



**Provider Engagement Meeting  
Louisiana Department of Health  
August 20, 2021 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM  
Meeting Minutes**

**Welcome and Introduction:** *Dr. Marcus Bachhuber*

- Dr. Marcus Bachhuber made welcomes and introductions.

**Interim Medicaid Director Update:** *Michael Boutte*

- Michael Boutte thanked everyone for their continued hard work and support of the Medicaid population.
- Michael Boutte provided the following updates on COVID-19:
  - The recent COVID-19 surge has increased the need to work together, particularly around increasing vaccination rates, reinforcing masking, and social distancing.
  - We need to be pushing vaccinations and working with our teams, patients, and clients to get people vaccinated and figure out what is driving any hesitancy or refusal of a vaccination.
  - Michael Boutte invited those on the call to reach out if there any comments, suggestions, or ideas about increasing vaccinations.

**Medicaid Program Updates:** *Dr. Marcus Bachhuber*

- Dr. Marcus Bachhuber stated that COVID-19-related flexibilities continue to be posted on Informational Bulletins, which are updated regularly and posted on the LDH website.
- Dr. Marcus Bachhuber introduced the following new COVID-19-related flexibilities or programs:
  - At-home vaccinations (effective June 8, 2021): Providers may be reimbursed for administering the COVID-19 vaccine in enrollees' homes.
  - Reimbursement of booster doses of mRNA vaccines according to CDC and FDA recommendations (effective September 24, 2021)
  - Suspended hospital-based utilization management (effective August 1, 2021)
  - Suspended Prior Authorizations for lower levels of care (effective August 9, 2021)
  - Replaced post-hospital discharge homecare Prior Authorizations with an automatic approval when the hospital or home health agency sends a notification to the MCO (effective August 9, 2021)
- Dr. Marcus Bachhuber discussed the following key COVID-19-related flexibilities that are remaining in place:
  - Reimbursement of commercial COVID-19 testing
  - Reimbursement of authorized COVID-19 treatment administration (with the federal government providing most of the actual treatment for free)
  - Reimbursement of COVID-19 vaccine administration (now including at-home service locations)
  - Telehealth flexibilities:
    - The video requirement has been suspended if the patient does not have access to audio/video technology and the same standard of care can be met.
    - Telehealth continues to be allowable for physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, early steps, ABA, and components of well child visits for

children 24 months of age and older, assuming the same standard of care can be met.

- Reimbursement of interprofessional assessment and management services, such as physician to physician (or APRN/PA) discussions about a patient involving the electronic health record, audio/visual platforms, or through telephone.
- Allowing a 90-day supply for many chronic maintenance medications, excluding controlled substances, with copays waived and signatures not required for delivery.
- Dr. Marcus Bachhuber provided the following miscellaneous COVID-19-related updates:
  - Of the 4.5 million people in Louisiana, not everyone is eligible for a vaccine. However, there have been 2.2 million people who have initiated a vaccine series and 1.8 million who have completed their vaccine series. There are almost 2,500 providers enrolled to administer the vaccine.
  - To increase uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine, LDH has been conducting a Performance Improvement Project (PIP) with the MCOs:
    - PIPs are collaborative quality improvement projects where common targets are set and the MCOs have the flexibility to compose their own strategies and initiatives. Each strategy initiative has performance or data collected about its success.
    - LDH provides weekly reports of vaccine performance to MCOs and then LDH receives a monthly reporting of activities and strategies from the MCOs.
    - The focus has been on adults and children as well as racial and ethnic disparities.
- Dr. Marcus Bachhuber provided the following updates related to Medicaid:
  - HEDIS and state-specified quality measures are in the process of being finalized and the dashboard will be updated with measurement Year 2020 results. In addition, LDH is completing some small reorganizations of the dashboard and language updates.
  - The Medicaid Provider Enrollment Portal launched July 2021. All providers will need to register. Provider will receive mail invites starting August or September 2021. Existing providers are required to log in and submit an application through the enrollment portal by March 31, 2022 to continue receiving reimbursement.
- Dr. Marcus Bachhuber provided the following Maternal and Child Health Initiatives updates:
  - LDH is working with CMS on an Asthma Affinity Project. The main goal is to support home remediation for people with asthma.
  - Medicaid is collaborating with the GIFT program and the Office of Public Health to understand the needs of and improve Medicaid-covered breastfeeding support services.
  - Medicaid will continue to work with the Perinatal Commission Subcommittees to discuss remote patient monitoring, telehealth postpartum, and perinatal depression and substance abuse disorder services.
  - There is an ongoing fluoride varnish initiative.
- Dr. Marcus Bachhuber announced the Public University Partnership Program:
  - This program is a unique funding opportunity to promote innovation and help us address challenges facing Medicaid today.
  - It will be a partnership with public universities that can propose ideas for research and evaluation projects in the areas of health services, health policy, epidemiology, clinical research, health economics, prevention, behavioral and social science, community-based research, or any type of project that can improve the Medicaid program.
- Dr. Marcus Bachhuber provided the following Medicaid MCO RFP updates, with dates subject to change:

