

The Dirigo Review

DHA Connecting You to
Health Coverage
& Health Quality

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Spring 2011

Dear Members:

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the status of the Dirigo Health Agency (DHA) and our programs. Since my last communication, Governor LePage released the details of his proposed Fiscal Year 2012-2013 biennial budget. As such, we have heard from many of you with questions about the future of Dirigo. Although the DHA and its programs are not funded by the General Fund, the Legislature must give the Agency authorization to spend the money it receives.

The governor's proposed budget provides for DHA as follows:

- DHA and its programs including the DHA-Maine Quality Forum would be funded through December 31, 2013.
- The level of funding for the Agency over the 24-month period beginning July 1, 2011-June 30, 2013 would be reduced by \$35 million.

The proposed reduction in Agency funding comes primarily from a reduction in the level of the access payment, which is our main source of revenue. The access payment is now 2.14% of paid claims. Over the next biennial, the access payment drops to 1.75% then to 1.25%. Effective July 1, 2013 the access payment is 0.75% with a termination date of December 31, 2013.

The budget bill will be debated in the Legislature. The Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee of Insurance and Financial Services of the Legislature have scheduled the public hearing on Dirigo provisions in the governor's proposed budget for March 24th at 1:00pm in Room 228 of the State House. Please also note that the Dirigo Board of Trustees will be discussing the potential impact of the governor's proposed budget on the Agency and its programs. The Dirigo Board meets the second Monday of the month. Meetings start at 9:00am at the Dirigo Health Agency. Board meetings are open to the public and there is an opportunity for public comment. The next Dirigo Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 14th.

You can contact us by e-mail at:

dha@maine.gov

Or you can write us at:

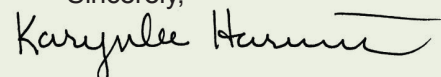
DHA

53 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0053

The Dirigo Health Agency is located at:

211 Water Street
Augusta, Maine 04330

Sincerely,



Karynlee Harrington
Executive Director

The Dirigo Review

Featured Program

The Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) – from DHA

As part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) is a federal program to help individuals who have been uninsured for at least the past six months and who have been previously diagnosed with a serious medical condition, enroll in health insurance. The Dirigo Health Agency (DHA) administers the PCIP through a contractual relationship with the US Department of Health and Human Services. The program is available now and open to individuals and self-employed of one.

The plan covers individuals who have not had medical coverage for the past six months and have one of 37 listed medical conditions. See www.dirigohealth.maine.gov for a complete listing of conditions.

Premium subsidies are available on a sliding scale to individuals with household incomes under 300% of the Federal Poverty Limit (\$32,490 for a single, \$66,150 for a family of four), and assets under \$60,000 for a household of one and under \$120,000 for a household of two or more.

The PCIP program has had positive responses from those enrolled. Here are some of the things we are hearing:

“When I learned about the pre-existing coverage that Dirigo Health was offering, I knew I absolutely had to get coverage! I seriously do not know what I would have done, had I not found this coverage and if I had not been accepted to join. This affordable health insurance has saved me from trying to figure out which medicines are more important to help keep me alive because I didn't have insurance coverage to help supplement what was needed to pay for all of them.”

– Dewayne Stoddard

“It is an awful, lonely, outcast feeling when you are afraid to go to the emergency room. I felt like I didn't belong and not worthy of the care that I needed. President Obama's new pre-existing condition plan through DirigoChoice has removed all of those fears and will probably save my life.”

– Sandy M.

DHA customer service at 1-877-892-8391 has more information on the programs and is ready to help prescreen, determine monthly cost and provide application forms. More information on the PCIP program can be found on our website: www.dirigohealth.maine.gov

DirigoChoice Update

Small business segment represents significant growth in last four months of 2010.

76% of membership growth from August 2010 through January 2011 was in the small business market segment. As of January 1, 2011 there are 590 small businesses statewide offering DirigoChoice to their employees.

