



Division of TennCare Annual Report

TennCare Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) and
Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) | July 2026



I. Executive Summary

During the 2025–2026 reporting period, TennCare continued strengthening its commitment to operational transparency and collaborative program administration through the implementation of the Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) and Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC). Together, these advisory bodies established a structured design to elevate member experience and support continuous quality improvement across the TennCare program.

Throughout the reporting period, the BAC and MAC served complementary functions within TennCare's governance and engagement framework. The BAC elevated direct member and caregiver experiences related to healthcare access, communication barriers, transportation reliability, provider availability, and administrative complexity. The MAC provided a forum for healthcare providers, managed care organizations (MCOs), member-serving organizations, pharmacy stakeholders, BAC representatives and TennCare leadership to evaluate barriers and identify opportunities for program improvement.

II. Membership and Representation

Composition

During the inaugural recruitment cycle, TennCare received 62 applications for participation in the Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC), reflecting strong interest from TennCare members and caregivers across the state. Following the application review and selection process, 11 members were selected to serve on the Council, representing a broad cross-section of TennCare members.

The composition of the BAC reflected diversity across geography, race and ethnicity, caregiving experience, disability representation, age, and maternal health experience. Membership included representation from both rural and metropolitan communities, allowing TennCare to gather feedback from members navigating a wide range of healthcare needs, access barriers, and service delivery systems throughout Tennessee.

BAC membership included representation from several key member populations served by TennCare, including parents and caretaker relatives of minor children, pregnant and postpartum women, older adults, and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) or caregivers supporting individuals with IDD.

This representative composition strengthened TennCare's ability to gather feedback reflecting diverse member experiences and operational challenges impacting TennCare members across the state.

Recruitment and Retention

TennCare conducted statewide recruitment efforts during the inaugural BAC recruitment cycle and received 62 applications from interested TennCare members and caregivers.

Following the application review and selection process:

- 11 members accepted appointment to the BAC;
- 10 members remained active participants throughout the reporting period.

The BAC maintained a 91 percent retention rate during its inaugural year, reflecting sustained participation and strong member engagement throughout the reporting period.

The high retention rate also demonstrated the effectiveness of TennCare's engagement structure and the Council's ability to create meaningful opportunities for members to provide feedback, elevate concerns, and participate in discussions related to TennCare operations and member experience.

III. BAC: Activities and Topic Discussion

The BAC met quarterly throughout the reporting period and focused discussions on issues directly impacting TennCare members including dental access, eligibility and renewal processes, communication practices, transportation reliability, and access to preventive care.

BAC meetings were intentionally structured to support participation and meaningful dialogue. TennCare facilitated round-robin discussions and targeted prompting to generate conversations.

Key Areas of Member Feedback

Throughout the reporting period, BAC meetings focused on several key interaction points between TennCare and its members, including eligibility and renewal notices, non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT), dental services, and access to information about TennCare benefits and programs. These discussions provided members with an opportunity to share their experiences navigating TennCare services and identify opportunities for improvement.

Notices and Member Communications

TennCare specifically solicited feedback from BAC members regarding eligibility notices and other member communications, including the volume of notices received from TennCare. Members generally expressed a desire for clear, concise communication and improved coordination of notices at the household level to reduce confusion.

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)

Members shared experiences related to scheduling transportation, delayed return rides following medical appointments, reimbursement processes, and communication barriers.

Members also highlighted communication challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and complex healthcare needs. For example, non-verbal members can experience difficulty communicating with transportation providers, especially while waiting for a return ride.

Dental Services and Access to Care

Members provided feedback related to accessing dental care, including provider availability, specialty dental services, and awareness of covered dental benefits. Some members expressed difficulty taking their children to appointments due to school policies. Members also expressed interest in receiving additional information regarding available dental resources, including after-hours care options and TeleDentistry services.

Awareness of TennCare Benefits and Programs

Members identified opportunities to improve awareness of available TennCare benefits, services, and programs. For example, one member was unaware of the programs available for children with disabilities. Discussions highlighted opportunities for additional member education regarding specific services, such as transportation services, dental benefits, and specialized programs available to TennCare members and their families.

TennCare Response to Member Feedback

The member experience director continuously reviewed member feedback with program staff, identifying issues discussed and seeking program improvements where necessary.

In response to feedback regarding notices and member communications, TennCare initiated efforts to review member notices and identify opportunities to simplify messaging, reduce duplicate notices, and improve communication at the household level.

In response to transportation-related feedback, TennCare partnered with transportation vendors and managed care organizations to evaluate operational improvements, including enhancements to communication methods and accommodations for members with disabilities and complex communication needs. Ongoing discussions also focused on improving scheduling processes and reducing return transportation delays.

