

Health Innovation (B) Working Group | Tuesday, July 27

By: Steptoe

July 2021

On July 27, the Health Innovation (B) Working Group held a call in lieu of the summer national meeting to review the charges adopted last week by the Special (EX) Committee on Race and Insurance and to hear presentations on price transparency efforts. Commissioner Andrew Stolfi (OR) proposed that the Working Group conduct research to answer the charges' posed questions. Commissioner Jessica Altman (PA) supported the proposal and added that the Working Group members and interested parties should work together to collect a master list of current programs in place around the country improving access to healthcare for underserved communities. See below for the charges:

“The Health Innovations (B) Working Group will evaluate mechanisms to resolve disparities through improving access to care, including the efficacy of telehealth as a mechanism for addressing access issues; the use of alternative payment models and value-based payments and their impact on exacerbating or ameliorating disparities and social determinants of health; and programs to improve access to historically underserved communities.”

Additionally, the Working Group heard presentations from CMS staff regarding the general overview recently published rules on hospital and insurer price transparency requirements. Hospital price transparency efforts, in general, include:

- Starting January 1, 2021, each hospital operating in the United States has been required to provide clear, accessible pricing information online about the items and services they provide in two ways:
 - 1) As a comprehensive machine-readable file with all items and services
 - 2) In a display of shoppable services in a consumer-friendly format.
- CMS has begun to audit a sample of hospitals for compliance.

The Working Group also heard presentations from non-profit organizations, Fair Health and Consumer Checkbook, regarding their current efforts to provide additional industry data and assist in price transparency research. Consumer advocates emphasized the elements of successful price transparency tools (e.g., using independent sources,



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frequently refreshing data, and organizing data in a clear and applicable way, etc.). Additionally, the presenters specified that healthcare consumers lack available data. Therefore, they shop for value and not cost.

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