
Minutes: Human Services Performance Council Meeting

February 24, 2023

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

via Webex

Attendance: Alex Abraha, Linda Bixby, Lolita Davis Carter, Nikki Farago, Debbie Goettel, KiloMarie Granda, Stacy Hennen, Noel Jagolino, Rae Ann Keeler-Aus, Shaneen Moore, Rena Moran, Michelle Ness, Rodney Peterson, Eric Ratzmann, Ashley Reisenauer, Matt Traynor, Dr. Damir Utrzan, Lynne Valdes and Aaron Wittnebel
HSPM Team: Debra Anthony, Marisa Hinnenkamp, Carrie Krueger, Charity Mack, Gary Mortensen and Beryl Palmer

Guests: Fiona Carson and Matt Freeman (MACSSA,) Morgan Stevenson (Ramsey County), and Jesse Winsell (Hennepin County)

Welcome and Announcements

Council Co-Chairs

Members introduced themselves by sharing what drew them to the Council and what they hope to accomplish.

Approval of November 18th Minutes

Council Co-Chairs

Debbie Goettel motioned to approve; Linda Bixby seconded. A roll call vote was held and the motion carried.

Discussion and Input from Council

Perf Mgmt Team

Council Overview: Gary Mortensen

- Gary provided a brief overview of Council expectations and duties. He encouraged new members to ask questions.
- The Performance Council is required by law to meet quarterly and to submit an annual report to the legislature. The Council provides guidance for the Performance Management team.
- Hybrid meetings are typically held via Webex and in person at MCIT in St. Paul. The meeting schedule coincides with the timing of reports and a Council subgroup meets to provide recommendations on extenuating circumstance (EC) claims. Gary asked for volunteers for the EC workgroup.
- Advice from existing members to new members included sitting next to someone who has been on the Council longer, asking questions, reaching out anytime, and calling out the use of acronyms.

2023 Performance Team Priorities – Gary Mortensen

- Gary explained the team dashboard consisting of projects the team would like to highlight for the Council but noted we may not go over it in detail during meetings. He encouraged Councilors to review it and ask questions if needed.
 - Charity provided an update regarding the team's work on the improvement project for the measure, *percent of current child support paid*, including background on how the project began last year, the suspension of performance improvement plans (PIPs) for the measure, and a brief overview of the PIP process. A project planning team has been assembled and will meet for the first time on Feb. 27.
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- Beryl Palmer provided an update on Independent Housing and Adult Protection measures development projects. The housing project is currently focused on data integrity and identifying indicators. The Adult Protection project has a partnership workgroup (including counties and DHS) looking at guiding principles, clarifying roles, identifying barriers and looking at measures that would help us reach desired outcomes.
- Gary provided an overview of Deb Anthony’s new role as Equity Director for Counties, focused on capacity building and equitable engagement. He also explained the Equity Partnership as well as its current goals and projects.

Expedited SNAP Measure Recommendation – Charity Mack

- Charity provided an overview of the Expedited SNAP measure, *percent of expedited Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications processed within one business day*, and the challenges counties are experiencing with processing an overwhelming number of applications.
- In 2021, MNBenefits, an online benefits application system, launched statewide. This system made it easier for people to apply for benefits but created unintended consequences, such as partial or incomplete applications and delays in counties receiving the applications following submission.
- Historically, counties have done well on this measure. The drop in performance is significant and correlates to the pandemic and launch of new systems.
- The team proposes suspension of the measure for now. In 2024, we will re-evaluate the situation to see if the measure should return, be revised or be replaced.
- Commissioner Goettel moved to approve the proposal to suspend the measure for 2023 and 2024. Lolita Davis Carter Seconded. A roll call vote was held and the motion carried.

Legislative Update – Gary Mortensen

- Gary provided an overview of the proposal that was built in conjunction with the equity partnership and MACSSA. Unfortunately, it will not be included in the Governor’s budget.