To address feedback related to dental access and awareness, TennCare expanded member education efforts regarding available dental benefits, provider resources, and preventive oral health services through a combination of digital outreach and community-based education strategies.

TennCare also conducted its recurring month-long dental awareness campaigns twice during the reporting period, utilizing social media to promote oral health resources, available benefits, and access to care. In addition, TennCare distributed dental education information to schools

across Tennessee to increase awareness of preventive oral health practices and available dental services for children and families.

Both TennCare and Renaissance websites provide members with access to participating provider information and 24/7 virtual dental services, allowing members to consult with a licensed dentist after hours, receive support while traveling, and schedule appointments with participating in-network providers. Renaissance also maintains a library of oral health resources, including wellness videos, lesson plans, coloring books, activity sheets, and other educational materials designed to support oral health literacy and preventive care practices.

TennCare also used member feedback to strengthen education efforts related to available benefits and programs, helping ensure members are better informed about services available to support their healthcare needs.

IV. MAC: Activities and Topic Discussion

The Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) met quarterly during the reporting period to provide stakeholder feedback and discuss TennCare policy, program operations, member experiences, provider concerns, and emerging initiatives. Meetings included updates from TennCare leadership, Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), providers, and the Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC). Committee discussions focused on improving access to care, enhancing member and provider experiences, strengthening long-term services and supports, and advancing innovative healthcare initiatives.

Key Topics Discussed

Federal and State Policy Updates

TennCare leadership provided updates regarding federal Medicaid policy changes, including provisions in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). Leadership indicated that Tennessee is expected to experience minimal eligibility impacts because the state has not expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Discussions also addressed retroactive coverage changes, directed payment provisions, and preservation of TennCare's shared savings.

The committee received updates on TennCare's shared savings, which generated approximately \$1.3 billion during its first four years. Shared savings have supported significant investments including expanded services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, behavioral health initiatives, rural healthcare investments, provider payment increases, and the Strong Families Initiative. A new pilot program was also announced to help individuals transitioning off TennCare due to increased income maintain health coverage through time-limited, premium assistance.

Budget and Program Investments

Committee members reviewed TennCare's budget priorities, including medical inflation, pharmacy expenditures, Medicare cost-sharing obligations, long-term services and supports, and Employment and Community First (ECF) CHOICES expansion. Presentations highlighted continued investments in provider rate increases, LTSS enhancements, Health Starts initiatives, and additional CHOICES program capacity.

The committee also received an overview of Tennessee's Rural Health Transformation Program, supported through federal funding to expand rural healthcare access, strengthen the workforce, modernize infrastructure, and support innovative care delivery models.

Beneficiary Experience and BAC Feedback

The Beneficiary Advisory Council provided regular updates to MAC on member experiences.

Key themes included topics focused on during BAC quarterly meetings, including member communications, transportation, access to dental services, and specialty care.

Feedback from BAC discussions was shared with MAC members and TennCare leadership to support ongoing quality improvement efforts and member-centered program enhancements.

Children's Preventive Care and EPSDT

Committee discussions focused extensively on improving Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) screening rates. TennCare reported significant improvement in screening rates since the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching the highest rates observed since 2020. Discussions identified several opportunities, including:

- Transportation challenges.
- School attendance policies affecting appointment access.
- Missed well-child visits among adolescents.
- Opportunities for expanded community partnerships.
- Successful outreach initiatives conducted by MCOs and community providers.

Members shared strategies to improve engagement and increase preventive care utilization among children and families.

Provider Access and Engagement

Provider representatives discussed workforce shortages, specialty care access, dental provider recruitment, behavioral health workforce limitations, and challenges serving rural communities.

TennCare presented several initiatives to improve the provider experience, including:

- Provider website redesign and resource modernization.
- Development of provider roadmaps, FAQs, and training materials.

- Quarterly provider town halls.
- Expanded engagement with dental and pharmacy providers.
- Implementation of a network adequacy "secret shopper" program to assess appointment availability and provider accessibility.

The committee also discussed ongoing efforts to improve provider communication and reduce administrative burden.

Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS)

Committee members received updates regarding CHOICES and ECF CHOICES programs, including:

- Expansion of available slots.
- Progress reducing waitlists.
- Workforce development initiatives.
- Training and credentialing opportunities for direct support professionals.
- Continued efforts to support individuals in home- and community-based settings.

Nursing home representatives provided updates on occupancy trends, workforce challenges, quality improvement initiatives, and concerns regarding Medicaid eligibility determination timelines and their financial impact on long-term care facilities.

Innovative Programs and Social Determinants of Health

The committee reviewed several innovative initiatives including:

- Tennessee Community Compass resource directory.
- Health Starts non-medical health barriers
- Diaper benefit program.
- Community Health Worker service expansion proposal.
- Maternal health programs.
- Telehealth expansion.
- Community outreach events focused on food insecurity, hygiene access, and preventive care.
- Reentry health screenings for justice-involved youth and former foster youth.

