



**Medicaid Advisory Committee Meeting
November 18, 2025
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 PM
LDH/Bienville: Room 118
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present:

Allen "Al" Thibodeaux – *Beneficiary Advisory Council*
Annelies De Wulf, MD, MPH, FAIM – *LSU Health Sciences*
Ann Kay Cefalu Logarbo, MD, FAAP – *Aetna, Present by Proxy*
Cheryll Bowers-Stephens, MD, MBA – *Healthy Blue*
Damien Cuffie, DDS, MPH – *DentaQuest*
Joseph Biggio, Jr., MD, MS - *Ochsner*
Justin Bennet, FNP-BC – *Rural Health Nursing*
Kathleen Willis, MD – **Acting Chair, LDH**
Kevin Stephens, MD – *Humana*
Larry Humble, PharmD, PhD – *University of Louisiana Monroe*
Michael Bodin, MD – *OLOL Physicians Group*
Michael Giorlando, DDS – *MCNA*
Rodney Wise, MD – *AmeriHealth Caritas of Louisiana*
Steve B. Spedale, MD, FAAP – *Infamedics*
Steven Youngblood, MD – *United Healthcare*
Stewart T. Gordon, MD – *Louisiana Health Care Connections*
Theresa Stevenson – *Beneficiary Advisory Council*
Wes Hataway – *Louisiana Nursing Home Association*
Yvonne Dominigue, MS, RN – *Department of Children and Family Services*

Members Absent

Floyd Roberts, Jr., MD – *Louisiana Hospital Association*
Gerrelda Davis, MBA – *Louisiana Primary Care Association*
Jamie Duplechine - *Advocate*
Joe R. Rosier, Jr., CFA – *The Rapides Foundation*
Rep. Stephanie Berault – *Louisiana House of Representatives*
Sen. Regina Barrow – *Louisiana State Senate*
Tonya Joiner – *Louisiana Department of Health*
Vanessa de la Cruz, MD – *Louisiana Department of Health*

1. Roll Call

Tim Williams conducted the roll call; a quorum was met, with 18 out of 27 members present.

2. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Kathleen Willis at 1:04 p.m.

3. Medicaid Program Updates

Brandon Bueche provided the committee with updates on the Medicaid Program.

- Seth Gold was appointed as the Medicaid Director on November 10, 2025.
- Camille Conway was appointed as Chief of the Center for Economic Independence on November 13, 2025.
- Joint Legislative Committee of the Budget (JLCB) will be held on November 20, 2025.
 - LDH will be in attendance to request an extension to the contract with the six Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) for an additional 12 months (January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026)
 - “Amendment 12”: Changes to the MCO contracts expected January 1, 2026, will aim to enhance care coordination, member engagement, strengthen behavioral healthcare and oversight, expand population health and chronic disease focus, improve administrative clarity and provider relations, modernize clinical and case management standards, reinforce transparency, accountability and quality improvement. This is pending JLCB approval.
- Proposed changes to the annual open enrollment process. LDH published a notice of intent to simplify the process. The proposed rule:
 - Updates language by removing parts that are no longer relevant.
 - Removes annual open enrollment period.
 - Allows beneficiaries to change MCOs or Dental Benefit Program Managers (DBPM) up to two times per calendar year.
 - After transferring a second time, a member will remain with that group until the end of the calendar year unless they submit a letter showing cause.
 - The state is awaiting CMS confirmation for the rule to be finalized.
 - February 1, 2026, will be the implementation date if the rule gets approved.
- DBPM: Entering into an emergency contract with DentaQuest and MCNA, which will cover January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026.
 - LDH is currently in the process of creating a pediatric special needs dental incentive payment program along with DentaQuest and MCNA.
 - January 1, 2026, is the intended implementation date.
- House Bill 454 of the 2025 regular session. Requires the coverage of doula services before, during, and after birth to be reimbursed by Medicaid.

- LDH published a notice of intent and submitted a state plan amendment to implement the services.
- January 1, 2026, is the planned implementation date.

4. Medicaid Medical Director Updates

Medicaid Appointments and Nominations

Dr. Willis appointed Dr. Laura Drake and Nick Albares to the committee. There will now be 30 committee members.

