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Universal Health Plan Governance Board

April-August 2024 update

April/May, 2024

The Universal Health Plan Governance Board was launched in April 2024, with the goal of creating a plan to deliver a simplified, equitable, publicly funded health plan that will cover all Oregonians. The board began by establishing structures, procedures and a work plan for the next two and a half years.

Senate Bill (SB) 1089, which created UHPGB, provided financing for three full-time staff members within the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) to support the board. Additionally, funding was provided for two limited-duration staff members at the Oregon Health Authority to support the board.

Morgan Cowling was hired as executive director and has been on board since mid-February. She is the administrative focal point for board activity, including compliance guidelines.

In mid-April, Cowling hired two staff members who will report to her in supporting the board:
Jenny Donovan, senior policy advisor
Katy Deluca, coordinator

The Oregon Health Authority is in the process of hiring the two positions to support the board. Until those positions are filled, support is being provided by Laurel Swerdlow and Devlin Prince, who were active in supporting the SB 770 Task Force.

At its first meeting in April, UHPGB elected board members Helen Bellanca and Warren George to serve as the board chairperson and vice chairperson, respectively. They are working closely with Cowling, UHPGB staff, and the board to plan meeting agendas and advise on the direction of the work.

At the May meeting, the board heard a presentation on the work of the Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care, which led to legislative creation of UHPGB, and began discussing strategic values and principles that the board will use to guide its policy objectives.

Two short-term board member work groups were formed at the May meeting.

- Values and Principles to be adopted by the board.
- Work Plan Development – This group discussed and created the workplan draft. The resulting plan will help direct staff and outline needs for additional expertise and contractors going forward.

June 2024

The Universal Health Plan Governance Board (UHPGB) continued the work of grounding the Board with a basic overview of single-payer health care structure and the work that has been and is currently being done to advance universal health care in other states.

Substantial progress was made in creating a work plan for the next two years. Included in that work plan are committees focused on specific work streams necessary to the creation of the universal health plan required in SB 1089.

Here is a summary of items completed or now being launched:

- Two short-term board member work groups formed at the May meeting reported back at the June board meeting.
 - The Values and Principles work group returned four overarching principles to the board for consideration. The board agreed with the direction of the work group and requested that the group accomplish additional work to define the terms of the principles. The overarching principles recommended are:
 - Maximize Health
 - Fair Distribution of Medical Resources
 - Minimize Financial Hardship on Individuals and Families from Medical Costs
 - Community Ownership and Governance
 - The Work Plan Development work group provided a timeline for the work of the board and a recommendation of committees and committee charters to identify individual committee tasks, deliverables and required expertise.
- At the June meeting of the UHPGB, the board agreed on the work plan to be used as a foundational and iterative document for the organization of the board's work. The charters will be used to begin committee recruitment and identification of expertise for which the board will need contract with outside parties.
 - The board agreed to move forward with the creation of four committees to manage six identified work streams:
 - Community Engagement
 - Community Engagement
 - Communications
 - Finance
 - Plan Design and Expenditures
 - Operations
 - Operations
 - Transitions and Implementation
 - Recruitment for the committees will begin in July

July 2024

The Universal Health Plan Governance Board (UHPGB) is continuing to concentrate on two major priorities, board foundational grounding, and planning for the work which will ultimately lead to a comprehensive financial and operating plan for the implementation of a Universal Health Plan.

Under board foundational grounding, the board drew from board member expertise for presentations on two topics.

- Cheryl Ramirez reported on the board the Behavioral Health System and its funding mechanisms.
- Michelle Glass reported on general strategies and tools for Community Engagement.

As a major step in planning, the board adopted a work plan which will help guide the board through September of 2026 when the final report is due.

To support the work plan, four committees were approved by the board, with board members assigned as follows.

Community Engagement and Communications
Michelle Glass and Amy Fellows - Co-Chairs
Warren George

Plan Design and Expenditures
Debra Diaz – Chair
Helen Bellanca, Chunhwei Chi, Cheryl Ramirez

Finance and Revenue
Warren George – Chair
Cheryl Ramirez

Operations
Bruce Goldberg – Chair
Judy Richardson, Warren George

A fifth committee, Transition, will be formed once a plan has been further developed.

The board is recruiting for volunteers to apply to serve on these committees in addition to the assigned board members. The board has extended the application deadline to August 12th to encourage more people to apply. The application can be found on the UHPGB website.

In the next month, work will continue on adopting a framework for Values and Principles, and on reviewing the SB 770 Task Force recommendations as a means to help guide next steps.

August 2024

This month the Universal Health Plan Governance Board continued to expand its knowledge of health systems and their financing structures, moved forward with the adoption of the Board's guiding values and principles, agreed upon a preliminary structure with which committees can begin to build their work once they are seated, and heard an update on committee recruitment.

UHPGB staff presented an overview of four primary health plan systems, with their supporting financing structures, and information for discussion of how the definition of single payer has evolved over time. This information was provided to give the board a foundational jumping off point from which to begin discussion of the interplay between plan design and financing structure by exploring the structures commonly used around the world.

The Values and Principles workgroup met for a final time in August. The members discussed public comment received in July that incorporated the values and principles laid out in SB 1089 into the overarching principles created by the workgroup. After discussion of this approach to structuring, the workgroup agreed to incorporate the Health Equity Commission's statement into the overarching principles, placing it in the number one position, and to accept the guidance of the public comment and integrate the SB 1089 values and principles while retaining the workgroups carefully crafted language supporting and defining the overarching principles.

The UHPGB voted unanimously to adopt the recommendations of the workgroup. The values and principles document will be posted on the UHPGB website as a permanent foundational document of the board.

Following the adoption of the values and principles, the board engaged in robust discussion reviewing the recommendations from the Universal Health Plan Task Force, and using them as the basis for the board to develop a preliminary structure to further guide the work of the committees. Committees already have charters for their work from the board approved work plan, and this preliminary structure will further support committee work by providing more focused guidance.

Executive Director Cowling provided the board with an update on committee recruiting. The application period for the recruitment closed on August 12, 2024, with 166 applications received. The applicant pool included representation from across the state, from multiple health care and business entities, and interest spread throughout the four committees, with plan design receiving the largest amount of interest.

UHPGB staff will be reviewing each of the 166 applications and bringing recommendations to committee chairs to assist in their decisions on which applicants to bring forward for full board approval. The board will vote on committee applicants at the September board meeting and chosen applicants will be onboarded shortly thereafter. Committee meetings will begin as soon as possible after the membership has been approved, according to each committee's charter under the work plan.

Board meetings and established work group meetings are open to the public. The board encourages people to attend and take advantage of the opportunity to provide written and oral comments to the board. Meeting information and materials are available at the Universal Health Plan Governance Board [website](#). The board will continue working on strategies to encourage and include greater public engagement.

