowe asked for comments and discussion before adopting the final report for submission to the Legislature. Rep. Joe Schmick identified unanswered questions in the report, including eligibility, and remarked that there are pathways other than universal health care that may provide equitable access to coverage. Nicole Gomez referred to the statute which directs that all Washingtonians would be eligible for coverage under the universal system. It was clarified that the Commission will develop a 2023 workplan that will delve into detail on each of these components. The Commission members present voted by majority (10 for, and one opposed) to adopt the final report.

For the Commission's preliminary 2023 workplan discussion, HMA highlighted the two tasks from the Legislature: 1) Propose short-term solutions that move towards a universal health care system. 2) Design the universal system. HMA asked for the Commission's feedback on 2023 meetings having a two-track focus where each meeting would focus partly on short-term solutions, and partly on designing the new system. Jane Beyer suggested that meetings be framed as iterative so that short-term solutions are consistent with the vision for the new system. Nicole Gomez agreed that since the Commission is permanent, the iterative approach will be helpful for making recommendations over time. Jane Beyer suggested that at each meeting, the Commission choose a design component, agree on a vision for that component, and discuss long-term goals which would prompt discussions on



short-term and iterative steps to get there. The Commission will need to decide if they want to reach consensus on the vision. The Commission was asked if eligibility should remain the first design element for consideration in 2023 (as decided in previous meetings), and to determine the next topic after eligibility. Dave Iseminger agreed that eligibility is foundational and should be first, followed by benefits design and Joan Altman agreed.

The following were proposed by HMA as topics for upcoming meetings and 2023: information on other states and current programs in Washington, information on equity principles for designing the new system, and exploring opportunities within current authorities. Jane Beyer suggested that these topics should be elements of the discussion for each design component. Joan Altman agreed that information from other states would be helpful in discussions around governance. Nicole Gomez suggested beginning with information from Oregon and California's recent legislative reports. Chair Lowe recalled a past public comment encouraging the Commission to review lessons learned from failed attempts at state-level universal health care and suggested reviewing Vermont's efforts.

The Commission previously decided to establish FTAC to support the Commission. HMA asked the Commission how they envision FTAC assisting with key design elements and whether FTAC's draft charter addressed FTAC's role and relationship to the Commission. The workplan presented to the Commission at their next meeting could include more specific tasks for FTAC.

The Commission was asked if the FTAC membership process should be initiated. Applications would be available for a minimum of 30 days, which could be extended to 60 days. FTAC application questions were based partly on Washington's existing applications for boards and commissions and partly on Oregon's Universal Health Care Task Force advisory groups. Rep. Schmick and Dave Iseminger agreed that FTAC applicants should disclose conflicts of interest since there is a wide range of expertise in the health care industry that could be impacted by such a large transition. Joan Altman agreed and appreciated including health equity questions in the application and deferred to others on whether the application's length was a barrier. Bidisha Mandal raised concerns regarding FTAC's potential data driven work. The Commission can direct FTAC to disclose and make public whatever data and information they rely on. FTAC will have support from HCA staff and HMA which will help with access to state data. Commission members are welcome to apply for FTAC membership. Interested Commission members can email Mandy their interest in FTAC. The time commitment for FTAC will be similar to the Commission's. Joan Altman asked what level of state agency engagement to support FTAC's work is typical in other states. Oregon's Task Force legislation required finance agencies to participate in the advisory groups, though this is not a requirement for the Commission. The Commission has held FTAC positions for the Washington Office of Financial Management and the Department of Revenue. Nicole Gomez wondered if it could be possible for FTAC's work to be divided into subcommittees as is done in Oregon and it was clarified that the Commission could direct FTAC to divide work within FTAC by sub-topic. The Commission voted unanimously in favor of initiating the FTAC application process pending review of the application by the Office of Equity. Next steps include planning for topics in upcoming meetings based on feedback from today's meeting.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Next meeting

December 15, 2022

Meeting to be held on Zoom

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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