Dr. Willis moved that Dr. Drake serve as the new Pediatric Subcommittee Chair. Dr. Spedale seconded the motion. Motion passed. Dr. Laura Drake is now the Pediatric Subcommittee Chair.

Review August 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The committee reviewed the meeting minutes from the August meeting. Dr. Spedale moved to approve the meeting minutes. Dr. Humble seconded the motion. Motion passed. Meeting minutes approved.

Term Limits

Tim Williams explained the new term limits to the committee. The new term limits will be implemented in 2026. Everyone who is on the MAC will be considered to be in a new term starting in 2026. There will be a rotation of 1, 3, and 5-year terms. Once the term has ended, the member will be removed from the committee for 1 year. This is to ensure the MAC complies with the CMS Final Rule. The bylaws will be updated with term descriptions.

- 1-year term: Members who have been on the committee the longest.
- 3-year term: Members who are “in the middle”.
- 5-year term: Members who are newer to the committee.

5. Presentation by Dr. Kathleen Willis

Dr. Kathleen Willis delivered a data presentation outlining ER visits by the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) code. The ULM team provided this data. Each tab showed the Top 5 or Top 10 procedures. The data was also separated into those aged 18 or younger and those aged 18 or older. The data discussed includes:

- Top 10 Procedures by Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Code Ranked by Total Payment
- Top 10 Procedures by Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Code Ranked by Total Payment per Claim
- Top 10 Procedures by International Classification of Diseases Procedure Coding System (ICD-10-PCS) Code Ranked by Total Number of Claims
- Top 5 Medications by Hierarchical Ingredient Code List (HICL) Code Ranked by Total Payments
Hierarchical Ingredient Code List (HICL) ranked by Total Payments

- Top 5 Medications by Hierarchical Ingredient Code List (HICL) Code Ranked by Total Payment per Claim
- Top 10 All Level ED Visits ranked by Count of ED Visits by Diagnosis Code
- Top 10 ED visits that May Not Require the Presence of a Physician or Other Qualified Health Care Professional ranked by Count of ED Visits by Diagnosis Code
- Top 10 ED Visits Which Require Straightforward Medical Decision Making (CPT: 99282) Ranked by Count of ED Visits by Diagnosis Codes
- Top 10 ED Visits Which Require Low-Level Medical Decision Making (CPT: 99283) Ranked by Count of ED Visits by Diagnosis Codes

Dr. Willis stated that this data will be shared with the MAC members.

Discussion: Dr. Bowers-Stephens asked what the strategy is for this data. She stated that the MCOs have seen this data before.

Response: Dr. Willis stated that the subcommittee chairs requested this data.

Discussion: Dr. Bowers-Stephens stated that it would be invaluable for the MCOs to collaborate with the subcommittees, as subcommittee members are usually “boots on the ground” in the field.

Response: Eddy Meyers (ULM) stated that this is very high-level data. Therefore, he requests that, if anyone has a specific question after, they send it, and the data can be presented differently.

Suggestion: Angela Lockwood (Proxy for Dr. Logarbo) suggested that breaking the data down by parish or region would be very helpful.

Suggestion: Dr. Gordon recommends that the MCOs and MAC members receive advisories and recommendations from practicing clinicians on the subcommittees.

6. Subcommittee and BAC Updates

Adult Medicine – Dr. Michael Bodin, Chair

- Focusing on addressing access to care
 - Brainstorming evidence-based approaches
- Collaborating with the CBSS and Emergency Medicine Subcommittees
 - The collaborative initiative is to work with Community Health Workers (CHWs) to help patients navigate the healthcare system.

Behavioral Health – Dr. Lannis Tynes, Chair

- No updates

Community-Based Social Services (CBSS) – Nick Albares, Chair

- The Beneficiary Advisory Council’s (BAC) Chair, Al Thibodeaux, gave a CBSS update on behalf of Nick Albares due to his absence.
- CBSS will be having a joint meeting with the BAC on December 16, 2025.

Dental – Dr. Nicholas G. Mosca, Chair

Dr. Giorlando provided the updates on behalf of Dr. Mosca.