These efforts were discussed as strategies to address health outcomes across Tennessee communities.

V. Key Action Items

- TennCare dental leadership committed to addressing member concerns regarding dental provider access, specialist referrals, and benefit awareness.

- TennCare staff agreed to explore opportunities for improved communication regarding transportation benefits and return-trip procedures.
- Provider resource enhancements, including webpage redesigns and educational materials, will continue throughout 2026.
- Quarterly provider town halls will be expanded to support provider education and onboarding.
- TennCare will begin monitoring appointment access through the secret shopper network adequacy program.
- Follow-up discussions will continue regarding EPSDT improvement strategies, transportation barriers, and community partnerships.
- The BAC will continue examining priority member issues, including transportation access.
- TennCare and MCOs will continue collaborating on initiatives addressing workforce shortages, rural access challenges, and non-medical health barriers.

Managed Care Response Efforts

A significant operational strength during the reporting period was TennCare's coordination with the MCOs in addressing BAC feedback.

BlueCare utilized BAC feedback to inform initiatives related to transportation coordination, behavioral health access, maternal health support, culturally responsive communication, food insecurity screening, and LTSS oversight. BlueCare also focused on efforts to improve discharge coordination, transportation scheduling, and real-time tracking processes. BlueCare also expanded telehealth access, strengthened behavioral health coordination, and enhanced maternal health initiatives.

UnitedHealthcare described operational strategies focused on transportation coordination, maternal health collaboration, provider engagement, community partnerships, and social determinants of health initiatives. UnitedHealthcare highlighted collaborative initiatives involving transportation providers, maternity care coordination efforts, hospital-community partnerships, and Tennessee Community Compass referrals intended to strengthen continuity of care and improve access to services.

Wellpoint addressed concerns raised by BAC members regarding communication barriers, transportation reliability, and awareness of available benefits and services. Responses included provider directory review efforts, transportation improvements, and evaluation of family-friendly transportation accommodations.

This coordinated effort between the BAC, MAC, TennCare and MCOs created a framework that helped elevate member concerns into initiatives focused on improving member experience.

VII. Look Ahead

Building on the progress achieved during the 2025–2026 reporting period, TennCare will continue strengthening both the BAC and MAC as advisory structures. TennCare will continue refining engagement strategies, expanding accessibility supports, strengthening coordination, and increasing the use of advisory feedback to inform certain program decisions.

Appendix

BAC Member Survey 2026

Prepared from 10 member Likert-scale survey responses submitted May 26, 2026. All responses were confidential.

Executive Summary

BAC members reported a highly positive experience with the council over the past year. Across the 15 rating items, the results indicate strong member confidence in the respectful environment created by TennCare leadership, the quality of facilitation, the timeliness of meeting materials, and members' growth in understanding TennCare and advocating for their communities.

The strongest results were in meeting climate and support: leadership fostered respect, trust, and openness; materials were provided early enough for review; members felt comfortable disagreeing; facilitators ensured participation; and members reported stronger understanding and advocacy confidence.

The most actionable opportunities are related to transparency and decision-making. While results remained positive overall, respondents showed comparatively more uncertainty about how TennCare uses member feedback, why recommendations may be declined, the council's decision-making process, and the value of relationships developed through participation.

Open-ended responses emphasized practical impact. Members most often cited greater understanding of transportation benefits and referrals, broader understanding of TennCare benefits and services, clearer communication, and increased ability to help others in their communities.

Recommended Priorities

1. Close the feedback loop by showing members specific examples of how BAC input shaped TennCare actions, communications, or decisions.
2. When recommendations are not adopted, provide plain-language explanations that distinguish feasibility, policy, funding, operational, and timing constraints.
3. Review and clarify the council decision-making process, including when voting, consensus, or advisory input is used.
4. Continue practical member education on transportation, dental coverage, insurance benefits, online tools, and other high-interest topics.

