Policy & Advocacy Committee Meeting

MARCH 18TH, 2025 | 3:30 – 4:30 PM ET

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

AARP, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American Board of Family Medicine, American College of Clinical Pharmacy, American College of Lifestyle Medicine, American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians, American College of Physicians, American Psychological Association, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Community Catalyst, CVS Health Aetna, Elation Health, Harvard Medical School Center For Primary Care, HealthTeamWorks, Humana, Innovaccer, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Mental Health America, NAACOS, National Partnership for Women & Families, Primary Care Collaborative, Primary Care Development Corporation, Platform Government Strategies, Society of Teachers of Family Medicine, Upstream USA, VillageMD

THANK YOU TO OUR SPEAKERS:

- Co-chair: Sarah Coombs, National Partnership for Women and Families
- Brian Outland, American College of Physicians
- Stephen Voljavec, Office of Rep. Vern Buchanan

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and Announcements

Larry McNeely, Policy Director of the PCC, began the meeting by welcoming attendees and reviewing the agenda. Larry highlighted the PCC's upcoming conference:

- **Register for the PCC Conference:** On June 4–5, 2025 – the PCC will host its biennial Conference, ***Scaling What Works for Better Care***. Join us and leaders from across the health care sector for engaging discussions on scaling innovative approaches to primary care delivery and payment. **Click here to register for the conference.**

Larry provided a brief overview of some recent PCC communications:

- On March 6, the PCC released *Make Medicare Beneficiaries Healthier by Strengthening Primary Care*, an issue brief that outlines the central role that primary care must play in efforts to address chronic conditions.

- Larry announced an upcoming one pager on hybrid payment

Larry shared some recent correspondence between the PCC, our BHN members and the new Administration.

- On February 26, the PCC released a statement in response to the House passing a budget resolution that includes $880 billion in cuts that likely will affect Medicaid. Click here to read the full statement
- On March 7, the PCC and its BHN campaign partners submitted a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary, Robert Kennedy Jr, urging him to place whole-person primary care at the center of his strategy to improve Americans' health. Click here to read the full letter
- On March 13, the PCC and its BHN campaign partners sent a letter of support to sponsor Senators Cortez Masto and Cornyn, voicing support for the COMPLETE Care Act.

Larry discussed the recent CMMI announcement on the early cancellation of 8 models, including the *Making Care Primary* model and the *Primary Care First* model. Larry also shared CMMI comments about keeping primary care as a foundational component of the Center's strategy.

Co-Chair Remarks

Larry then introduced Sarah Coombs and Brian Outland and asked them to provide a quick overview of their organization's policy priorities.

Sarah shared that NPFW is focused on defense efforts for Medicaid. Alongside other partners, they are developing resources and educating Republican senators on the harms of cutting the Medicaid program for constituents within their states.

The NPWF recently participated in a Hill briefing focused on maternal health and the impacts on mothers' health if cuts to Medicaid are passed.

Following the recent announcements at CMMI, NPWF remains concerned and eager to learn more about how CMMI will invest in primary care moving forward.

Brian Outland, Director of Regulatory Affairs at ACP, provided marks on behalf of co-chair Shari Erickson. Brian outlined some key priorities for ACP, and how they are closely watching how these will impact primary care

- The recently passed CR that did not include a doc fix
- The telehealth extensions that are set to expire in September
- GME and NIH funding that has been recently cut
- Physician Payment
- Medicaid

Medicaid Primary Care: Towards a Multi-sector Sign-on Letter

Larry introduced a set of principles that PCC has developed to shape a sign-on letter articulating the importance of primary care and Medicaid. The goal of this letter is to be a nonpartisan, multi-stakeholder letter that informs policy makers on the Hill as they move forward with the budget reconciliation process.

Larry presented an outline of key points that could be included in this letter. The principal message reads: “By shifting federal support for Medicaid to other priorities, these proposals would undercut state-led efforts to more effectively prevent and manage chronic disease. With access to primary care and efforts to address chronic disease at stake, Congress should reject efforts to defund state Medicaid programs.”

Other key points include:

- Medicaid’ s importance to addressing chronic disease and providing behavioral health services, especially in rural communities, for dual-eligible beneficiaries and for children
- The effectiveness of Medicaid primary care, especially from community-based practices and FQHCs
- Value-based care arrangements in Medicaid can be a solution

To read more about the letter, see the slides here.

Ann Greiner added that the multi-stakeholder nature of this letter sends a powerful message to the Hill on the broad support Medicaid has.

Larry opened the floor to members to share feedback.

Alexa Roberts of Village MD agreed that this nonpartisan strategy is an effective one. By sharing the facts, we demonstrate that primary care is the best way to treat chronic conditions, and that Medicaid is a vital program to ensure access to primary care. She also highlighted that Medicaid gives states the flexibility to adjust based on the needs of their populations.

Jean Tips of the ACLM added that we need to paint a clear picture of what reality will be like if Medicaid does get cut. She stressed the need to lay out the downstream consequences, such as increased ED visits, to ensure that Congress truly understands the situation.

Larry asked the group for perspectives on striking a balance between working with Congressional offices on both sides of the aisle and holding true to the message we want to send.

Karen Ferguson of AACAP shared that the balance is good, but she agrees that the letter should highlight examples of the harm that will come with cutting Medicaid. She also added that it is important that we act as a coalition to raise awareness and education on this issue. She appreciated the gentle and nonpartisan nature of the letter.

Jordan Goldberg of PCDC gave her thanks for this more robust support of Medicaid but added that we need to include more about the damage these cuts will cause at the state-level. This includes the downstream effects of taking money that states use to manage their entire health systems, which can have terrible consequences.

Larry added that, similar to 2017, governors are expressing concern about these potential Medicaid cuts.

Larry announced that a final version of this letter should be shared sometime next week for potential signature.

Ann invited members to share possible examples of harms they would like to see identified in the letter and share them with the PCC team.

Capitol Hill Update

Larry introduced Stephen Voljavec, Legislative Director to Rep. Vern Buchanan, for an off-the-record conversation to discuss a few of his boss's priorities and the Medicare payment reform conversation.

Stephen shared that Rep. Buchanan recently introduced a bill that has passed through the House: The Chronic Disease Flexible Coverage Act. The PCC joined with seven other organizations on a letter supporting this legislation. Read the sign-on letter here, as well as a press release from Rep. Buchanan's office, featuring a quote from PCC CEO Ann Greiner.

For more details on this conversation, please contact Larry McNeely (lmcneely@thepcc.org).