



**Connection Coalition**  
September 14, 2020 | 12:00 pm - 1:00pm  
via Zoom Video Conference

## MINUTES

### **Participants:**

Theresa Comstock  
Mark Duerre  
April Grant  
Chuck Harman  
Amanda Levy  
Justin May  
Trish McDaid-O'Neill  
Jonathan Medeiros  
Curtis Paullins  
Thomas Renfree  
Kelli Strother  
Heidi Strunk  
Caren Sykes  
Paige Talley  
Kit Wall

1. Welcome, Introductions
  - a. Heidi Strunk chaired the meeting as Randall was unable to participate.
  - b. Participants introduced themselves and the group welcomed new corporate advisory partners, Mark Duerre with Intra-Cellular Therapies, and Chuck Harman with Neurocrine.
2. Review and approval of August 10, 2020 meeting minutes.
  - a. Add Kit Wall as a participant in the minutes. Approved with amendment noted.
3. Additional Agenda Items?
  - a. No items
4. California Budget Updates
  - a. Heidi Strunk noted SB115, the junior budget bill which made adjustments to the budget was signed on September 9<sup>th</sup>.
    - i. Some funding would only be triggered by a match from federal funding (Cares Act) which is basically stalled until after election.
5. Anticipated changes in Medi-Cal and the pharmacy benefit – Update
  - a. Chuck Harman asked if this topic was related to the carve out. Paige Talley noted it was more about the transition from managed care to fee for service.
6. Other Current Challenges Affecting Access to Treatment/Prescriptions
  - a. Access to LAIs

- i. Thomas Renfree asked whether restrictions on smaller pharmacies having to pay more was resolved. Pharmacies filed lawsuit so claw back is not happening. AB2100 would have resolved issue but it was amended out. Paige Talley noted the DHCS started clawbacks then stopped. Caren Sykes noted DHCS were doing a survey regarding specialty pharms, and there is hope there is a supplement. She also noted DHCS and Dept of Finance are opposed to AB2100.
  - b. Telehealth Update
    - i. Thomas Renfree shared there is a lot going on, there is now a California Telehealth Coalition and a bill by California Primary Care Association (CPCA), regarding AB2164 which is on the governor's desk. The group agreed with the COVID19 crisis, a lot more leniency is being granted Mental Health counseling, medications, etc. The Federal Government and State are definitely loosening restrictions. DHCS, Dept of Health Care Services, did a webinar on the topic.
    - ii. Thomas asked Curtis Paullins to find the California Telehealth Coalition website and send to the group.
    - iii. Kelli Strother mentioned the federal level is encouraging use of Telehealth.
- 7. Legislation, Status on the following:
  - a. [AB-1710](#) (Wood) Pharmacy practice: vaccines.
    - i. Passed, on Governor's desk for signing.
  - b. [AB-2100](#) (Wood) Pharmacy Benefits
    - i. See notes above in 6.a.
  - c. [SB-855](#) (Weiner) Health coverage: mental health or substance abuse disorders.
    - i. Thomas Renfree noted this bill really addresses issue of medical necessity (MN). Currently there are very rigid standards of MN and you need to be at the extreme stage of need before being granted coverage. Would prohibit plans from opting out of providing coverage.
    - ii. Amanda Levy informed the group that her organization (California Psychological Association) participated in press conference with Senator Weiner noting a national coalition supporting the bill.
    - iii. Kelli Strother noted that New York (NY) has a proposed rule on parity compliance. The Kennedy Forum is helping move this forward. Thomas Renfree noted the NY Attorney General (AG) also weighed in on the enforcement of parity. California needs our AG or the Insurance Commissioner to do the same.
  - d. Facility bills per Teresa Comstock:
    - i. At Issue was the fact that board and care facilities were closing. Theresa Comstock noted her organization (CA Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards & Commissions) is also supporting SB-855 and SB-803.
    - ii. [SB-1259](#) (Hurtado) Licensed adult residential facilities and residential care facilities for the elderly: SSI/SSP recipients: report.
      - 1. Held up in appropriations committee, did not move forward.
    - iii. [AB-2377](#) (Chiu) Adult residential facilities: closures and resident transfers.
      - 1. Passed out of Legislature, waiting for Governor's signature.
    - iv. [AB-1766](#) (Bloom) Licensed adult residential facilities and residential care facilities
      - 1. Passed out of Legislature, waiting for Governor's signature.
  - e. [AB-1304](#) (Waldron) California MAT Re-Entry Incentive Program.

- i. Thomas Renfree informed the group that this bill passed, and is awaiting the Governor's signature.
  - f. Other bills?
    - i. Thomas Renfree noted that SB-803 (Beall) Parity, did get to the governor, amended (guttled?), but still good stuff left in the bill. Heidi Strunk noted the bill would demand counties to opt in. Forces financial responsibility to counties vs state. DHCS would also create a billing code for counties to use if they wanted to opt in, to allow for pull down of Federal dollars. There would be a state level certification, but again counties need to opt in. Thomas noted counties need to pay share of cost and can get federal monies as well.
- 8. Coalition for Whole Health (CWH) Update
  - a. Carol Hood was not in attendance but had sent word that the CWH meeting was being held the day after the Connection Coalition meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup>. She will provide an update at the next meeting.
- 9. Membership Survey – What's working and what needs some work - planning for 2021
  - a. Curtis Paullins asked the group to consider questions for a survey that is being planned regarding what's working and what needs work with the Connection Coalition. Also to be included is a Doodle to determine the date/time for a virtual retreat in November and an ask for guest speaker suggestions.
- 10. Annual Retreat – Agenda, date and time TBD
  - a. Heidi asked the group to consider guest speaker suggestions for the survey noted above in item 9.
  - b. The potential dates discussed were November 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup>? No duration was decided yet but the group felt 2-3 hours max would suffice.