Methodology and Data Notes

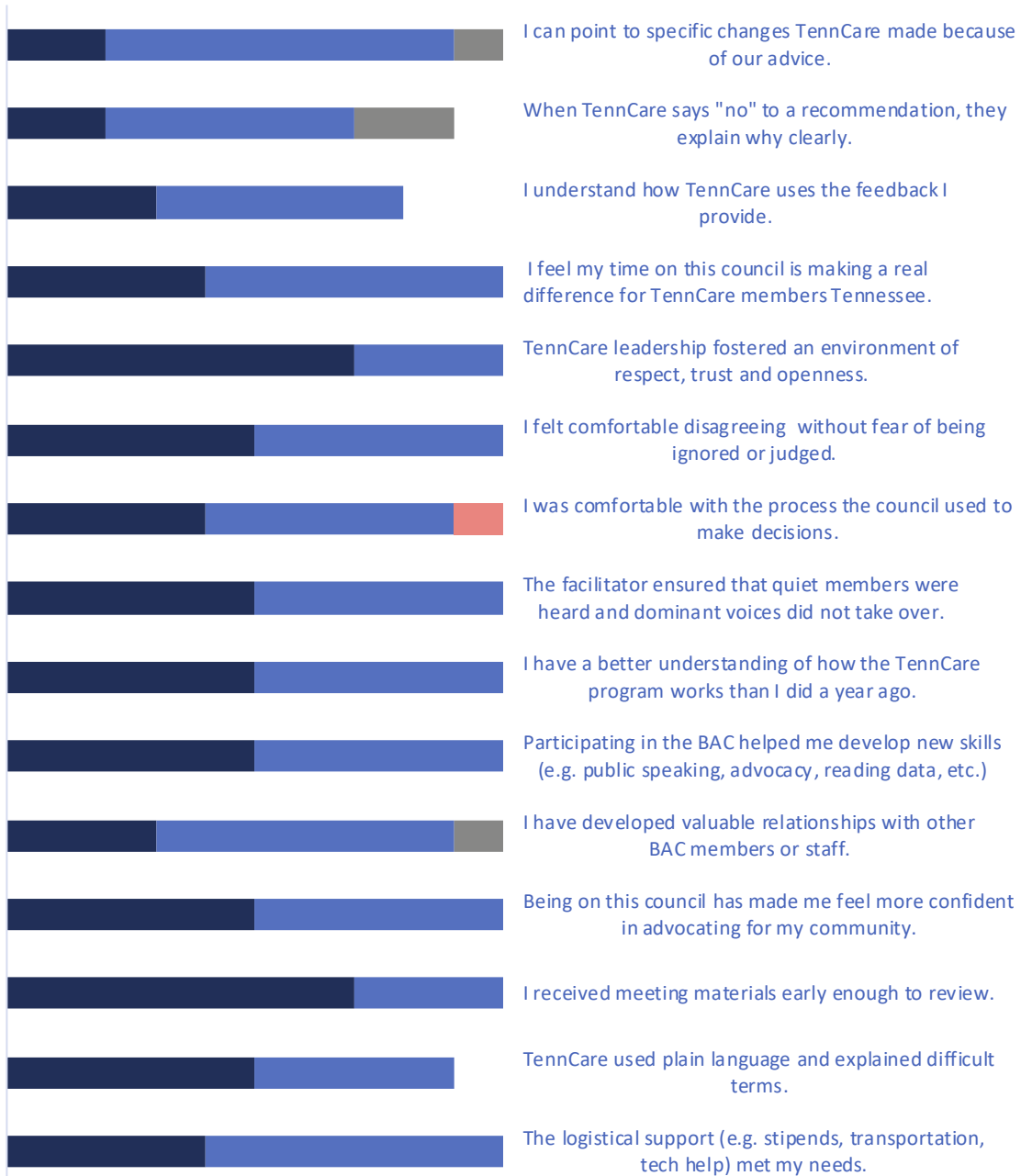
This report summarizes 10 survey responses from BAC members. Quantitative results are based on 15 Likert-scale items using a five-point agreement scale. Percentages are calculated

using the number of non-missing responses for each question. Open-ended responses were reviewed and grouped into practical themes based on recurring topics.

Because the response count is small, findings should be interpreted as directional rather than statistically representative. The analysis is most useful for identifying patterns, strengths, and areas for follow-up discussion.

Survey Responses

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Strongly Agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Disagree

Open-Ended Response Analysis

Members used open-ended questions to describe the BAC's impact. The comments focused more on what members learned, how they can use the information, and how they can help others.

The following are examples of representative comments from members:

"Knowing more about transportation and also asking the doctors more questions about the referral"

"I'm more aware of the transportation. And how it works. It also helped me to help others who may have a question to answer it."

"Making sure elders understand processes without being tech savvy...."

"I do like the fact that I'm not getting excessive mail that is repetitive in duplicate letters. I have a clear understanding about how transportation works."

Theme	Mentions	Interpretation
Transportation benefits and referrals	4	Members reported better understanding of transportation services and referral-related questions.
Plain language and accessible process	3	Members valued simpler explanations and support for those who are less comfortable with technology.
Reduced duplicate/repetitive communications	2	One response highlighted reduced repetitive mailings as a meaningful improvement.
Understanding TennCare benefits/services	2	Members cited dental coverage, insurance benefits, online services, and available resources.
Helping others/community advocacy	1	Members connected what they learned to answering questions and helping people in their communities.