

Health Care Affordability Advisory Task Force Meeting #2

Date: October 16, 2025, 9:00 am – 11:30 am

Minnesota Humanities Center, Library

Meeting Summary and Key Themes

Alex Caldwell (Director, Center for Health Care Affordability) welcomed task force members and other participants attending both in person and online.

Task Force Charter:

Alex highlighted the task force's charter, describing it as a living document that explains how the group will operate. She encouraged members to suggest updates or changes as their work continues. Alex also asked members to submit nominations for two co-chair positions, which will be chosen in November.

During discussion, members suggested adding into the charter who the task force will make recommendations to, and members also asked how the charter will be used. Alex clarified that the charter is for task force members and is intended to inform the group's operations.

Task Force Roadmap:

Alex shared an overview of the roadmap, which outlines the steps from learning about the task force's goals and policy landscape to developing recommendations. The plan includes at least two rounds of identifying priorities, reviewing policy options, and creating evidence-based recommendations for the Center and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Commissioner.

Members supported the idea of multiple rounds of work but raised questions about whether the task force should consider systemwide barriers to change before focusing on specific topics. They also asked about whether the task force should establish specific targets to measure success.

Definitions, Values, and Principles:

Julie Sonier (lead facilitator, Mathematica) led a discussion on definitions, values, and principles to guide the task force's work. She shared a draft definition of "affordability" and noted that it is important to consider affordability from many perspectives, including individuals, employers, government and the health care system as a whole.

Task force members generally liked the draft but suggested replacing the term "consumers" with "people", clarifying what "sustainability" means, and distinguishing between health care

and health insurance. They also said that access to care must be considered in addition to affordability.

In small group discussions about the group's principles and values, members highlighted:

- Change is possible, and incremental progress is valuable.
- Efforts to improve affordability should include employers, not just individuals.
- Innovation is important, even when data is limited.
- Prevention and early interventions may lower long-term costs and are worth exploring even though we may not see savings immediately.
- The need to understand the roles of different types of organizations in the health care system and how they are paid.

Health Care Spending Data and Trends:

Stefan Gildemeister (Director, MDH Health Economics Program) presented data on how Minnesotans get their insurance and what drives health care spending by service and payer type.

Members asked questions to better understand key data and trends. They also discussed how other states' experiences show that recommendations must be backed by solid data and evidence to lead to real change.

Policy Framework:

Julie then led a discussion on the draft policy framework and the criteria for choosing priority policy areas. Some members suggested the task force needs a clear problem statement to help it select priorities. Others noted that the health care system is changing quickly, and that the task force's recommendations should consider factors like federal policy shifts, artificial intelligence, and climate change.

Alex closed the meeting by thanking members for their input and participation. She shared that at the next meeting in December the task force will begin discussing initial priority topics and identifying what additional information is needed to guide those choices.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR HEALTH CARE AFFORDABILITY

The Minnesota Center for Health Care Affordability at the Minnesota Department of Health is committed to making health care more affordable for all Minnesotans.

The Center identifies cost drivers, provides transparent research, and advances solutions that stabilize health care spending so that Minnesotans can afford the high-quality care they need.

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