

Meeting Summary

NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC)

Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2026

Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

BAC Members Present: Arlyn Perez Nunez, Autumn Woods (Seth Arber), Bee Ray, Dina Ginsberger, Elray Hobbs, MrDexter, Sachin Pathare, Tony Pantaleo, DA, LG, AL, AN, SS, AW

BAC Member Not Present: JD, Rosalynn McEvilly

State Participants: NJ Department of Human Services staff including Greg Woods, Natalie Kotkin, Steve Tunney, Shanique McGowan Powers, Karen Enoch, Sam Krauss, Phyllis Melendez, Lynda Grajeda, Valerie Mielke, Dave Helfand, Thomas Lind, Paige Solariski, Jason Luisi, JH Williams

Meeting Overview

This meeting of the NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid Advisory Council (BAC) included a summary and discussion of the state's behavioral health (BH) care system, an overview of the NJ FamilyCare Behavioral Health Integration initiative, and H.R.1 Community Engagement requirements and member engagement.

Key Meeting Topics

1. Call to Order and Council Business

State staff welcomed members, conducted roll calls, reviewed the meeting agenda, demonstrated the BAC website, and facilitated BAC member approval of the March 17, 2026 meeting notes.

Tony Pantaleo made a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by a majority and approved by the Council.

2. NJ Behavioral Health Care Services

This topic focused on behavioral health (BH) care services delivered through NJ FamilyCare whereby the member is connected to a managed care organization (MCO), which works with mental health providers, community support programs and hospitals to provide services to NJ FamilyCare members. State leaders described the three primary goals of BH integration into managed care as to 1) improve access to care, 2) promote whole-person care, and 3) strengthen care coordination.

Presenters described the coordination of BH services between the Department of Human Services (DHS) DMAHS, the DHS Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Children and Families, Children's System of Care (DCF). Staff explained that Medicaid works with state partners on an ongoing basis to increase access to services. Medicaid representatives also described ongoing integrated care initiatives designed to better coordinate behavioral health, primary care and social services.

The BAC member discussion included the following:

- BAC members shared personal experiences regarding barriers to behavioral health care including provider shortages, difficulty locating trauma-informed care, limited access to specialists, and inconsistent communication regarding available services.
- BAC members emphasized the need for better communication, advocacy, specialized providers, and easier access to coordinated services. The state would like to consider the development of a short, easy to digest resource explaining available services and how members can access them.
- A BAC member questioned whether there will be advocacy specifically addressing the experiences and needs of children receiving services through DCF and asked if DCF can be considered for future BAC meeting participation. State representatives noted that DMAHS works closely with DCF and DOE to ensure children have appropriate access to covered services by improving access and reducing barriers to care.
- A BAC member shared concerns about the quality and availability of specialized behavioral health and addiction services and emphasized the need for better provider options, harm reduction resources and community support. State leaders acknowledged the members' concerns and stated that New Jersey is moving toward integrated care, allowing behavioral health, addiction, and primary care services to work more closely together. Recent regulatory changes are intended to make integrated services easier for providers to offer.

3. Community Engagement Requirements Messaging and Member Engagement for H.R.1, the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," (OBBBA)

Presenters reviewed upcoming Medicaid work/activity requirement changes, member exemptions, renewal requirements, and proposed member notification letters about the upcoming federal changes.

It was noted that some federal guidance remains unclear, particularly around required documentation. The state is working to comply with federal requirements while minimizing the burden on members.

- BAC members expressed appreciation for the screening tool and its rollout after BAC members participated in earlier discussions about its development. During the conversation, BAC members requested clearer implementation timelines and additional guidance for individuals affected by future policy changes.

- A BAC member reported having received a member communication and using the online portal to determine whether the new rules applied. The BAC member indicated the process was clear and easy.
- BAC members requested options for submitting documentation related to work requirements. State representatives indicated that they will work toward establishing data sources to verify compliance with work requirements.

Wrap-up and Next Steps:

Following the meeting, a survey will be sent to BAC members about future meeting dates and topics for future meetings.

Some DMAHS staff stayed on the Zoom after the meeting to address follow-up questions and/or issues.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00 Noon.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the BAC will be a hybrid session on September 15, 2026.