

Office of Health Strategy
Health Care Cabinet
Draft Meeting Minutes
May 27, 2025 | 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
[Zoom Meeting Recording](#)

ATTENDANCE

BY ELECTRONIC DEVICE:

Ellen Andrews	Andrea Barton Reeves	Paul Lombardo
Kurt Barwis	Tiffany Donelson	Casandra Murphy
Joanne Borduas	Collen Harrington	Nicole Taylor
James Cardon	Kathleen Holt	
Mehul Dalal	Alan Kaye	

ABSENT:

Robyn Anderson	Claudio Gualtieri	Shelly Ann Stokes Sweatt
Danielle Morgan	Hassam Saada	Laura Manzione
Anthony Yoder	Manisha Juthani	

OTHER PARTICIPANTS:

Mehul Dalal, DSS	Boyd Jackson, OHS
Cindy Dubuque-Gallo, OHS	Dan Keenan, Trinity Health
Elisa Neira, OHS	
Alex Reger, OHS	

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Healthcare Cabinet was held virtually on Tuesday, May 27, 2025. The meeting was called to order by Deidre Gifford at 2:08 p.m. Attendance was taken by roll call and quorum was not reached.

APPROVAL OF March 25, MINUTES

Due to the absence of a quorum, the Health Care Cabinet was unable to formally approve the meeting minutes at this time. This item will be revisited once quorum is met in the next meeting scheduled for July 22, 2025.

E & C Medicaid Proposals

Dr. Mehul Dalal from the Department of Social Services provided an update on federal Medicaid proposals included in the recently passed House Budget Bill. He explains that the proposals are still under negotiation in the Senate and may change. Dr. Dalal focuses on the most impactful provisions for states and Medicaid members, particularly the work requirements provision set to be effective December 31, 2026. He notes that even after passage, additional guidance from CMS will be needed to fully understand the implications. Dr. Dalal explained that states will be required to check compliance with work requirements for adults aged 19–64 enrolled in Medicaid expansion, with some exemptions. The bill also

proposes 6-month eligibility checks and mandates cost-sharing for those with incomes over 100% of the Federal poverty level. Additionally, there are penalties for states providing coverage to non-citizens and restrictions on provider taxes, funding for Planned Parenthood, and gender-affirming care.

The cabinet discussed potential changes to Medicaid and healthcare marketplaces that could result in millions losing coverage. Mehul explains that DSS is closely monitoring developments in Washington and working with partners to understand implications. Ellen requests sharing previous cost estimates and assumptions with the cabinet. Deidre mentions that Kaiser Family Foundation provides state-by-state impact estimates and notes that marketplace enrollment may decrease due to proposed restrictions. She emphasizes that Connecticut's uninsured rate is likely to rise, affecting both individuals and healthcare providers.

June 23, 2025 Informational Benchmark Hearing

Alex Reger from the Office of Health Strategy (OHS) announces two upcoming informational hearings on June 23rd, 2025. The morning session will discuss the 2023 benchmark program results, including healthcare affordability, spending drivers, and hospital costs. The afternoon session will focus on setting new benchmarks for 2026–2030, covering cost growth, primary care spending targets, and quality benchmarks. OHS will release proposed benchmarks for public comment on June 9th, with a virtual listening session on June 16th. Written comments are accepted until June 30th, when the Commissioner will release final benchmark values.

AHEAD UPDATE

Dan Keenan from Trinity Health of New England and co-chair of the AHEAD Advisory Committee, updated the cabinet on Connecticut's participation in the CMS AHEAD model, which aims to implement global hospital budgets to improve cost control and health equity. The committee has met monthly since February of 2025 and is focusing on learning from Maryland's experience. CMS release a global budget calculator tool, helping hospitals estimate Medicare impacts. Legislation is currently being considered to enable the program.

Legislative Update

Cindy Dubuque-Gallo from the OHS provided an update on several healthcare-related bills in the legislature. The private equity and healthcare transactions bill is being negotiated, with multiple versions being harmonized. The certificate of need bill has been amended to include cost and market impact reviews. The cost growth benchmark bill is being discussed with the insurance committee, with efforts to harmonize two related bills. The Health Information Exchange bill includes a study on granular consent, allowing patients to choose what information is shared. Regarding healthcare affordability, a provision allowing the Insurance Commissioner to reduce premium rate requests by up to two percentage points if the health carrier's premium rate has exceeded the benchmark in the two preceding years has passed the Senate. Out-of-network caps and prescription drug pricing bills are still under discussion, with potential for harmonization. The healthcare cabinet technical revisions were still being contemplated.

Announcements

Commissioner Deidre Gifford announced her retirement effective at the end of June, thanking the Cabinet members for their contributions to healthcare policy in Connecticut.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:24 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for July 22, 2025.