- The subcommittee received an update about our PUPP-supported project, Dental Prevention for Children Aged 6 months to 5 Years in Primary Care Setting
- We proposed a QI project to obtain data to inform quality planning to reduce ED utilization for non-traumatic dental conditions.
- Three thoughts on the top ten ED utilization data statistics that Dr. Willis shared with the subcommittee chairs in November:
 - Non-traumatic dental conditions ranked #2 for adults. Our medical providers noted that K08.89 is used as a primary code for "toothache" or "tooth pain". However, other codes can be used; for example, ICD codes with "fever" may reveal more dental abscesses or cellulitis in that population, particularly in pediatric patients.
 - Could the ED use statistics shared for enrollees over age 18 be stratified by "adult dental waiver" versus adults who are enrolled in the Medicaid Expansion plan?
- Continue the discussion regarding Medicaid policy options to support mobile anesthesiology practices to provide in-office sedation and anesthesia services.
 - To reduce the significant wait times (up to two years) for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Identified 2026 dates to hold our subcommittee meetings.

Emergency Medicine – Dr. Annelies De Wulf, Chair

- Focusing on access, pediatric preparedness, and ED utilization
- Collaborating with the Dental Subcommittee
- Meeting with Adult Medicine and CBSS Chairs to look at any overlap and working to ensure that patients can work with CHWs to navigate the healthcare system.

Neonatology – Dr. Steve Spedale, Chair

- Continuing to focus on hospital-grade pumps.
- Final revisions on the data will be available during the first quarter of 2026.

Obstetrics – Dr. Joseph Biggio, Chair

- Three potential projects:
 - Care coordination, risk assessment/risk stratification
 - Transportation options for prenatal care
 - Postpartum Medicaid extension
- Also wanting to look at what's covered regarding genetic testing.

Pediatrics – Dr. Laura Drake, Chair

Dr. Drake was appointed Pediatric Chair at this meeting. Dr. Willis asked her what the focus of her subcommittee would look like. Dr. Drake stated she was interested in focusing on access to care (transportation) and access to mental healthcare.

Laboratory Medicine and Test Utilization – Vacant

- N/A

Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) – Al Thibodeaux, Chair

- Collaboration meeting with CBSS Subcommittee will occur on December 16, 2025.
- At the last meeting, the Rules of Engagement during meetings were discussed.
- Next meeting is in January.
- Theresa Stevenson (Co-Chair) invited the MAC Members to attend the BAC meetings.

7. Open Forum

Discussion: Dr. Gordon asked if the rate increases that went into the professional fee schedule follow the Behavioral Health Provider fee schedule, for example, social workers, counselors, etc. or if it's just physicians?

Response: Dr. Willis stated she would follow up on this.

Suggestion: Angela Lockwood (Proxy) requested that the group define, for each focus area, what each subcommittee means by "access," so everyone can identify the root cause.

Discussion: Dr. Gordon asked when the quality measures would be available. Tim Williams stated they are forthcoming, as we are awaiting leadership approval.

Response: Dr. Bodin stated that processes cannot be implemented if quality measures are unavailable. Tim Williams noted that a list should be available after the JLCB meeting.

Discussion: Justin Bennett asked which strategies are in place for network specialists to manage pain for Medicaid recipients. Dr. Bowers-Stephens stated that telehealth improves access, particularly in rural areas, and hopes that the reimbursement increase will help. Dr. Gordon advised reaching out to the plans to schedule appointments so the provider can honor the contract. They will also offer case management contacts.

Public Comment: Dr. Nick Fears, an LSU professor in Human Sciences and Education, stated that LSU is collaborating with LDH on ADA access, specifically regarding pediatrics. They are developing training for comprehensive autism diagnostic evaluations, producing a "pipeline checklist". For example, if the child is tested for autism and is not diagnosed with it, then it will show how you route for ADHD. This is to reassure parents that they don't have to go out of state to find help. They hope to have this program up and running by January 2026. He stated that he will attend more MAC meetings and is interested in providing the committee with more information about the project.

8. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

2026 Meeting Dates:

- March 10, 2026
- May 12, 2026
- August 11, 2026

- November 10, 2026