



DirigoChoice Member Newsletter

October 20, 2008

News

Dirigo Health Agency releases new web site.

On October 8, 2008, the Dirigo Health Agency unveiled its new web site. Designed to allow faster access to relevant information and updated with information about Harvard Pilgrim Health Care (HPHC), the new site will better serve our members and interested parties. See for yourself at <http://www.dirigohealth.maine.gov>

Q & A

What is the wording that will be on the November 4th ballot for Question 1?

Do you want to reject the parts of a new law that change the method of funding Maine's Dirigo Health Program through charging health insurance companies a fixed fee on paid claims and adding taxes to malt liquor, wine and soft drinks? Yes or No

Who should I call for help completing my renewal paperwork?

Call the Dirigo Health Agency at 1-877-892-8391. The Customer Service staff will be happy to help you.

Message from the Executive Director

Dear DirigoChoice Member:

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on a referendum that will impact DirigoChoice. Since my last Alert, LD 2247 was thoughtfully debated by the Joint Standing Committee on Insurance and Financial Services, and was passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. You can access a copy of the public law at the following link: <http://janus.state.me.us/legis> - search for LD 2247.

The new law changes the funding source for the subsidies for DirigoChoice, following the recommendations of a bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission. The revenues in the new law are raised from a tax on beer, wine, and soda, and also by replacing the current variable assessment (SOP) on insurance claims with a lower, fixed assessment.

There is now a "People's Veto" provision related to the new funding law on the November ballot as Question 1, placed by those opposed to this source of funding. If the People's Veto is unsuccessful, the new law will go into effect and DirigoChoice will be able to open the program to new enrollees.

If the Peoples Veto is successful, the old funding will remain in place, which will require the Legislature to decide how to continue to fund the program.

The challenges that lie ahead of us are all part of health care reform and working towards changing a system where the end goal is high quality, affordable health care for every Mainer.

Karynlee Harrington
Executive Director
Dirigo Health Agency

The Dirigo Health Agency's Maine Quality Forum

The Dirigo Health Agency does more than provide the DirigoChoice program. The Agency is responsible through its Maine Quality Forum (MQF) for monitoring and improving healthcare quality in Maine. Better health care is less expensive which allows for expanded access to care. MQF pursues this goal in a number of ways:

- We monitor the performance of health care providers, hospitals and professionals, through the collection of data which shows us what providers do, measured against established medical best practices.

Variations in how medical care is provided throughout Maine can be seen in the hospital discharge data set, which reflects differences in frequency of certain treatment strategies across the state. For example, there is wide variation in the use of hysterectomy (surgical removal of the uterus) for noncancerous conditions in Maine women. This and other information from the hospital data set is displayed on the MQF website (www.mainequalityforum.gov).

- We collect reports from Maine hospitals on their performance against a set of accepted measures, or best practices based on evidence. Hospitals can be compared to similar Maine hospitals on care for heart failure, heart

<p>Q & A</p> <p>Who is being accepted for new enrollment in DirigoChoice at this time?</p> <p>The DirigoChoice program is open to non subsidized small employer groups and sole proprietors. DirigoChoice is closed to subsidized and non-subsidized individuals.</p> <p>Who do I call to find out what it would cost to add a dependent to my DirigoChoice coverage?</p> <p>Call the Dirigo Health Agency at 1-877-892-8391. The Customer Service staff will be happy to help you.</p>	<p>attacks, pneumonia, infection prevention, and other areas. This information is also available on the MQF website.</p> <p>The Maine Quality Forum participates in and helps create partnerships among providers, payers, and purchasers which will improve the quality of care in Maine. Several examples of this work are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Maine Infection Control Collaborative, in which nearly all of Maine's hospitals and almost its entire infection prevention community has come together to share experiences and approaches in order to reduce the risk of healthcare associated infection. • The Critical Access Hospital Medication Safety Collaborative, in which 14 of Maine's 15 small rural hospitals have joined together to develop projects which will decrease the likelihood of medication errors. • The Maine Patient-Centered Medical Home Pilot Project. This project aims to demonstrate that stronger, more accessible primary care practices contribute to improved health and fewer avoidable complications of chronic illness. • The In a Heartbeat project is collaboration among health educators, emergency responders, physicians, and hospitals to promote best practices in the care of patients with heart attacks and to measure the performance of each of these components of our health care system. 	
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