

HCBS Quality Assurance Committee Meeting Minutes December 10, 2025

Present

Brandi Monts, Debbie Chapman, Michelle Williams, Paul Davis, Hilary Spears, Darci Ladwig, Saif Hakim, Sue Halle, Aaron Dickson, Katrina Davis, Neal Hallmark, Lonnie Keese, Tracy Hoppis, Resa Hayes, Lisa Robbe, Will Nichol, Cathy Murashi, Melissa Randles, Ann Casilev, Valerie Kindschy, Ashly Flores, Jamie Coonts, Amal Grabinski, Ryan Hilton, Suzanne Taylor, Paula Acosta, Suzanne Taylor, Ryan Hilton, Michelle Sturdevant, Destinie Buzzard, Faith Waweru, Paul Davis, Kathleen Dolin, Mallory Hagel, Linda Hyatt, Jennifer Barron, Uma Kukathas

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began with introductions, and everyone shared their name and one word to describe how 2025.

Changes to the HCBS Quality Assurance Committee

The last committee reviewed how this meeting works and whether it meets community needs. Over the past two years, steering committee members helped collect feedback, create orientation materials, and identify which voices should be included.

Based on recent feedback from the survey responses and DDC/DDCS, changes coming in 2026 include:

- The current long, virtual meetings will end;
- The work done by this group will be shared with DDCS to include in other stakeholder groups that are currently being run;
- DDCS will use the proposed committee work in other advisory groups and listening sessions; and
- The council will host at least one in-person gathering each year to help people connect and build relationships.

Several shared concerns about these changes and felt they were important. It allowed community members to review data, ask questions, and hold DDCS accountable.

Key concerns included:

- Losing an independent space outside of DDCS
- Fewer opportunities to review waiver data in detail

- Making sure virtual options continue for rural and remote communities
- Keeping family members and self-advocates involved

DDCS staff acknowledged these concerns and said accountability and community input are still very important. They shared that staffing shortages and new federal requirements are also affecting how meetings are organized. DDC will send out a way to collect concerns and suggestions to move forward. The list of identified seats from the last committee will also be sent out for the group.

Federal CMS Access Rule and Advisory Groups

Destinie explained that new federal rules (CMS Access Rules) require states to change how they collect feedback from people who use services. These rules require states to create Beneficiary Advisory Councils and other formal feedback systems.

DDCS and the Healthcare Authority said:

- Community input will still be required for waivers and Community First Choice;
- Feedback will continue through other advisory groups and listening sessions; and
- Community feedback will help shape future waiver changes

Information about how to join these groups and how families and self-advocates will be shared.

5. Community Protection Program – Therapy Services Update

Destinie shared an update about moving therapy services from waiver funding to Medicare and managed care plans.

Key points:

- Many providers are still completing contracts;
- Some delays happened due to federal processing issues;
- Plans are in place to avoid gaps in services;
- Changes are expected to begin February 1; and
- Quarterly team meetings and wraparound supports will continue

6. New Grievance and Complaint System

Neil and Faith discussed plans for a new statewide grievance system required by federal rules. The new system will:

- Give people one main place to submit complaints or concerns;

- Be available online, by phone, in person, or by fax;
- Use clear language and multiple languages; and
- Let people track what happens after they submit a concern

The system is expected to launch by **July 1, 2026**, and community members will be asked to help test it before launch.

7. Adult Family Home (AFH) Program Update

Paula stated that there are between 1,700 and 1,800 people currently living in Adult Family Homes. The AFH Specialty Pilot does remain limited to 100 people while a statewide referral process is being developed. Provider training courses continue across the state

Paula also explained new **Residency Agreement** rules starting January 1. Agreements must protect resident rights and must follow HCBS rules. Residents receiving Medicaid can get free legal help if they receive a 30-day notice. Providers must update admission agreements.

A short video about Adult Family Homes was shared.

Waiver Redesign Project Update

Sarah and Bob gave an update on the waiver redesign project. The goal is to make waivers easier to understand, easier to access and more efficient and transparent. Community feedback is a key part of this work, and updates will continue through meetings and the project website.

Closing

Brandi thanked everyone for sharing their thoughts and concerns. Participants were encouraged to send written feedback so it can be shared with DDCS leadership. Many people shared that this meeting has been meaningful and that the changes bring both hope and sadness.

Links

Steering Committee

[Draft Membership Guidelines](#)

CMS & Federal Guidance:

<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/access-care/medicaid-advisory-committees-and-beneficiary-advisory-councils>

[https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/part-441/subpart-G#p-441.301\(c\)\(7\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/part-441/subpart-G#p-441.301(c)(7))

DDCS / DSHS Resources:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/019916c449c0721f94494d9e5869a045>

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/DDA/dda/documents/24-1119%20DDA%20Waiver%20Restructure%20Report%20corrected.pdf>

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/waiver-redesign-project-overview-and-updates>