

WAIVER WAITLIST MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

First Minutes of 2026

July 17, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the Waiver Waitlist Management Subcommittee was held on July 17, 2026, at 10:30 AM in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Wade Williams, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Craig Richardson, Co-Chair; Representative Wade Williams, Co-Chair; Senators and Karen Berg; and Representatives and Lisa Willner; and Steve Shannon, Steven Stack, Amy Staed, Kelly Upchurch.

Guests: Leslie Hoffmann, Deputy Commissioner, Department for Medicaid Services, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; and Carmen Hancock, Division Director, Department for Medicaid Services, Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

LRC Staff: DJ Burns and Angela Rhodes.

Introductions and Discussion of Goals and Key Priorities

Chair Williams stated the mission, vision, and key priorities for the subcommittee. He stated public comment would be allowed for the first meeting and moving forward any public comments could be made at the Medicaid Oversight and Advisory Board (MOAB) meetings.

Current State of Kentucky's 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Services Waiver Programs

Leslie Hoffmann, Deputy Commissioner, Department for Medicaid Services (DMS), Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), gave an overview of Kentucky's 1915(c) home and community-based services (HCBS) waiver programs including enrollment and wait list data. Carmen Hancock, Division Director, DMS, CHFS, gave a presentation on 1915(c) HCBS waiver distribution demographics, annual cost per member, and metrics.

In response to Chair Williams, Ms. Hancock stated when a member is allocated a waiver slot an assessment is completed to determine if they meet the level of care for that waiver program. Secretary Stack stated Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services

(CMS) guidelines state undocumented individuals are ineligible for Medicaid and 1915(c) HCBS waiver programs.

In response to Senator Berg, Ms. Hancock stated when a service is billed for a member on a 1915(c) HCBS waiver that member retains the allocated waiver slot until the end of the waiver year. The allocated waiver slot cannot be reallocated due to federal law.

In response to Ms. Staed, Ms. Hancock stated she would follow-up with the average days on a waitlist for the past 5 years for each waiver program. She stated the average wait times in the presentation were calculated using members who were allocated a slot and members still waiting for a slot to open. She stated when a waiver slot is allocated the member has 60 days to initiate services with a one-time extension available at their request for an additional 60 days, before that slot is reallocated to the next member on the waitlist. Ms. Hancock stated the assessment for level of care relies on Kentucky Administrative Regulations that define that facilities level of care threshold. She stated the average churn of vacated slots per month for the Michelle P. waiver is approximately 25 per month and she would follow-up with the subcommittee on data for the other waivers. Ms. Hancock stated cost increases from previous reports were primarily due to several rounds of rate increases from the General Assembly.

In response to Representative Willner, Ms. Hancock stated preparations around waiver eligibility in relation to 2026 RS HB 2 that will be reported to MOAB in October. Ms. Hoffmann stated DMS runs a routine report for individuals on the waitlist to determine eligibility and Medicaid status. She stated currently 80% of individuals on the waitlist receive Medicaid benefits, meaning they have access to a multitude of state plan services including preventative services, physician services, and occupational therapy and/or physical therapy (OT/PT).

In response to Senator Berg, Ms. Hoffman stated the 1915(c) HCBS waiver programs offer an alternative to institutional level care including higher reimbursement rates and service durations for specific populations, such as the ABI waiver. Which may require a higher need for OT/PT and speech services. She stated the ABI waiver and ABI long-term care waiver include a residential component due to Mayo-Portland Adaptability Inventory (MPAI) that shows people better progress in a 24-hour residential setting which is not in the state plan, causing this level of care to require a waiver. Ms. Hoffman stated the services include acute patients as they can keep progressing and making steps towards rehabilitation over multiple years. She stated the average stay for all the waivers is roughly 11 months. Ms. Hancock stated DMS is working to define and educate the public on Medicaid services offered without a waiver, so members can better determine their need or lack thereof for a waiver.

In response to Ms. Staed, Ms. Hoffman stated waivers were created as a waiving for a specific population to receive specific needs/services not covered in the state plan.

In response to Representative Willner, Secretary Stack stated each waiver requires an application and approval for specific eligibility requirements are approved by CMS, consistent with the federal governing statutes for the 1915(c) waiver programs. He stated the cost of special care services are generally too high for individuals to afford. When members are told they do not qualify for a waiver or cannot be in an out of state facility, it is due to the eligibility pathway being interrupted once you go into an inpatient facility or leave the state. He stated eligibility guidelines are complex and create gray areas of overlap, DMS balances complying with the federal government while fully serving Kentuckians.

In response to Senator Berg, Commissioner Lee stated the waivers include homemaking services such as housekeeping, bathing, and toiletry. She stated private insurance does not cover those services and waivers allow individuals to remain in their home and community with personal supports allowing them to have more independence.

In response to Mr. Shannon, Secretary Stack stated 2026 RS HB 2 requires CHFS to compile a report and they will present their plan at the October MOAB meeting.

Public Comment

The following individuals gave testimony on their personal experience and advocacy for the 1915(c) waiver programs impact on the lives of their loved ones and friends: Ms. Vanessa Johnson, Ms. Jennifer Mynear, Mr. Steven Stone, Ms. Claire Mynear, Mr. David Brubaker, Ms. Amber Wilson, Ms. Mary Patton, and Ms. Joy Baum.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:53 AM.