2023 Performance Council Strategic Planning: Gary Mortensen

- There was no time to discuss this agenda topic.

Next Steps and Action Items

Gary Mortensen – 5 min

Remaining 2023 Performance Council Meetings

- May 19, 2023
- August 25, 2023
- December 1, 2023
- Gary asked if we could move the May meeting to the 19th due to conflict with the MACSSA Conference. This move was favorable for most Councilors.
- Meeting adjourned.

Minutes: Human Services Performance Council Meeting

May 19, 2023

9:30 a.m. – 12:30pm

Hybrid - Webex and MCIT building

Welcome and Announcements

Council Co-Chairs

Attendance: Charity Mack, Carrie Kreuger, Gary Mortensen, Femi Fajolu, Beryl Palmer, Othman Zaimi, Marisa Hinnenkamp, Deb Anthony, Alex Abraha, Ashley Reisenauer, Fiona Carson - MACSSA, Rena Moran (commissioner), Dr. Damir Utrzan, Eric Ratzmann, Jesse Winsell, KiloMarie Granda, Linda Bixby, Lynne Valedes, Matt Freeman, Matt Traynor, Lolita Davis Carter, Nikki Farago, Rae Ann Keeler-Aus, Rod Peterson, Stacy Hennen, Stevenson Morgan– Aide to Rena Moran, Noel, Commissioner Lee,

Absent: Commissioner Goettel, Shaneen Moore, Aaron Witnebel

Othman Zaimi, the newest member of the Performance Management team introduced himself to the Council. He will officially join the Performance Management team on May 31.

Council members and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of February 24th Minutes

Council Co-Chairs

- Commissioner Peterson moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Moran seconded. Minutes approved through roll-call vote.

Discussion and Input from Council

Perf Mgmt Team

Extenuating Circumstance Claims Recommendations

- Gary provided an overview of the EC claims process.
- Received three claims from Dakota, Ramsey and Wright Counties
- The Council's EC Workgroup reviewed the claims and recommended approval of all three claims. The claims centered around caseload changes, staffing issues, and DHS data system issues.
- The Council discussed the measure and threshold and how measures were set.
- Rae Ann moved to recommend approval of EC Claims.
- Stacy seconded motion to approve recommendation.
- The Council discussed some of the factors influencing the barriers cited by counties including:
 - The launch of the state MNbenefits system, which takes applications and forwards them to counties for processing. In early 2022, a number of applications were delayed by the system. The long delay resulted in many people reapplying, further increasing the backlog of applications.

- More Minnesotans were encouraged to apply for benefits due to the requirements changes during the COVID-19 emergency, leading to more applications from people who do not qualify.
- Ongoing issues with capacity to access training required by DHS. New employees cannot process applications until they attend a 4-day training, and they cannot access the training because there are limited seats available in the monthly training and increased turnover has increased demand. This has been an ongoing conversation between DHS, counties and the legislature.
- Increased telework options and a generous compensation package from one large metro county contributed to a number of experienced workers to take jobs with that county, increasing turnover.
- Despite use of overtime, at a large financial cost and a hardship for staff, counties were not able to meet the threshold.
- The Council discussed the toll delays take on people waiting for assistance. Also, if the training delays and potential opportunities to open up more training were issues, the Council could advocate for changes by issuing a statement to the commissioner.
- The Council discussed the need for systems modernization.
- Gary conducted a roll-call vote to recommend approval of all three claims. Linda Bixby and Commissioner Moran abstained from the vote and the motion carried.

