

KENTUCKY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DELIVERY SYSTEM TASK FORCE

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2023 Interim

June 5, 2023

Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the Kentucky Health & Human Services Delivery System Task Force was held on June 5, 2023, at 3:00 PM in Room 171 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Stephen Meredith, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Stephen Meredith, Co-Chair; Representative David Meade, Co-Chair; Senator Julie Raque Adams, Senator Denise Harper Angel, Senator Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Representative Amy Neighbors, and Representative Sarah Stalker.

Guests: Eric Friedlander, Secretary; Carrie Banahan, Deputy Secretary; Lisa Lee, Commissioner, Department for Medicaid Services; Dr. Steven Stack, Commissioner, Department for Public Health; and Lesa Dennis, Acting Commissioner, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services.

LRC Staff: Samir Nasir, Logan Bush, and DJ Burns.

Review of the Charge of the Task Force and Introduction of Members

Senator Meredith discussed the jurisdiction of the task force and welcomed members. He stated the task force was created to examine the Cabinet for Health & Family Services (CHFS) and look for new ways to operate the vast departments within CHFS.

Review of 2022 CHFS Reorganization Task Force's Final Report and Resulting SB 48

Senator Meredith discussed the 2022 CHFS Reorganization Task Force's recommendations and the inclusion of the recommendations within 23 RS SB 48, which passed and became law.

Assessment of the Impact of 23 RS SB 48 on the Cabinet for Health & Family Services

Eric Friedlander, Secretary, Cabinet for Health & Family Services discussed the implementation of the changes made within the Cabinet from the passage of 23 RS SB 48. He stated the cabinet is creating transition documents to ensure nothing is missed when these transitions take place to other areas of state government.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Stalker, Secretary Friedlander stated that the cabinet is in charge of court ordered child support payments when it comes to transferring the payments from non custodial parent to custodial parent. He stated that the collection of child support arrears is behind.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Meade, Secretary Friedlander stated that the system used for child support is a DOS system and that the cabinet is working to update that computer system to a newer one. He stated this update will make it easier when it comes time to transfer the department to the Attorney General's office, and all memorandum of understandings should transfer as well.

Assessment by the Cabinet of Health & Family Services on the Impact of Ending the Federal Covid-19 Emergency

Eric Friedlander discussed Medicaid enrollment during the public health emergency (PHE), caseload distribution, and renewal data as of May 31, 2023. Lisa Lee, Commissioner, Department for Medicaid Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services, discussed the ending of the PHEs impact on Medicaid flexibilities, the federal match phase down process, and KY PHE website resources. Dr. Steven Stack, Commissioner, Department for Public Health, Cabinet for Health & Family Services, discussed the impacts of the end of the PHE on the Department for Public Health. Lesa Dennis, Acting Commissioner, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services, discussed the impacts to child care and child welfare the ending of the PHE has had.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Meredith, Secretary Friedlander stated that it is hard to speculate the projection of Medicaid membership in the coming year. He stated the cabinet is looking into the renewal process and how many members are moving to private insurance and that there are many factors at play when it comes to the budget for Medicaid. After the conclusion of the PHE, he expects the Medicaid membership numbers to be lower than during the PHE. Commissioner Lee stated that all directed payments for providers have a quality measurement on them as well as a withhold payment for managed care organizations if the quality isn't met.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Mays Bledsoe, Secretary Friedlander stated that the difference in caseload from month to month is because people come into the system at different times of the year, especially around open enrollment periods. Carrie Banahan, Deputy Secretary, Cabinet for Health & Family Services, stated that during the qualified health plan open enrollment in November and December, the cabinet strategically lowered the renewal caseload to account for the new applicants during those times.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Stalker, Commissioner Lee stated that within the renewal system the cabinet has access to various data sources such as income tax information, state wage index, and birth and death certificates. She stated the system will ping all of those data points and if they match the eligibility then the member will not be required to submit that information for renewal.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Meredith, Dr. Stack stated that the public health transformation funding given in the previous budget has helped fund local health departments core programs. He stated that the PHE consumed the local health departments focus during the pandemic but also made it apparent that each local leader is the chief health strategist for their jurisdiction. He stated Covid-19 was unprecedented in the fact there was no testing or vaccines developed for it and based on the new structures created from the pandemic he believes if an outbreak were to occur with a known disease, KY would be better equipped to handle it. Secretary Friedlander stated that the Covid-19 pandemic will be studied for twenty years, that decisions made in the moment were both right and wrong and hopefully we learn from those decisions and apply those to any future PHEs.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Mays Bledsoe, Secretary Friedlander stated that during the next budget discussion, the cabinet needs to look at funding for child care.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Stalker, Commissioner Lee stated that beginning in July the national fingerprint-based background checks will be implemented for caregivers, facility, and state agency staff. She stated the cabinet has been working to make the process of background checks quicker and more efficient. Secretary Friedlander stated that the CARES system has no flexibility within those processes.

Next Steps for the Task Force

Senator Meredith discussed the jurisdiction and invited members to reach out to himself or Co-Chair Meade with any suggestions for future topics of discussion.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM.