



## NATIVE AMERICAN TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2025

Time: Start 1:00 pm End: 4:20 pm Place: Virtual meeting

**Chair:** Theresa Belanger, Medical Assistance Division (MAD) Native American Liaison

**Committee Members Call In:** Dana Flannery MAD Director; Heidi Capriotti, Elisa Walker-Moran, Michal Hayes, Alanna Dancis MAD Deputy Directors; Keenan Ryan, Alysia Beltran MAD; Nick Boukas, Annabelle Martinez BHSD; Janet Johnson DOH; Amanda Veracka MAD; Valyn Candelaria San Felipe Pueblo; Michelle Tafoya Santa Clara Pueblo, Emily Haozous Ft. Sill Apache; Ezra Bayles Taos Pueblo; Lena Gachupin, Anthony Yepa Santo Domingo Pueblo; Leonard Montoya Ohkay Owingeh; Randall Morgan, Antoinette Bird AAIHS; Michele Morris Navajo Nation.

**Guest speakers:** Turquoise Care MCOs – Nancy Smith Leslie, Bonnie Vallo, Jessica Chavez, Jessica Urioste, Felicity King BCBS; Maya Stefanovic, Shelly Begay, Drew Peterson, Mellisa Logg UHC; Scott Atole, Gabriel Parra, Freda Begay PHP; Shari Roanhorse-Aguilar Molina.

**Guest Speaker –** Maggie Drew/Madhu Gupta Medicaid Innovation Collaborative (MIC)

DISCUSSION ITEM	OUTCOME	FOLLOW-UP ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON/ DEPARTMENT	EXPECTED OR REQUIRED COMPLETION DATE
I. Invocation/Introductions	Leonard Montoya from Ohkay Owingeh provided the invocation. All HCA/MAD staff, MCO reps, guest speakers, ISD, and NATAC reps introduced themselves.	None	All	N/A
II. Review of the 12/16/2024 minutes	One small change was made to December 2024 minutes.	Completed	All	N/A
III. Introduction of MCOs to NATAC <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Molina Health Care</li><li>BCBSNM</li><li>UnitedHealthcare</li><li>Presbyterian</li></ul>	Request was made by NATAC to get an updated list of the MCO staff, Tribal liaisons and claims department contacts. Theresa will update and send it to NATAC. Hi level overview from the Turquoise Care MCOs & tribal programs to improve health disparities: <b>BCBSNM</b> highlighted the work they are doing with Tribes. Maternal and Child health grant to GIMC, Rehoboth, 4 Corners detox, food box initiative; Mescalero Apache Tribe grant, Laguna feast mobile van, grant to Gallup. <b>Molina</b> discussed traditional & holistic healing for all members; Activities Bucks to help families with club membership and sports equipment; home meals for new & expecting moms, health center located in Gallup at Rio West Mall. <b>Presbyterian</b> talked about their new parent/well baby program, sports physicals, enhanced services for children in state custody,	List was compiled and send to NATAC 5/2025	Theresa/Dana	Completed

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	<p><b>UnitedHealthcare</b> mentioned <b>easy access</b> transportation benefit, which includes allowing up to 4 extended family members to attend appointments: scholarship opportunities for Tribal colleges, NTU \$35,000 scholarship fund.</p> <p><b>Value Based Payment Strategies:</b></p> <p>All 4 MCOs offer different levels of Value Based Payment Strategies. The MCOs use them for better outcomes for patients. Some MCOs work with First Nations Health Source in Albuquerque as a model. Keep in mind the sensitivity around data sharing with Tribal providers, cultural considerations when considering outcomes, value-based care, and quality outcomes.</p> <p><b>Role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in MCO business operations:</b></p> <p>One M/CO responded that AI has not been operationalized in their business plan. No other responses were given.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> What percentage of NA in the Pueblos do you serve? How often do you go out to Pueblos to meet with members?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> MCOs provided the enrollment numbers of each of their NA enrollment. Many tribes invite MCOs to attend health fairs. Each MCO also offers Native American Advisory Board (NAAB) meetings in Tribal communities 4 times per year. MCOs are very visible in Tribal communities. MCO Provider Operations also goes out in the Tribal communities.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Could MCOs post their Value-Added Services (VAS)? Many people don't know what the VAS. How can we get the list of VAS out to their members? What percent of NA members are using the VAS? NATAC is asking for the main contact for claims billing for Tribes and IHS for each MCOs.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> How many Native Americans are using VAS that the MCOs offer?</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> I want to make sure the MCOs are following the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) in caring for our Native American patients. I am wondering how data breaches, anti-trust settlements, downgrading of MCOs and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is involved in providing services to our Native American patients. How is the President's Executive Order going to impact coverage? I am concerned with the competition between MCOs for our patients.</p>	Theresa will get the numbers of VAS utilization and the list of VAS for the next NATAC	Theresa	Next NATAC
IV. Medicaid Innovation Collaborative (MIC)	Maggie Drew/Madhu Gupta – Medicaid Innovation Collaborative. Improving care for underserved communities. A non-profit impact	Completed	N/A	N/A

