



Board Meeting Minutes

*Connect for Health Colorado Meeting Room
East Tower, Suite 1025
3773 Cherry Creek N Dr., Denver, CO 80209
May 6, 2013
2:00 PM – 3:50 PM*

Board members present: Richard Betts (phone), Susan Birch, Steve ErkenBrack (phone), Mike Fallon, Eric Grossman (phone), Gretchen Hammer, Kevin Patterson (phone), Robert Ruiz-Moss (phone), Jim Riesberg, Arnold Salazar, and Nathan Wilkes.

Staff present: Camisha Bailey, Cammie Blais, Adela Flores-Brennan, Patty Fontneau, Caren Henderson, Lindy Hinman, Christa McClure, Myung Oak Kim, Gary Schneider, Heather Taber, Laura Villanueva, and Adele Work.

Approximately 25 people attended the meeting in person and additional people joined by phone.

I. Welcome & Introductions

There were no changes made to the agenda.

II. Exchange Development and Operations

1. Report on Comments on HHS Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM): Standards for Navigators and Non-Navigator Assistance Personnel

i. Recommendation from Rules & Regulations Committee

Adela Flores-Brennan walked through the [proposed comments](#) to HHS that captured the feedback from the recently held Rules and Regulations Review Committee Meeting.

Gretchen Hammer asked for comments from the Rules and Regulations Review Committee members. Steve ErkenBrack concurred with Adela's presentation and highlighted the provisions on the second page that he felt were very important.

Arnold Salazar moved to approve the Connect for Health Colorado staff recommendations for the Comments on Standards for Navigators and Non-Navigator Assistance Personnel. Steve ErkenBrack seconded the motion.

No further Board discussion.

ii. Public comment

No public comment.

iii. Vote

Vote: The motion was unanimously approved. There were 8 voting members present.

2. Level 2 Grant

i. Presentation

Gretchen Hammer introduced the [draft](#) of the Level 2 Grant and asked the Board for suggestions on how they would like to structure the discussion. Arnold Salazar suggested the Board go through each of the sections one at a time and see if there were any questions for staff.

As there were no questions around the Project Abstract, Gretchen gave a brief outline of the Project Narrative. Section A under the Narrative provided a historic look back at the deliverables from both the first and second Level 1 Grant, as required under the Level 2 Grant Guidelines. Under the Program Integration portion, Arnold Salazar asked if the federal government could ask for more interoperability between Connect for Health Colorado and other public programs. Patty Fontneau replied that Connect for Health Colorado meets all federal requirements and has full federal support. Gretchen concluded the discussion on Section A by reminding the Board that most of the information under this section had already been reported to the federal government as required under the Blueprint submission.

Commissioner Riesberg commented that he would like the Responsible Party section under the Work Plan to expand to also list state partners. Patty Fontneau replied that staff would look to add both state partners and the appropriate third party vendor support.

Commissioner Riesberg pointed out a correction to a header on page 38.

Sue Birch asked how much flexibility there would be among the line items and sections. Patty Fontneau replied that there is some flexibility among the line items that fall within the same categories in the budget. Beyond that, additional approvals would be needed to move funds between categories.

Arnold Salazar asked if the grant was for as much federal funding as was possible. Patty Fontneau replied that staff identified what Connect for Health Colorado is trying to accomplish and build, and from there scheduled for the money needed to support these goals and objectives. Connect for Health Colorado could ask for more or less money, but staff did its best to establish what was needed to ensure success and ask for the actual amount needed. Arnold expressed concern that Connect for Health Colorado is planning for the unknown and stated his opinion that Connect for Health Colorado should try to obtain as much federal support as possible.

Gretchen Hammer reminded the Board that in the past, grant requests needed to cover all operational expenses. As Connect for Health Colorado moves into a period where revenue will be part of its operations, it will have another source of income to draw on in order to be successful.

Richard Betts agreed with Arnold and stated his belief that Connect for Health Colorado should ask for enough federal money to ensure that staff is able to accomplish everything needed in the first 18 months. He indicated that the primary reason new businesses fail is a lack of capitalization.

Sue Birch also agreed that with so many uncertainties ahead, Connect for Health Colorado should take precaution to ensure it does end up in a position with a shortage of funds.

Mike Fallon expressed his disagreement of asking for federal funds. He commented that just because funds are available doesn't mean that we should ask for them. He also commented that extra federal grant money would not be returned and that new purposes would be found. He stated his opinion that the overall ask was too high.

Mike Fallon also expressed his disagreement with shifting expenses to the federal tax payer rather than having them come out of the operating revenue of a successful business. Connect for Health Colorado had a good business plan in place where it could afford things on its own success, but now is looking to have the Federal Government fund some of the future development.

Patty Fontneau walked through the budget document and also focused on the additional requests. She also reminded the Board that many of these items would require additional Board approval to draw against the federal grant dollars for these improvements.