- The RFP was posted on June 23, 2021. There was a deadline for written inquiries and responses. The deadline for the receipt of the proposals is September 3, 2021.
- The notice of award will go out November 5, 2021, with contract execution on or around December 10, 2021. The planned operational start date is July 12, 2022.

**Presentations of Special Topics or Quality Related Studies/Activities:** *Dr. Patti Barovechio, DNP, RN, CCM*

- Dr. Patti Barovechio from the LDH Office of Public Health presented on Streamlined Implementation of EPSDT Developmental Screens – Tools and Resources. Presentation slides are available on the Quality Committee website at <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/2175>.
- Dr. Barovechio discussed the importance of developmental screening and the prevalence of children in Louisiana with special healthcare needs.
- Dr. Barovechio discussed the following available resources related to developmental screening:
  - The LDH-created Developmental Screening Toolkit as part of the Louisiana Developmental Screening guidelines: This is a step-by-step process for using the tools, assessing a practice, and implementing screening.
  - Technical assistance and resources from the National Academy of Pediatrics
  - Customized technical assistance available through the LDH OPH Bureau of Family Health, funded through Title V at no cost to the practice. The practice develops their own priorities and the Bureau of Family Health provides any needed support.
- Dr. Barovechio also discussed the following topics based on meeting attendee questions:
  - Examples of recent technical assistance provided (building of an MOC application form with the American Board of Pediatrics and helping a new practice set up full developmental screening services)
  - How the Office of Public Health technical assistance can help practices navigate telehealth developmental screening
  - The importance of using a validated and reliable instrument when performing developmental screening
  - The barriers the Bureau helps practices overcome, such as time, space/physical issues, and requiring a team effort
  - Communication to providers about the technical assistance resources and toolkits from the LDH OPH Bureau of Family Health, which includes an incoming presentation by the Developmental Screening Coordinator at the AAP Conference and LDH social media. Dr. Barovechio welcomed suggestions on communicating further with providers.
- Dr. Barovechio provided the following information about the state’s Louisiana Mental Health Perinatal Partnership with Tulane:
  - This partnership supports providers as they treat behavioral health issues at the primary care practice level
  - An example usage is a mom exhibiting severe depression. Her primary care provider can connect her with a mental health provider in real time for a free consultation.
  - The program is grant-funded.

**Open Forum**

- Amanda Dumas thanked Dr. Barovechio for the presentation and emphasized that Medicaid works closely with OPH, especially with the developmental screening process reimbursement.
- There were no further questions, comments, or issues brought forward.
- Kolynda Parker stated the next meeting will be on Friday, November 19 at 1PM – 3PM.

**Adjourn.**

Meeting adjourned at 1:58PM.