

Universal Health Care Commission meeting minutes

September 11, 2025

Hybrid meeting held on Zoom and in person at the Health Care Authority (HCA) from 2–5 p.m.

Note: The meeting materials packet and a full recording of this meeting can be found on the [Commission's meetings and materials page](#).

All votes made during this meeting are highlighted throughout in blue.

Members present

Vicki Lowe, Chair
Joan Altman
Jane Beyer
Senator Annette Cleveland
Nicole Gomez
Theresa Tamura (*representing the Health Care Authority*)
Tao Kwan-Gett
Bidisha Mandal
Representative Joe Schmick
Mohamed Shidane

Members absent

Representative Lisa Parshley
Omar Santana-Gomez

Call to order

Vicki Lowe, Chair of the Universal Health Care Commission (Commission), called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. There were enough members for a quorum, so the Commission could hold votes.

Agenda items

Welcoming remarks

Chair Lowe began with a land acknowledgement and welcomed members to the Commission's 25th meeting.

Two new members were welcomed to the Commission, Senator Cleveland and Dr. Tao Kwan-Gett. Chair Lowe noted that Representative Lisa Parshley has also joined the Commission but was unable to attend today's meeting. Lastly, Chair Lowe shared that Stella Vasquez has resigned from her role on the Commission. Vasquez held a governor-appointed seat and the Governor's Office has been informed of the open governor-appointment seats on the Commission.

Meeting minutes

Commission members approved the June 2025 meeting minutes by unanimous vote.

Public comment

The following members of the public provided comments:

- **Katherine Lewandowsky**, Whole Washington
- **Emma Heinonen**, Washington Community Action Network (CAN)
- **Lannette Sargent**, Washington CAN
- **Marcia Stedman**, Health Care for All - Washington
- **Annie Fitzgerald**, Whole Washington
- **Kate Rhodes**, Washington CAN
- **Thomas Kennedy**, Whole Washington

Public comment topics included:

- Appreciation for the Advocates Roundtable
- Timing of governance decisions
- Administrative simplification, including streamlining prior authorizations and making billing more transparent
- Support for hospital global budgeting
- Suggested changes to PEBB/SEBB, including consolidating purchasing and expanding enrollment opportunities for local government
- Limiting Health Benefit Exchange offerings to a standard plan
- Explore offering supplemental coverage for services not covered by Medicare
- Treatment decisions, including opposition to AI-generated decisions related to care and opposition to decisions made by those without a medical license
- Request for input on the Washington Health Trust bill

Find full testimonies in the [meeting recording \(time stamp 8:01\)](#).

Advocates Roundtable report out

Vicki Lowe, Chair

Chair Lowe thanked panelists from Health Care for All – Washington, Northwest Health Law Advocates, Washington Community Action Network (CAN), and Whole Washington for joining the Commission at the [August 5 Advocates Roundtable](#). Over a dozen members of the public attended the meeting in person and roughly 75 people joined online.

Commission members shared their reflections from the meeting, including appreciation for learning more about how the advocacy groups work together and hearing panelists' thoughts on cost-containment strategies given the current landscape. Chair Lowe noted that the Commission looks forward to working with advocacy organizations to gather community input and spread the word about the Commission's work moving forward.

Find the full discussion in the [meeting recording \(time stamp 23:40\)](#).

Commission member updates

Chair Lowe invited state agency representatives and other Commission members to provide updates from their agencies and organizations on work that aligns with the Commission. The following members and agency staff provided updates:

- **Elena Soyer**, Health Care Authority (HCA)
- **Joan Altman**, Washington Health Benefit Exchange (WAHBE)
- **Jane Beyer**, Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC)
- **Tao Kwan-Gett**, Department of Health (DOH)
- **Senator Annette Cleveland**, Washington State Senate
- **Chair Vicki Lowe**, American Indian Health Commission

Updates touched on the [Rural Health Transformation Program](#), [final rate increases](#) for individual health plans, [OIC's emergency rule](#) regarding the application of a uniform cost-sharing reduction silver load adjustment factor, the West Coast Health Alliance, the [Washington State COVID-19 Vaccine Standing Order](#), upcoming joint Health Care and Behavioral Health Oversight Committee meetings, upcoming Senate Health and Long-Term Care Committee Legislative Assembly Days in December, and impacts of HR1 on American Indian and Alaskan Natives in the Indian health care delivery system.

Find their full updates in the [meeting recording \(time stamp 28:41\)](#).