2023 Performance Team Priorities Update

- Gary highlighted the project spreadsheet shared with the Performance Council in the meeting packets.
- Deb shared an overview of the work she is doing in her new role as Equity Director for Counties. The new role began in August 2022. She has identified five priorities, two of which are currently the focus:
 - Strategic Plan – Working with MACSSA and DHS to put together a shared plan.
 - Build Capacity – Working to help counties build capacity to increase equity.
 - DEI Assessment – Working with a nonprofit to create an assessment counties can use to understand their strengths and gaps with equity and use as a basis for creating an action plan. Did a test of the system and heard from partners they are interested in piloting its use.
 - Equitable Engagement- Piloted an engagement model with Stearns and Dakota counties to work on engaging community.
 - Technical Assistance - Conducting regional visits across the state with MACSSA.
- Charity provided an update on the Child Support Paid barriers project.
 - In late 2022, the Performance Council suspended the Child Support Paid measure following statewide decline in child support collections.
 - Because of the statewide issue, the Performance Management team is working collaboratively with counties and DHS Child Support Division to identify the barriers counties are experiencing, develop potential strategies to address those barriers, and to develop a Performance Management model for future collaborative improvement work.
 - Currently working with steering committee members including county representatives, DHS Child Support Division representatives, and Performance Management coordinators to attend Child Support meetings throughout the state to collect information about the barriers counties are experiencing. Charity anticipates the project will extend into next year.

Legislative Update

- Proposals have been put forward in the legislature to split DHS into three separate agencies:
 - Direct Care and Treatment (DCT) - State Hospital System. Will become their own department, to be named.
 - Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) – This would be the administration of children and family services and other programs from other state agencies spun off into its own department.
 - Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Should the legislation pass, 12 individuals would manage the transition to plan the new organization. Planning timeline:
 - July 1, 2023 – Transition team established.
 - July 1, 2024 – Agency legally established, commissioner named.
 - July 2024 – July 2025 – Programs will transition to their new agencies.
- Council Discussion – What does it mean for the Performance Management Council and the Performance Management Team? As our legislation was created specific to the Department of Human Services and specifically outlines 11 essential human services, we will want to look at rewriting the legislation following the change. What are the opportunities for the new Performance Management System? What concerns or cautions?
 - Discussed placement of the Performance Management system and whether it should be embedded within one of the three agencies or somewhere else.
 - How can we have Performance Management continue to focus on pieces that reside in both DHS and DCYF and use this system as a forum to keep those connections? Administratively that is messy, it is something that should be prioritized. After the split a lot of the same people will work for the agencies, so you will have connections and relationships that can continue to drive collaboration. The Performance Council is here to evaluate the performance and the work of delivering human services, regardless of which agency. If we choose an agency, services end up in siloes.
 - Improving “human service delivery” happens where the customer meets us – the counties. No matter how the state agencies are split, the work happens at the county. Look at being a part of the governor’s office and having a higher system-level role to work with commissioners of all agencies. Otherwise, the Performance Management system becomes powerless.
 - The Performance Council, given the opportunity, should also be involved in oversight of DCT. The organization has gotten big. It could be more efficient and needs oversight.
 - The Performance Council needs a strategic planning session after July 1 so we can strategically plan what we want this group to be and prepare a plan or proposal to the commissioners who have a say in the matter. This will need to be a long session, not just two hours.
 - Opportunity to refocus should include more integration of advancing equity into performance management.
 - This is an opportunity for agencies to rebuild and rethink the way we work. Equity should be a focus and built into policies and procedures. The Performance Management system should advocate for performance to be centered in the work of the departments.

- This shift creates more opportunities for silos and separates programs that are tied together, for example child support and Medicaid.
- Lack of measures in some of these areas is an opportunity to expand and rethink how to build a portfolio of measures spanning multiple departments.
- The eleven essential human services don't go away if we divide the work differently. This group may need to view its role as bridging those different entities. There is a bifurcation around separate agencies that is not helpful to the work.
- There are very real operational consequences to these decisions. We need to consider the Performance Management team, where they sit and how they will have the authority to do the work needed to manage the system.
- Part of the county perspective in agreeing to the Performance Management system was an opportunity for administrative simplification and reduce the administrative burden on counties. Can the Performance Management system hold the state departments accountable, too? One of the things being brought up by counties is greater collaboration between state agencies and counties.
- A strategic planning retreat will be scheduled to continue this conversation.