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	<p>investment firm focused on serving low-income communities. 3 key phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Define and Discover</b> the problems. Identify and assess companies that support goals that are identified.</li> <li>• <b>Source and Select</b> – Seek input from Medicaid beneficiaries and communities.</li> <li>• <b>Connect and Catalyze</b> – Provide an event that goes over the best solution to address the problems.</li> </ul> <p><b>Comment:</b> Tribal communities don't always have access to fresh food. The closest stores are gas stations with fast food or packaged food. We have to drive long distances for healthy food. Food insecurity is a problem even in larger communities where there are large NA populations. Native Americans prefer to go to Native American programs for their needs not the local food bank. Native people also want to learn how to grow their own food.</p> <p>Unhoused Native Americans are not counted accurately because a lot of "couch surfing is happening" where they are staying with family or friends and aren't being counted as unhoused. Some Tribal homes are substandard for living in because they aren't built safely – people will build their own shelter, but it is not up to code and can be unsafe.</p>	<p>Contact info for MIC if you would like to share more with their group:</p> <p><a href="mailto:mdrew@acum.en.org">mdrew@acum.en.org</a></p> <p><a href="mailto:mgupta@acum.en.org">mgupta@acum.en.org</a></p>		
V. Tribal Listening Session & Traditional Healing Workgroup	<p>Theresa Belanger talked about a Tribal Listening Session with MCOs, Tribal leaders, and I/T/Us planned for fall, 2025. We will be discussing highlights, barriers, challenges to health care and how we can collaborate to make it better with key action items in place. More information will be coming soon.</p>	Update at next meeting	Theresa	Next NATAC
VI. Justice Involved – Re-entry Waiver	<p>Heidi Capriotti – update on Justice involved services for youth and adults leaving incarceration. CAA – "Consolidated Appropriations Act" – went into effect 01/01/2025. Requires Medicaid to provide targeted case management and EPDST to youth who are incarcerated under age 21 and former foster care youth up to age 26. Medicaid has been working with the CYFD Juvenile Justice and NM Corrections Department to reimburse for EPDST and case management services for youth leaving incarceration.</p> <p>We are also working with re-entry services for adults' summer of 2025 on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), 30-day supply of meds and enhanced case management.</p> <p>We have a workgroup for CAA, Corrections Dept.workgroup, county workgroup and a few others. We want to work with Tribal jails as well for child and adult services and have a Tribal workgroup.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Each Pueblo handles adults/youth incarceration differently. Many of the northern and southern Pueblos send people to Santa Fe Detention Center</p>	<p>Navajo Nation has correctional facilities, Div. of Public Safety. Michele Morris will get that information to Heidi.</p> <p>Theresa will reach out to Mescalero to see where they send people that need incarceration</p>	Heidi Capriotti	Next NATAC

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	Heidi needs contacts for Tribal correctional facilities.			
VII. Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM)	<p>Keenan Ryan Pharmacist with MAD – If your pharmacies aren't getting the OMB rate for pharmacy prescriptions, please let Keenan know. MAD is working on a Preferred Drug List (PDL) which includes FFS and Managed Care. We will have working groups and stakeholder engagement from Tribes.</p> <p>What are Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) and what do they do? These people are third-party companies that administer the pharmacy benefit for health insurances. We don't have PBMs for Tribal pharmacies. The group wants to continue conversation with Keenan Ryan. Keenan provided his email in the chat.</p>	None	Keenan Ryan, MAD Pharmacist Ryan, Keenan, HCA <a href="mailto:Keenan.Ryan@hca.nm.gov">Keenan.Ryan@hca.nm.gov</a>	September 2025 NATAC
VIII. Sun Bucks	Deferred to June 2025 NATAC.	Reschedule for June 2025	SNAP – Zachary Gonzales	Next NATAC
IX. Comments/questions/ updates	Dana addressed a question about the current status of Medicaid. "We are going to continue the path forward. In planning for the implications of potential cuts, we are looking at that and how it could affect our current services. We want to see BH, PH and Social Determinants of Health be addressed.	Next NATAC	Dana	June 2025
X. Closing, next meeting	Next meeting Monday, June 16, 2025 1-4 pm. Theresa will request that MCO Lead Tribal Liaison attend the meeting.			

Respectfully submitted:

Theresa Belanger

May 14, 2025