Eric Grossman asked if there was any precedent for Level 2 Grant approval to look at. Patty Fontneau replied that other Level 2 Grants have been approved for different states. The average approval amount was \$163 million. The median amount was \$123 million. Connect for Health Colorado is at \$125 million. When compared to similarly sized states, both Washington and Maryland had Level 2 Grants approved without reduction at \$127 million and \$123 million respectively.

Eric Grossman stated his opinion that staff has worked to make fiscally responsible recommendations to the Board. Given that there seems to be little risk when compared to other state Exchanges and their Level 2 Grant ask, the Board should not diverge from the proposed numbers.

Arnold Salazar stated that Connect for Health Colorado has the opportunity to capitalize where it would not have to risk anything. In his opinion, it would be in Connect for Health Colorado's best interest to have extra funds in case something unforeseen does occur. Since there is a process in place to draw against the grant award, there will be opportunity to leave excess funds unused. Sue Birch agreed with Arnold's statements and expressed her belief that Connect for Health Colorado could be prudent in how it draws against the grant.

Steve ErkenBrack expressed his belief that looking at the costs over time is a good way to approach the grant request, but echoed Arnold's statement that it is all unknown. Patty Fontneau replied that staff did its modeling on low, mid, and high enrollment estimates. Connect for Health Colorado will be self-sustaining on the low estimates.

Arnold Salazar asked for discussion on the Assistance Network as there seemed to be confusion as evidenced by the consumer [letters](#) to the Board. Patty Fontneau clarified that while Connect for Health Colorado did cut back on the federal grant ask, they do anticipate other revenue streams to support the program.

Arnold Salazar asked why Connect for Health Colorado would risk underfunding the Assistance Network. He expressed concern that funding may be underestimated, and that it would be prudent to ask for additional federal funding. Mike Fallon countered with a comment that no one knows what fully funded will be. Mike went on to say that Connect for Health Colorado should push people towards using the most cost effective ways of enrolling, such as online or through the call center.

Richard Betts also voiced his concern about underfunding the Assistance Network. He believes the most important challenge ahead is making sure the uninsured obtain coverage and expressed his opinion that this is the area that Connect for Health Colorado will be judged on and deemed a success or failure.

Steve ErkenBrack expressed his appreciation for the projections and echoed the previous comments that no one knows what lies ahead as there is no history on which to project on. He also commented that Connect for Health Colorado should error on the side of being able to fund the Assistance Network more robustly from federal funds if needed, and that letters from consumers reflect this concern.

Gretchen Hammer asked the Board how they would like to proceed and laid out their options to approve the grant as presented, amend the grant and approve, or postpone formal Board action until after the conversation with the Legislative Implementation Review Committee (LIRC).

Arnold Salazar replied that he did not think the Board should start taking apart the work the Connect for Health Colorado staff has already completed by making line item recommendations. He believed the Board should approve the grant and give guidance to staff on how to fine-tune before submission. Mike Fallon continued to express his concern on the size of the grant.

Steve ErkenBrack disagreed that the Board should not ask staff to change items. Steve acknowledged the public feedback and thought it appropriate to direct staff to revisit the projected Assistance Network enrollment numbers. He recognized the time and effort the staff put into the numbers, but expressed his opinion that the Board should revisit again at the end of the week.

Rob Ruiz-Moss stated that the Board had already discussed and reviewed the top three budget items. He would like to move the discussion along to the LIRC.

Commissioner Riesberg commented that he believes the Connect for Health Colorado staff has worked diligently to accurately present a grant that would address the actual needs of the organization. Sue Birch agreed but asked that the staff revisit the Assistance Network numbers. Nathan Wilkes added that he thought that some of the assumptions for the Assistance Network may be low and require a revisit.

Gretchen Hammer acknowledged the different feedback and commented that Connect for Health Colorado has been engaging with stakeholders throughout the process. Based on discussion, she asked the Board to confirm that staff should do additional work around the Assistance Network. Conversations would begin with the LIRC and the Board would revisit for a final vote later on in the week to ensure that staff had enough time to submit the final application. Steve ErkenBrack added that he would still like to open it up for public comment and asked that staff take both the public feedback and the LIRC feedback into the edits before the Board reconvenes for a vote.

The Board agreed with this plan. No formal motion was made. No further Board discussion.

ii. Public comment

Elizabeth Arenales, Health Program Director at the Colorado Center on Law and Policy (CCLP), asked the Board to revisit the Assistance Network request. She cited a [coalition letter](#) that had been sent to the Board and urged them to look at the midlevel projected enrollment numbers to ensure protection against the uncertainties and unknowns.

Adam Fox, Membership Coordinator at the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative (CCHI), also referenced a [letter](#) that had been sent to the Board on behalf of the ACA Implementation Fund Project Partners and Steering Committee. He related his personal experience from assisting with Medicaid and CHP+ enrollment and shared that it could take up from 1 to 3 hours to assist an individual, with additional follow-up needed. Adam emphasized the importance of understanding the need of the population the Assistance Network would serve. He concluded by encouraging the Board to further analyze the Assistance Network numbers as it could have drastic implications for the success of the Exchange.

III. Adjourn

The Board meeting adjourned at 3:50 PM.