

BAYOU HEALTH REPORTING

REPORT INFORMATION

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○ **Reporting Quarter**

3rd Quarter, September, 2024

○ **Agenda Topics**

- Introductions
- Health Plan Updates
- HEAC Purpose
- Quality Improvement
- Whole Health
- Member Renewal Process
- Group Discussion

○ **Introductions**

Kathy Victorian commenced the meeting on September 18, 2024, welcoming the attendees and asking them to introduce themselves by stating their names and organizations. Some of the participants who introduced themselves included member Adrian, Rashad Bristow from Healthy Blue, Monette Bourque, Daphne Woodyly, and Jennifer Campbell from Elevance Health, establishing a collaborative and inclusive environment for the meeting.

○ **Health Plan Updates**

Kathy Victorian provided updates on Healthy Blue's membership, which stood at 260,373 as of June 30, 2024. She mentioned the resumption of the standard auto-assignment methodology for member renewal. Moreover, she shared information about the Membership Rights and Responsibilities handbook, ensuring clarity on member entitlements.

○ **HEAC Purpose**

Kathy Victorian introduced the purpose of the Q3 Health Equity Advisory Committee (HEAC) meeting. She highlighted the significance of the topics up for discussion and mentioned the involvement of Louisiana Department of Health (LDH). Victorian noted they had 62 slides prepared for the detailed presentation.

○ **Quality Improvement**

Jennifer Campbell took over to discuss the annual Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey, which assesses member experiences with healthcare. She emphasized the importance of member participation in the CAHPS survey to help identify areas for improvement. Key CAHPS questions included accessibility to care and quality of interactions with healthcare providers.

○ **Member Feedback and Personal Experience**

- Member Adrian shared positive feedback regarding their personal doctor, stating that they feel respected. However, Adrian also highlighted significant difficulties related to postpartum care, specifically mentioning that their OB (Obstetrician) also serves as their primary doctor. Adrian expressed frustration with the struggle to get help for postpartum depression, pointing out that the OB isn't addressing certain issues, which creates confusion regarding who is responsible for their mental health care between the OB and their psychiatrist. This feedback emphasized the need for better support and clear guidelines to navigate these challenges effectively, underscoring the importance of prioritizing mental health.
- During the discussion, a member participant shared their struggle in accessing appropriate mental health care postpartum. Jennifer Campbell acknowledged the issue, stating that their organization focuses on whole-person care, valuing both mental and physical health. This conversation opened a broader dialogue about integrating care between different healthcare specialties, enlightening the participants on the need for better care coordination.
- In the Health Education and Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (HEAC) 2024 3rd Quarter Meeting, member Adrian made several significant contributions, each highlighting their personal experiences and providing feedback on various topics discussed.
- Adrian talked about their struggles with accessing mental health services, particularly related to postpartum depression. They highlighted the difficulty of navigating the healthcare system when different providers, like their OB-GYN and psychiatrist, were involved, which often left them feeling in limbo. They emphasized the importance of making mental health a priority, sharing an incident where a claim for a time-sensitive medication was denied, and highlighting the life-

and-death significance of addressing mental health issues adequately. This interaction pertained to mental health services and the challenges in getting appropriate care.

- Adrian found the Sydney Health app beneficial, especially in managing their postpartum depression and addressing food insecurity. They shared challenges they faced in reaching out for help due to feelings of isolation and her mental health struggles. Adrian discussed their experiences with health screeners for postpartum depression, mentioning they felt like a liability when their low scores worried others, noting that people seemed unsure of how to assist them. They also recounted a positive experience with a resource during their pregnancy that provided fresh fruits and vegetables, expressing appreciation for the support they received as a black birthing person. This part of the discussion pertained to mental health support, resource access, and maternal health.

○ **Whole Health**

Molly Taylor discussed the whole health initiative aimed at addressing both physical and mental health needs comprehensively. Emphasizing the importance of encompassing various health aspects to elevate consumer care experiences, Taylor encouraged ongoing member feedback to continually improve healthcare services.

- **Connecting Members with Resources:** Towards the conclusion, efforts were made to ensure members receive the necessary support for their mental health challenges. Kathy Victorian previewed this topic initially, but Daphne Woodyly and Brooke Deykin committed to connecting with the member seeking mental health assistance. This segment focused on practical steps to bridge gaps in mental health support.
- **Resource Availability for Members:** Molly Taylor responded to members' concerns about resource availability and accessing them. Highlighting the importance of tools like the Healthy Blue Member website and the Sydney Health app, the discussion allowed members to express their struggles, particularly regarding food insecurity. Adrian was mentioned during this dialogue, reiterating common concerns faced by members.
- **Health Equity vs. Equality:** Molly Taylor explained the difference between health equity and equality using a metaphor of differently sized life jackets to illustrate that uniform solutions could be harmful. This segment emphasized a Health Equity by Design approach, stressing the need to tailor resources to individual members' needs.
- **Addressing Health Disparities:** Molly Taylor further emphasized the need to incorporate health equity into organizational practices by focusing on data review and partnerships with community organizations. The discussion revolved around significant health disparities within different regions, urging proactive measures to address these community needs.
- **Mental Health and Maternal Health:** Molly Taylor facilitated a conversation involving concerns about postpartum depression and unique challenges faced by individuals experiencing it. Adrian and other members shared their personal experiences about difficulty in accessing help during mental health struggles, highlighting the critical need for tailored services.