Workplan update

[Ally Power, HCA](#)

Ally Power, Health Policy Analyst at HCA, reviewed the Commission's milestone tracker and noted for today's meeting, the Commission will be reviewing draft straw proposals for eligibility and benefits and services. The new straw proposal format is being piloted in response to Commission members' requests to further document decisions.

Power then outlined next steps for the draft annual report, which was sent to Commission members on Thursday, August 28 and was also included in the Appendix of the September

meeting packet. The final report is due to the Legislature on November 1, and the Commission will vote to adopt this final report at their next meeting on Thursday, October 9. Commission members were encouraged to review the draft and send any edits, comments, questions to the general mailbox or directly to staff. Power then shared the upcoming Commission and FTAC meeting schedule for 2026.

Finally, Power noted the open seat on FTAC and shared that the current FTAC charter states that all vacancies will be filled by the Commission. Power proposed adding language to further outline the process for filling vacancies and the criteria used for reviewing candidates. Commission members requested additional language be added to indicate that FTAC members may be retired health care professionals who are no longer actively practicing and that the vacancy announcement should note that recipients of the announcement should share the information with their networks to help achieve a broad reach. Commission members adopted the revised updated FTAC Charter language and directed HCA staff to publish an announcement for FTAC applicants by unanimous vote. The updated FTAC charter is available [here](#).

Find the full presentation and discussion in the [meeting recording \(time stamp 50:57\)](#).

Section 1333 interstate compacts: Overview and Q&A

[Patty Kuderer, Washington Insurance Commissioner; Jason Levitis, The Urban Institute; Randy Pate, Randolph Pate Advisors](#)

Commissioner Kuderer provided opening remarks and noted that this discussion represents the very beginning steps of learning about section 1333 interstate compacts for the Commission. Sec. 1333 interstate compacts are a provision of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in which two or more states can create a regulatory framework to sell qualified health plans across state lines. They require approval by state legislatures and the federal government.

Subject matter experts Jason Levitis and Randy Pate provided an overview of the topic including key benefits, implementation approaches, and legislative hurdles. Levitis noted that a sec. 1333 compact could potentially be part of a package of reforms to move towards universal coverage, but there is great uncertainty about how sec. 1333 will be implemented, which attaches risk to pursuing the program. Sec. 1333 includes no language to waive other ACA provisions or to provide federal funding.

Following the presentation, Commission members engaged in a robust discussion of the topic including the potential for joint Basic Health Plans, multi-state agreements for Qualified Health Plan certification criteria, or interstate exchanges. Commission members discussed developing a potential exploratory Work Group, reaching out to counterparts in Oregon, exploring the intersection of sec. 1332 waivers and 1333 compacts, and ensuring that any pursuit would increase coverage and lower costs.

Find the full presentation and discussion in the [meeting recording \(time stamp 59:33\)](#).

Finance Technical Advisory Committee (FTAC) update

Ross Valore, HCA

Ross Valore, Board and Commission Director at HCA, provided an update from the [July FTAC meeting](#), which included:

- Overview of public comments received
- Eligibility straw proposal
- Benefits and services straw proposal

Valore then opened up the meeting for discussion of the eligibility straw proposal.

Commission members proposed revisions and requested the revised proposal be presented at the October meeting. Valore then opened up the meeting for discussion of the benefits and services straw proposal. Commission members requested framing language be incorporated into the annual report that indicates these straw proposals provide initial recommendations and are part of an iterative approach. Commission members then voted to adopt the benefits and services straw proposal and to incorporate it into the annual report.

Find the full presentation and discussion in the [meeting recording \(time stamp 2:07:00\)](#).

Transitional solutions

Vicki Lowe, Chair

Chair Lowe shared the proposed transitional solution topics offered by Commission and FTAC members during the June and July meetings. Chair Lowe also referenced the transitional solutions submitted by Health Care for All – Washington in the written public comments tab. Commission members then named the following priorities:

- Stabilize our current system and identify mitigation strategies regarding federal changes like coverage losses
- Address health care workforce needs in rural areas
- Looking at the financial underpinnings of our current system to address affordability, sustainability, and resilience
- Explore creation of a state-option Medicare Advantage plan
- Consider creating Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP) coverage options

Find the full presentation and discussion in the [meeting recording \(time stamp 2:36:17\)](#).

Closing comments and adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Next meeting

Thursday, October 9, 2025 from 2-5 p.m.

The meeting will be held on Zoom and in person at HCA.