Next Steps and Action Items

Gary Mortensen

Remaining 2023 Performance Council Meetings

- August 25, 2023
- December 1, 2023

Minutes: Human Services Performance Council Meeting

August 25, 2023

9:30 a.m. – 12:36 p.m.

Hybrid - Webex and MCIT building

Welcome and Announcements

Councilmembers Present

Alex Abraha, Linda Bixby, Lolita Davis Carter, Nikki Farago, Debbie Goettel, KiloMarie Granda, Stacy Hennen, Noel Jagolino, Rae Ann Keeler-Aus, Joan Lee, Rena Moran, Shaneen Moore, Damir Utrzan, Lynne Penke Valdes, Aaron Wittnebel

Performance Management Team Present

Debra Anthony, Olufemi Fajolu, Carrie Kreuger, Othman Zaimi

Guests Present

Jesse Winsell (Hennepin County), Matt Freeman (MACSSA), Stevenson Morgan (Ramsey County)

Council members introduced themselves, talked about what they enjoyed most during the summer.

Approval of May 25th Minutes

- Commissioner Moran moved to approve the minutes; Lolita Davis Carter seconded. Minutes approved through roll-call vote.

Discussion and Input from Council

Extenuating Circumstance Claims Recommendations

- Aaron moved to adopt the recommendations of EC Claim Workgroup; Lolita Carter Davis seconded the motion.
 - Discussion:
 - Carrie briefed council on the measures under consideration, the EC claim process, and the history of the EC Claim Workgroup.
 - Carrie provided a brief overview of the county EC claims recommended for approval by the EC workgroup as well as those recommended for denial.
 - The Council discussed the measures and how the thresholds were set.
 - Council's discussion was largely centered on seeking clarifications of measure definitions and the EC Workgroup's decision-making process.
 - The workgroup spends a lot of time discussing the EC Claims and asking questions of subject-matter experts to arrive at their decisions.
 - The goal of a PIP is to work with counties to improve performance. The PIP is not intended to serve as a punitive instrument.

- Othman conducted a roll-call vote to approve the motion to adopt the EC Claims Workgroup recommendations, the motion carried.
- The council discussed Beltrami's EC Claim and the updated information regarding cases delayed by the DHS approval process.
 - Rae Ann moved to recommend the EC claim be approved. The motion was seconded by Stacy. In a roll call vote, the motion carried with one abstention.
- Aaron suggested future meeting agendas should reflect the need for motion before discussion.

Suspension of Child Support Paid Measure for 2024

- Carrie provided historical background on why the team is proposing suspending the PIP requirement for the Child Support Paid measure for an additional year.
 - Performance on the measure declined statewide; 37 counties had performance that was below the threshold.
 - In 2022, the Council approved a suspension of PIPs while the team pursued a systemic investigation of the performance decline.
 - The team has formed a workgroup consisting of representatives from Performance Management, the DHS Child Support Division and county partners. The workgroup has collected data about barriers and strategies for improvement and are continuing to work on synthesis of the information.
 - The work is ongoing, and the workgroup needs more time to complete it.
- Council discussed the proposal and sought clarifications on barriers being found by the workgroup. These include:
 - Staff turnover
 - Training time needed to fully train new hires
 - Technology challenges
 - Antiquated systems
- Shaneen provided some context to discussion.
 - Legislature approved money for systems upgrade.
 - COVID might have played a role but there are other issues.
 - Division is working on focusing on specialization and uniqueness of each county.
- Council's response to proposal and Shaneen's comments were positive with some guidance.
 - Process should be more transparent.
 - There is a need for a wholistic approach.
- Linda Bixby moved to adopt the proposal; Lolita Carter Davis seconded. Othman conducted a roll-call vote and the motion carried.

2023-2027 DHS Strategic Plan Presentation by Liz Scherber

- Liz Scherber presented the DHS Strategic Plan: <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7705EA-ENG>.
- The Council discussed the plan and asked about how the strategic plan fits into the DHS split.

