



To: MassAHU

From: Shelley Kaleita

Re: December 28th 2020, Connector Board Meeting

Date: December 28th, 2020

Overview

On Monday, December 28th, at 11:30am, the Connector board met to discuss the lease for office space and then a vote, updated business broker commissions and then a vote, and an open enrollment update.

The board began by hearing the updated terms of the lease for their office space after declining to vote at the December 10th meeting. The board wanted parts of the lease to be renegotiated to fit the hybrid work schedule due to COVID-19. The board voted to move forward with the renegotiated lease.

Chaitra Sanders, Associate Director Health Connector for Business, then moved to discuss the updated broker commissions and schedule. She noted small businesses continue to face economic disruption due to COVID-19, and the CCA has sought to support these businesses by extending payment deadlines, providing resources and information and continuing broker engagement. Since the last update at the May 14th Board meeting, the Health Connector has been providing ongoing updates to small businesses on how to access affordable coverage. The Health Connector continues extended payment deadlines with an additional 30 days in accordance with MA DOI guidelines. The 2020 HCB survey findings point to strong small business satisfaction and of the 412 current and former HCB employer groups surveyed in the fall, satisfaction among small groups is at 86%. Regarding Health Connector for Business Enrollment membership growth during 2020, although growth has slowed, overall enrollment has remained stable trending upwards since March. New business growth has offset enrollment terminations. Regarding the group count, there has been an 11% increase in groups throughout the year that have enrolled on the platform, while membership enrollment has increased by 15%. Given the change in the economic climate they were expecting little to no growth during the 2020 plan year, but saw 402 new groups and 2,389 members account for new sales on the Health Connector for Business, which is only slightly lower than originally expected before the onset of COVID-19. Many small businesses have chosen to offer a choice model plan. 51% of new groups are offered a Choice Model, while 58% of new membership is in a choice model. Regarding broker engagement, brokers play a key role in educating the employer community

about the benefits of Health Connector for Business and all available offerings from the Health Connector. They have conducted new training for brokers, and the Health Connector conducted 103 one-on-one remote training sessions with brokers since the beginning of 2020. Broker refresher training seminars were held on April 29th, and November 18th, with both seminars averaging about 50 broker attendees. A ConnectWell training seminar for brokers held on December 2nd, was attended by 40 brokers. As most brokers are not familiar with the Health Connector’s individual and family offerings, educational materials about the individual market have been provided to brokers who may have clients who are in need of individual coverage. Brokers have also been invited and attended all six presentations designed to inform terminated and furloughed employees for their health insurance options in the individual marketplace. Brokers continue to be a leading partner in driving new membership with broker certification and sales steadily increased in 2020. Year to date in 2020, 74% of new sales membership was a result of a broker sale. Regarding broker commissions, the last review and update of commissions was completed in 2017 for commissions effective in 2018, carriers and intermediaries normally amend commissions annually. To inform revised broker commissions, a full survey of the existing marketplace commissions was conducted. The results of the survey indicate that the Health Connector medical commissions should increase broker commissions to ensure parity with the off-exchange market. Dental commissions would not need to be amended to create parity based on the results of the survey. For FY 21, the proposed increase in broker commissions is accounted for in the budget pending the boards approval. The Health Connector staff proposed a revised broker commission schedule, pictured below, based on market research to be effective January 1st, 2021. The board then moved to vote and approve the revised broker commission schedule.

Product	Group Size	Off-Exchange Commissions	Current CCA Commission	Proposed 2021 Commission Rates
Medical	1 to 4 employees	\$10-\$24 pspm	\$10 pspm	No Change
	5 to 9 employees	\$24-\$30 pspm	\$20 pspm	\$25 pspm
	10+ employees	\$24-\$30 pspm	\$28 pspm	\$30 pspm
Dental	All groups	\$6 pspm	\$6 pspm	No Change

Marissa Woltmann, Director of Policy and Applied Research, then discussed updates regarding open enrollment. The 2021 open enrollment period runs from November 1st to January 23rd. The staff will synthesize full open enrollment activity after its closure, but provided an interim update for the board. She noted overall, halted membership movement from MassHealth to the Health

Connector due to the federal public health emergency has been a key reason for lower than usual enrollment. But they continue to see strong activity among renewing and new members. Their staff and partners work to conduct outreach, marketing and member support on open enrollment to maximize public and member awareness. As of December 22nd, 9% of ConnectorCare members were determined eligible for unsubsidized coverage in 2021. The loss of subsidies is most often due to unverified income. While members have been slower to provide updated income information this year, it appears that bills for January have sparked a substantial number of updates over the last week. Through December 22nd, over 277,000 members had enrolled for January, a 6% reduction from last year at this time. Lower membership is primarily the result of decreased new enrollments rather than termination of existing members, likely due to Medicaid protections associated with the federal public health emergency. Enrollment among people who were not enrolled when open enrollment started are down about 40%. Overall, retention remains high at nearly 94%, which is nearly identical to last year. Regarding shopping activity, over 55,000 renewing members and 20,000 new members have shopped so far. This represents renewing members at all stages of the shopping process: browsing, selecting a plan, and effectuating coverage. Even if individuals shop, they often confirm their current plan for next year. As in prior years, members who shop generally opt for lower-cost plans. Shifts towards Bronze have continued, with 1,400 renewing non-ConnectorCare members already having switched from a higher tier to Bronze. 57% of new non-ConnectorCare enrollees chose Bronze. When discussing outreach, it was noted that to maximize visibility of open enrollment paid and earned media avenues are being pursued. A full lineup of ongoing programming will maintain visibility in open enrollment through the January 23rd deadline.

After hearing the open enrollment update, the board then moved to adjourn the meeting.