The DirigoChoice small business segment now makes up 39% of the total DirigoChoice membership.

As other insurance options continue to post double-digit rate increases, more businesses and individuals are turning to DirigoChoice. Since the program opened, there has been a 53% increase in the percentage of DirigoChoice members who receive no subsidy at all.

Uninsured, Low-Income, Part-Time Workers Coverage Voucher Update

This new program, made possible by a Federal grant from HRSA, continues to grow. Employers such as restaurants, health care providers and others, find it a convenient and affordable way to cover valuable part-time employees.



**DHA now offers a
voucher brochure...**

to request one

email: dha@maine.gov

Legislative Update

There are several legislative bills that the Agency is following that, if passed, may impact the Agency. Copies of written testimony that the Agency may provide a legislative committee on the impact of a proposed bill may be found at www.dirigohealth.maine.gov

Health Care Headlines

Quality Spotlight

The Dirigo Health Agency's Maine Quality Forum (MQF) just released its Annual Report on Health Care Associated Infections in the State of Maine.

A health care associated infection (HAI) is an infection that is not present when a patient is admitted to a hospital or other health care facility (e.g., nursing homes, ambulatory care centers or emergency departments). Health care associated infections are usually caused by bacteria, but can be caused by a virus or a fungus. Oftentimes, these germs are carried on a patient's body without causing any harm. These germs can be picked up from contaminated surfaces or objects, including health care workers' hands or from a visitor carrying the germ, or by contact with an infected person.

Hospital patients are especially susceptible to infection. Their immunity may be compromised by the disease that brought them there, or by surgery or other medical procedures they receive. Health care associated infections can be devastating to patients' health and present a significant cost to the health care system. The US Department of Health and Human Services puts health care associated infections as one of the leading causes of death in the United States, estimating the human cost of HAIs in 2002 at 99,000 deaths. A 2009 analysis by the federal Center for Disease Control estimates the cost of HAIs per hospital patient ranges from \$16,000 - \$19,000, for a total national cost of \$28.4 billion - \$33.8 billion.

The Report presents data for a range of quality indicators. These include compliance with particular processes designed to reduce the incidence of infection and improve the outcomes of care of surgical patients. Also included are measures of the incidence of infection related to the use of central line catheters and the use of processes intended to reduce the risk of such infections. Indicators also measure adherence to processes designed to prevent pneumonia in patients who are on ventilators. The data show that Maine hospitals outperform the national average with regard to most of these measures.

This year's Report also includes the findings of the prevalence of MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus*) in certain populations defined by the MQF as being at high risk for colonization by the bacteria. This study was carried out at the direction of the Maine Legislature and was designed to assess prevalence of MRSA among certain patients of acute care hospitals. The study documents those populations in which a threshold prevalence level for MRSA colonization was found to exist; those populations vary from one hospital to the next. Hospitals are required to continue to conduct active surveillance for MRSA for those populations that were documented in the study to have exceeded the risk threshold and to report the findings of that surveillance to the Maine Health Data Organization. DHA-MQF will publically report the results on an ongoing basis.

A copy of the full report can be found at www.dirigohealth.maine.gov/pages/news.html

Come visit us at the Maine Restaurant and Lodging Show

The show is at the Cumberland County Civic Center in Portland. We'll be there exhibiting Dirigo Health plans at Booth 507. If you get a chance, stop by and say hi – we're looking forward to seeing you.



MAINE RESTAURANT & LODGING
EXPO 2011

Wednesday, March 16, 2011 - 10 am - 4 pm - Cumberland County Civic Center - Portland, Maine

DHA
53 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333



To find out more:
Call 1-877-892-8391, or visit www.dirigohealth.maine.gov
Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn!

Your Voice Matters:
We have entered the expanding world of social media. Now you can friend us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and connect with us and a growing number of companies on LinkedIn. We look forward to hearing what you have to say and keeping you apprised of our progress.