- There was further discussion of the work taking place with the DHS transition and how that change will affect county performance on measures. As well as the need for county involvement and meaningful measures.
- Liz and Nikki assured council that their suggestions will be considered as conversations proceed and that focus would always be on the people of Minnesota.

Update on 2023 Performance Team Projects

- Carrie shared the Performance Management project dashboard.
- Debra presented the equity partnership update and the legislative proposal to council.
 - The goals of the legislative proposal include:
 - Improve the lives of those impacted by disparities
 - Eliminate disparities
 - Increase counties' capacity for equity
 - Creation of Minnesota's blueprint for equity
 - Creation of DEI assessment
 - A community engagement guide was created, and plans are in progress to expand the guide to counties.
 - Equity partnership retreat will take place on September 20.
 - The council discussed the ongoing work and provided positive feedback.
- Carrie provided information on the child support barrier project.
 - Workgroup has attended regional meetings to solicit feedback from Child Support workers across the state about what is working and what is not working.
 - Various ideas gathered have been synthesized, but that synthesis has not been finalized and the group is working to sort ideas by practicality.

Plan for Performance Council Strategic Planning Sessions

- Othman presented an overview of the planned direction setting session taking place before our December meeting.
- Council contributed potential topics of discussion for the direction setting sessions.
- Potential format for the session was also discussed. Council settled on an in-person format which could be either full or half day.
- Council also suggested potential speakers for the session.
- Othman to continue to engage council members to fine tune the topics and speakers' list.

Next Steps and Action Items

- Carrie informed council that legislative report was no longer required. The team is still planning to prepare a more concise annual report for the council, counties and other interested parties.
- Carrie also shared that half the council members' terms will end in December. The team will begin the process to assess interest in renewing terms and recruiting new members to fill vacancies.
- Next meeting: December 1, 2023

Minutes: Human Services Performance Council Meeting

December 1, 2023

9:30 a.m. – Noon

WebEx Call / Hybrid Meeting – MCIT Building

Attendance

- Council members: Alex Abraha, Linda Bixby, Lolita Davis Carter, Nikki Farago, Debbie Goettel, KiloMarie Granda, Noel Jagolino, Rae Ann Keeler-Aus, Joan Lee, Shaneen Moore, Rod Peterson, Eric Ratzman, Damir Urtzan, Lynne Valdes, Aaron Witnebel
- HSPM staff: Debra Anthony, Olufemi Fajolu, Carrie Krueger, Charity Mack, Beryl Palmer, Othman Zaimi
- Guests: Matt Freeman (MACSSA), Jesse Winsell (Hennepin County)

Welcome and Announcements

- Council members, staff and guests introduced themselves and shared their favorite non-essential item in their house or office.
- Deputy Commissioner Farago introduced Carrie Krueger in her new role as deputy director since Gary's departure.

Approval of August 25th Minutes

- Debbie Goettel motioned to approve the August minutes, seconded by Rod Peterson.
- Othman Zaimi conducted a roll call vote. Motion carried.

Overview of Child Support Performance Report

- Carrie Krueger provided an update on the Child Support measures reported to counties last month. The Adult Protection measure was postponed due to internal data management changes. The Adult Protection data will be included in the April 2024 report.
- County performance for Child Support orders established and paternity established has declined with more counties below the threshold than typical, while the child support paid measure has seen some improvement since last year. PIPs for child support paid were suspended for an additional year.
- There was discussion on Mahnommen County's performance and the technical assistance provided to assist Mahmomen County's improvement efforts. The Council discussed some of the barriers the county is experiencing as well as strategies and resources that may help improvement efforts.

- Discussed the need for a more holistic approach to Child Support to help connect parents with the resources they need. Shaneen Moore shared that DHS applied for an advancing equity federal grant and were awarded about 4 million to work on a demonstration project with other states to look at how BIPOC people are experiencing the system and the impacts it is having. Shaneen would be willing to come back to talk to the Council about that work in the future.

