

HCBS Meeting Sept. 10, 2025

Attending

Sara Coleman, Cathy Murahashi, Lonnie Keesee, Will Nichol, Paula Costa, Resa Hayes, Michelle Williams, Sandi Gruberg, Sue Halle, Melissa Randles, Darci Ladwig, Dee Dee Garman, Christie Chiles, Debbie Chapman, Tracie Hoppis, Emily Rogers, Jamie Coonts, Valerie Kindschy, Angela Randel, Catherine Higgins, Lori Gianetto Bare, Hillary Spears

Steering Committee updates

Linda gave a recruitment update to the committee. They have been discussing membership on the larger group. She stated that there will be a survey out within the next week. The survey asks about membership, recruitment, and recommendations.

The results will be shared at the December committee meeting.

Reimagine (Jaime Bond)

Jamie shared that Dr. Tonik Joseph is leaving state services October 3rd. With Tonik being was a driver, she helped build and strengthen relationships and will be missed.

She detailed upcoming organizational changes effective October 1st, including the restructuring of DDCS as a division within Home and Community Living Administration. Kris Pederson is the new director and Tara Jacobson and Nichole Jensen becoming deputy directors.

Jaime also stated that a survey would be distributed next week regarding steering committee recruitment and discussed potential future conversations about combining teams with other divisions to implement a "no wrong door" approach for service delivery.

Medicaid impacts from funding cuts at a federal level (Jaime Bond)

Jaime presented a PowerPoint on the impacts of the recent federal bill on the DSHS population, focusing on changes to food benefits and Medicaid eligibility. She explained that while there are some impacts, particularly for those on Medicaid expansion, the DDOS population will not be significantly affected in terms of services received.

She noted that about 50 clients may have their Medicaid eligibility disrupted due to changes in legal citizenship and lawful permanent residence definitions.

High level WaCares Fund updates (Kristen Maki)

Kristen provided an overview of the program, explaining its development since 2014 and key milestones. She detailed the program's structure, including contribution rates, benefit amounts, and eligibility requirements for workers to earn and access long-term care benefits.

Kristen outlined the various pathways for qualifying for benefits, such as permanent access after 10 years of contributions, temporary access for those who haven't met the 10-year requirement and a prorated option for near retirees.

She also described the care needs requirement and the range of services covered by Walk Cares, emphasizing its focus on supporting independence and flexibility in care options. Kristen highlighted upcoming milestones, including a pilot in Spokane and surrounding counties, the launch of online account registration, and the availability of benefit applications starting in May, with services beginning in July.

Waiver Restructure updates (Sarah Coleman)

Sarah shared that in 2024 the legislature received a report on how the waiver system could be restructured. Their goals in the report align w/ their mission. The roll out will begin in the fall of 2027. DDA Waiver restructure report.

HCBS Access Rules (Lori Gianetto Bare and Lonnie Keesee)

Lori presented a PowerPoint about the HCBS Access Rule requirements and timeline.

HCLA Organizational Structure Changes (Lori)

Clarification was given regarding the new organizational structure and terminology following the merger of various divisions into the Home and Community Living Administration (HCLA). The transition from using terms like ALTSA and DDA to HCS (Home and Community Services) and DDCCS (Developmental Disabilities Community Services). Lori explained that the changes were driven by federal recommendations from the Office of Inspector General to standardize practices across states and improve client rights and safety. The group acknowledged the ongoing confusion and agreed to seek a clearer visual representation of the organizational structure to assist both staff and families.

No-Paid Services updates (Catherine Higgins and Will Nichol)

Will and Catherine gave an update on the no paid services as directed by SB 5394 which became effective in July. Will stated that the program will discontinue outreach to enrolled individuals not currently receiving services.

Catherine emphasized that while case management assignments will end, people can still request services through various methods, including visiting or calling division offices, using an online web form, or visiting the public website. She reassured attendees that the division remains available to answer questions and provide resources, even though the program structure has changed.