



## Connection Coalition

July 13, 2020 | 12:00 pm - 1:00pm

*Conference Call via Zoom – See Details at Bottom of Page*

### Minutes

#### 1. Welcome, Introductions

- a. Curtis informed the group that Kelli Strother is returning to Otsuka at the end of July.

#### 2. Additional Agenda Items?

- a. None

#### 3. California Budget Issues from Members

- a. Randall – State will start seeing revenues, and possible budget trailer bills coming in August
- b. Paige Talley – Asked about the suspended Medi-Cal programs didn't include termination of AB1114, the one that would allow DHCS to provide reimbursements to pharmacies/pharmacists for Long Acting Injectables. Randall: So a rollover of the bill into a budget item has not materialized. Neither Paige nor Randall have seen anything else regarding this.

#### 4. Anticipated changes in Medi-Cal and their pharmacy benefit – Update

- a. Trish McDaid-O'Neil – an announcement was made last week, no changes.
- b. Paige Talley had a question on the transition to fee for service – workgroup had a meeting
  - i. Trish answered – website is updated, Jan 2021 is target date
  - ii. Paige will send how to subscribe link to Curtis for dissemination.
- c. Randall – Nothing definite to comment on.
  - i. Randall mentioned the states generic program, still status quo, postponed indefinitely

#### 5. Other Current Challenges Affecting Access to Treatment/Prescriptions

- a. Access to LAIs
  - i. Caren, had a call with southern district manager team and they think the situation is improving. One concern is release of folks from prison. Need to have a solid plan of where they will be released to and also to make sure they remain on meds.
  - ii. Randall – noted the LA Times article on prison release plan and will forward to CP to share with the group.
    1. Justin May noted the Governor stated about 10% of prison population being released.
    2. Kit Wall commented that she heard 8,000 prisoners by August. She wasn't sure on the source.
    3. Sheree - of the 8000 prisoners expected to be released by the end of August, many have medical issues, cannot guarantee they are tested prior to release, recommending testing take place within 14 days of release. No info on a plan to place them where they can quarantine until COVID19 status determined.
      - a. CA Hospital Association talking with CDCR and at HHS
      - b. Not good news from hospitals, in early June CHA sent a recommended surge plan to HHS. Forcing cancellation of elective surgeries caused economic hardship for hospitals. CA has for decades been developing disaster plans for the health care delivery system, however, the plans are developed around an episode (i.e. fire, earthquake, etc.) and no plan for an ongoing pandemic. Also, state law requires health officers be the lead on

<http://www.mhac.org/connection-coalition/>

pandemics vs relying on a plan. What we've uncovered/learned from the first wave, we are now asking state to reevaluate state disaster plan because it's not effective. Santa Clara and LA Counties ordered mandated testing for all hospital staff and patients with COVID19 symptoms. However there is a lack of testing supplies and results are taking up to 2 weeks.

- c. With an exhausted workforce, lack of PPE, and a lack of testing this is a critical situation for hospitals.
- d. No continuity in testing protocols and PPE requirements. Need a regional (minimally) or statewide posted.
- e. Randall asked about psychiatric hospitals, specifically procedures that may differ from regular medical services.
  - i. Sheree wasn't aware of any. There are standards for congregate living long term care facilities. Requires testing of staff and patients every 7 days. This is the only well-known standard out there. Prisons have developed one but it has not been made available yet. DHCS released an FAQ that left much to be desired. Sheree has been working with HHS since March 21<sup>st</sup> to come up with a Behavioral Health Surge Plan.

b. Telehealth Update

- i. Teresa Comstock has been following the Department of Rehabilitations, Assisted Technology Committee working on a digital access project.
  - 1. [www.digitalaccessproject.org](http://www.digitalaccessproject.org)
- ii. Caren wondered about Telehealth continuing after the pandemic. Noting everyone likes the service. Randall noted being aware of some psychiatrists are concerned about limitation being imposed by the Federal government at the end of the month. No deadline to end the flexibilities are in sight. Amanda noted Federal emergency guidelines will be renewed another 90 days.
- iii. Kit noted a June 25<sup>th</sup> notice that CMS unveiled permanent rules for public comment, Kit will send information to Curtis to share with the group.

**6. Legislation, Status on the following:**

- a. [AB-1710](#) (Wood) Pharmacy practice: vaccines.
  - i. Jonathan Medeiros informed the group that the CA Pharmacists Association are sponsors of the legislation. From a medication/vaccine access perspective. Bill would fix previous legislation (SB 493) giving the ability for pharmacists to prescribe all FDA approved vaccines.
  - ii. Paige Talley noted, at the board of licensing committee meeting last week they have a proposal to address COVID19 that was not as broad as AB 1710, so they broadened their proposal. CPHA supports AB 1710 and recommends making it a pandemic urgent bill.
    - 1. Pharmacists can vaccinate but would also be enabled to do COVID19 testing.
  - iii. Randall agrees we should watch/track bill even though it doesn't necessarily fall in ConnCo purview.
  - iv. Caren Sykes and Jennifer Cunningham noted they agree the group consider this legislation.
  - v. Randall - No position to be taken at this time. Get a fact sheet and conduct email poll to decide/adopt a position before the next meeting.
- b. [AB-2100](#) (Wood) Pharmacy Benefits
  - i. In Senate Health committee but no hearing date scheduled.
    - 1. Paige Talley offered a brief digest of the amended version, Jan 2021 DHCS would establish the Prescription Drug Medi-Cal Review System (PDMRS), basically any Medi-Cal beneficiary grievance would be eligible for review. When they say outpatient they also include folks in congregate living.

- ii. Randall suggested we continue following this bill.
- c. [SB-855](#) (Weiner) Health coverage: mental health or substance abuse disorders.
  - i. Randall noted the bill is pending after victory in Senate with 5 republican NAY, one YEA, and 5 abstentions. The bill is about parity enforcement and would lead to better access to mental health care.
- d. Other bills?
  - i. Teresa Comstock noted the following bills regarding facilities:
    1. [SB-1259](#) (Hurtado) Licensed adult residential facilities and residential care facilities for the elderly: SSI/SSP recipients: report.
    2. [AB-2377](#) (Chiu) Adult residential facilities: closures and resident transfers.
    3. [AB-1766](#) (Bloom) Licensed adult residential facilities and residential care facilities for the elderly: data collection: residents with a serious mental disorder.
    4. CALBHBC has links to the bills, fact sheets, and sample letters at: <https://www.calbhbc.org/legislative-advocacy.html>
    5. The group agreed to follow these bills.
  - ii. Randall noted another push to reduce number of bills being heard.
- 7. Coalition for Whole Health Update**
  - a. July meeting postponed. No report.
- 8. Member Comments:
  - a. Kit Wall shared info “Ernie & Joe – Crisis Cops”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWU38es-tWU>
- 9. Next meeting is on August 10th - Conference Call via Zoom or In-person depending on SIP restrictions

**Participants:**

Todd Bledsoe  
Teresa Comstock  
Jennifer Cunningham  
Rebecca Gonzales  
April Grant  
Randall Hagar  
Carol Hood  
Amanda Levy  
Sheree Lowe  
Justin May  
Jonathan Medeiros  
Curtis Paullins  
Heidi Strunk  
Caren Sykes  
Paige Talley  
Kit Wall