Extenuating Circumstances Claims Review

- Carrie Krueger gave an overview of EC Claims process, workgroup discussion, and recommendations for Extenuating Circumstance review process. The EC Workgroup met on November 29, 2023 to discuss claims from Hennepin and Stearns counties.
- Carrie provided an overview of each submitted EC Claim
 - Hennepin County (EC Claims packet p. 6) - Recommendation: Approve
 - Rationale: Medical Assistance Only (MAO) cases cannot be closed and impact their performance. They clearly documented the challenges associated with these cases and provided data to show that without them they would be above the performance threshold. Hennepin's similar claim was approved last year.
 - Stearns County - (EC Claims packet p. 14) - Recommendation: Deny
 - Rationale: Although the workgroup was empathetic to Stearns County and their claim was very similar to Hennepin's, they are on year 3 of a Performance Improvement Plan and statute does not allow for closing a PIP due to an extenuating circumstance. In the spirit of continuous improvement, we do have an opportunity to revise statute to account for this type of situation in the future.
- Carrie also highlighted barriers/themes cited in the claims.
 - How policy decisions in one program impact performance in another.
 - Systemic issue related to data system and not being able to close child support cases until the medical assistance is resolved.
- Debbie Goettel motioned to accept the recommendations, Noel Jagolino seconded. A roll call vote was held, and the motion carried.

Extenuating Circumstances Claim Workgroup Changes Proposal

- Due to time constraints, this discussion was tabled until the Feb 2024 meeting.

DHS Transition Planning Team Presentation

- Jane Hardwick, Planning Director and County Lead, DCYF Implementation Office, MMB shared information on the statute that established the new Department of Children, Youth and Families. The underlying premise is to focus on children, youth and families in state government, elevating them in policy and budget decisions.
- DCYF will be a cabinet level agency focusing on this population, with a whole family focus. This is a national trend across the country. Core programs proposed to move to the new

agency include: child care and early learning programs, child support, child safety and permanency, economic support and food assistance programs, youth opportunity and older youth investments. The agency is scheduled to be fully staffed and functional by July of 2025.

- Jane asked for feedback on engagement efforts and how the Council would like to stay informed.

Update on Child Protection and Performance Management

- Nikki Farago gave an update on the recent articles that have come out about our child protection system, particularly child deaths due to maltreatment. Child safety is paramount, and family preservation is important. These kinds of stories are to be expected and are also very difficult.
- Carrie Krueger talked about the Human Services Performance Management System and the information provided to the reporter. They wanted the letters provided to counties and Performance Improvement Plans provided to us. There was mention in an article of the potential for fiscal penalties.
- Rather than implementing fiscal penalties, the performance management team has been leaning into collaboration with counties, program areas and technical assistance.
- Nikki also noted that since 2014 and 2015, the state has incorporated collaborative safety.

HSPM Team Projects Updates

- Charity Mack provided an update on the child support paid improvement project. HSPM collaborated with the Child Support Division and counties, developed a planning team, and gathered information from across the state regarding the barriers and potential ideas for improvement. The team is currently working to finalize best practices for counties as well as commitments by DHS to share in a report that will be distributed.

Transitioning the Council into a new year

- Othman Zaimi recognized and thanked outgoing members: Michelle Ness, Ashley Reisenaur, Shaneen Moore and Linda Bixby. He also briefly discussed the process of recruiting/renewing members.
- The next meeting will be in February. It will be a refresher for some and onboarding for new members, focused on what the council does as well as setting some strategic goals. We want to do it in person if possible, with a slightly longer timeframe.
- Meeting adjourned at 12:03pm

2024 meeting dates:

- Feb. 23, 2024 (4th Friday)
- May 17, 2024 (3rd Friday)
- Aug. 16, 2024 (3rd Friday)
- Friday, Nov. 22, 2024 (4th Friday)