- **Community Resources and Member Support:** The meeting included discussions around specific community services like connecting members to local programs addressing food insecurity and maternal health. Kolletta Davis shared a positive experience with receiving fresh food assistance during her pregnancy, underlining the efficacy of community resource programs.
- **Importance of Feedback and Closing Remarks:** Molly Taylor and Kathy Victorian both underscored the value of member feedback in addressing health disparities. Encouraging ongoing sharing of personal experiences, they acknowledged the participation and engagement of the members, stressing the importance of their input in guiding future actions for better healthcare services.
- **Reducing Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis**
 - Lawrencia Gougisha, the statewide nurse educator for the STI, HIV, and hepatitis C program with the Louisiana Department of Health, led a comprehensive discussion focused on reducing syphilis and congenital syphilis in Louisiana. She began by emphasizing an urgent call to action for healthcare providers, community members, and health plan providers to address the rising numbers of congenital syphilis cases collaboratively. Gougisha provided an in-depth overview of syphilis, detailing its transmission, stages, and severe impacts on pregnant women, such as significant morbidity and potential fetal death if left untreated.
 - The discussion explored various screening tests, particularly non-treponemal and treponemal tests, while explaining the rationale behind shifting to a reverse screening algorithm to avoid missing past infections. Gougisha detailed the stages of syphilis and their respective symptoms, emphasizing the critical need for accurate diagnosis and timely treatment. She cited alarming statistics from 2022, which revealed that 323 pregnant mothers were diagnosed with syphilis and 115 cases of congenital syphilis were reported in Louisiana, including seven linked infant deaths.
 - Gougisha stressed the necessity of timely prenatal care and testing, particularly in the third trimester, and underscored the importance of community involvement in spreading awareness and information to prevent congenital syphilis. She concluded by advocating for equitable access to prenatal care and consistent testing protocols to ensure healthy outcomes for both mothers and babies.
 - A significant part of the conversation focused on improving care coordination for mothers diagnosed with syphilis. Gougisha highlighted the gaps in care coordination among providers and the lack of partner treatment, which increases the risk of reinfection for mothers. She outlined initiatives such as the perinatal case management program designed to connect pregnant women with medical care and community support to ensure treatment adherence and reduce congenital syphilis.
 - Gougisha addressed the myriad social determinants affecting treatment compliance, such as food and housing instability, reframing the perception of non-compliance as a symptom of these broader challenges. She introduced the "SHOT" program, wherein Parish Health unit nurses conduct home visits to provide treatment for both pregnant mothers and their

partners, effectively addressing transportation barriers particularly prevalent in rural areas. Additionally, she mentioned the "SHIP Direct RX Prox" program, which supplies Bacillin to clinics at no cost for treatment.

- The session included the introduction of a newly established provider consultation warm line, aimed at assisting healthcare providers in managing patient care more effectively, particularly concerning the diagnosis of syphilis.
 - Kathy Victorian contributed to the discussion by questioning why routine syphilis testing is not a standard practice in emergency settings. Gougisha responded by acknowledging the need for better education among healthcare providers.
 - Kolletta Davis added to the discussion by highlighting the importance of gathering information on populations affected by syphilis, pointing to a demographic inquiry that Gougisha had previously addressed.
 - Throughout the session, Gougisha encouraged community members to engage actively in their care, urging them to advocate for thorough testing and treatment. She pointed out the rising incidence of syphilis across racial and socioeconomic groups, insisting that the issue transcends race and is largely influenced by broader social determinants of health. This comprehensive approach aimed to foster a unified and proactive response from all stakeholders to improve overall health outcomes in Louisiana.
- **Member Feedback and Personal Experiences:**
 - During the meeting, Adrian expressed appreciation for an informative presentation while attending to their daughter, who was coming in from speech therapy. They found the discussion enlightening and useful. This remark pertained to their feedback on the overall meeting.
 - Adrian also commented on the complexity of syphilis, recognizing how it can mimic other medical conditions. They noted that the information shared during the presentation substantially impacted their understanding, making them more aware of the disease's symptoms and impacts. This discussion pertained to the transmission and diagnosis of syphilis, highlighting the importance of awareness about its symptoms and impacts.
 - Each of Adrian's contributions brought a personal perspective to the meeting, emphasizing the importance of better mental health support, improved healthcare coordination, and increased awareness of syphilis and its complexities.
- **Take Away**
 - **Member Renewal Process**
 - In the Health Education and Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (HEAC) 2024 3rd Quarter Meeting, the discussion on the member renewal process was led by Kathy Victorian. Victorian explained that the membership renewal process had resumed following the end of the PHA (Personal Health Assessment) renewal period on May 31, 2024. As of June 30, 2024, the standard auto-assignment methodology was reinstated for member renewals.

- Kathy Victorian emphasized that the monthly renewals were back on track, and members were also subject to quarterly income verification to ensure eligibility requirements were met. She noted the importance of this renewal process in maintaining an up-to-date member roster and ensuring that the services provided are aligned with the current membership's needs.
 - Throughout her presentation, Kathy Victorian reiterated the significance of keeping accurate and current information for all members, as it directly impacts their access to and the quality of healthcare services. This process allows the health plan to tailor its offerings and ensure that members receive the appropriate care and support necessary for their health and wellbeing.
 - There were no further questions or discussions from other participants recorded in the document concerning the member renewal process following Kathy Victorian's explanation. The process appeared to be well-understood and effectively communicated to the members present at the meeting.
- **Group Discussion**
- In conclusion, the HEAC meeting extensively covered topics related to resource availability, health equity, mental health, community support, and the importance of member feedback. These discussions aim to guide future actions towards better member services and addressing healthcare challenges effectively.