



TennCare Medicaid Advisory Committee Meeting

January 13, 2026

1pm CST

Participants:

X	Attendee	X	Attendee
X	Cato Johnson, Chair, Hospital Administrator (Healthcare Administrator)	X	Deborah Murph, Executive Director of Mountain Hope (Clinical Provider)
X	Kimberly Howerton (Clinical Provider)	X	Julie Joseph, BlueCare Chief Medical Officer (Medicaid MCO)
X	Lauren Percy (Developmental Disabilities Representative)	X	Greg Cannella, WellPoint Chief Medical Officer (Medicaid MCO)
X	Jeannie Beauchamp, D.D.S. (Clinical Provider)	X	Rebecca Robinson, TennCare
X	Dana Moore, TennCare	X	Jim Guffey, TennCare
X	Christian Brown, TennCare	X	Amy Lawrence, TennCare
X	BAC Member	X	BAC Member
X	Reese Devilbiss, Notetaker		

Topics:

Number	Topic
1.	Introduction and Administrative Items
2.	Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) Meeting Updates
3.	Sector Updates – Rural Health Transformation Program
4.	2026 TennCare Budget
5.	BlueCross BlueCare Medical Overview
6.	Meeting Adjournment

Meeting Minutes

Introduction and Administrative Items

- Cato Johnson opened the meeting by wishing the group a Happy New Year and handed it off to Dana Moore for the administrative items.
- Dana reminded the group of the requirement to acknowledge any real or perceived conflicts of interest (COIs). She confirmed that all COI forms have been received and there are no new conflicts to report at this time.
- Voting commenced for the approval of the October 2025 Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) meeting minutes.
 - All attendees approved of the meeting minutes.

Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) Meeting Updates

- Dana provided an update of the January BAC meeting, which was used to discuss the TennCare dental experience from the member perspective.
- Key takeaways from the meeting include:
 - Members understood benefits for routine dental services but expressed confusion on coverage of more complex dental services like partials, dentures, and implants.
 - Members were not aware of new benefits such as TeleDentistry.
 - TennCare adults reported difficulty finding dental practices that accept TennCare, with some members feeling rushed or stigmatized during visits. The referral process was also cited as a challenge, with uncertainty about which specialists are covered with TennCare.
 - Transportation remains a significant barrier to consistent dental and medical care. Members reported lengthy wait times for return transportation (3-4 hours) after appointments and challenges navigating with car seats.
 - Members expressed that reminders via mail, text, and email are helpful communication channels.
- Dana relayed that this feedback is helpful to improve the member experience, highlighting the need for clearer messaging of covered adult dental services.
- Jeannie Beauchamp concurred with the feedback, emphasizing the need to enroll more dentists and specialists, particularly in rural areas where patients may travel for up to 1.5 hours for procedures like a root canal.
- Dana confirmed that the TennCare dental team is actively developing action plans to address these issues. The next BAC meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2026, with transportation as a key agenda item.

Sector and MCO Updates

- Cato introduced the topic of the Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program.
- Rebecca Robinson provided an update on the RHT Program.
 - The State of Tennessee submitted its application in November, an initiative led by the

Governor's office.

- The state has received non-recurring federal funding for fiscal years 2026-2030, with future funding contingent on performance outcomes.
 - The amount awarded (\$206,888,882 for Year One) is over the initial requested amount.
- The investment will allow TennCare to expand access to care for rural Tennesseans, modernize facilities and technology, support workforce development, and advance innovative care models.
- Seventeen (17) initiatives have been identified and aligned with the five Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Strategic Goals, covering areas such as preventative care, maternal health, and behavioral health. Several of these initiatives will be led by or in strong partnership with TennCare.
- Due to the “use it or lose it” nature of the funding, programs must be well-designed for rapid execution within the first year.
- Additional details can be found on the Department of Health website: [Tennessee Department of Health Rural Health Access for Tennessee's Future](#)

TennCare Budget 2026

- Christian Brown presented an overview of the 2026 budget proposal, designed to further advance the mission of improving lives through high-quality cost-effective care.
- Key Budget Drivers:
 - **Medical Inflation and Utilization:**
 - Includes the cost of utilization and changing inflation patterns.
 - **Pharmacy:**
 - Sticker prices for all categories have seen an increase across the board.
 - **Medicare Services:**
 - Allocated to cover required cost-sharing for dual-eligible (Medicare and Medicaid) individuals.
 - **Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Rural Health Clinic (RHC) Funding:**
 - Accounts for current and anticipated growth state-wide.
 - **Employment and Community First (ECF) CHOICES Crisis Population:**
 - Supports the ECF CHOICES program, which helps individuals with Intellectual and Development Disabilities (IDD) achieve and sustain independent living and employment.
 - Adjustments are also requested due to inflation to maintain access for specific services.
- Christian noted there is a proposal to include Community Health Workers as a covered service, building on a successful pilot during the Health Starts program.
- The Governor is scheduled to present the state budget in early February 2026.

BlueCross BlueCare Medical Overview

- Dr. Julie Joseph provided an overview of recent initiatives and improvements.
- The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) quality improvement



partnership for fiscal year 2026 is underway.

- All participating providers improved well-child visit rates by at least 5% in 2025.
- The Clinical Advisory Panel provides input to support better outcomes, leading to:
 - BlueCare providing coverage of the RSV vaccine for maternal health.
 - Guidance on syphilis cases and the development of member education materials for screenings.
- Member Advisory Panels allow for members and advocates to provide input on policies and procedures, leading to member enhancements such as:
 - The expansion of Teladoc, a virtual on-demand option to improve timely access to care.
 - A bill being passed which allows family members to be hired as paid caregivers.
- The TennCare Health Starts program is implementing Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) initiatives with three MCOs, focusing on the maternal population.
- A new benefit is being rolled out to provide preventative screenings for inmates under 21 and former foster care youth up to age 26 to assist with re-entry into the community.
- TennCare and the three MCOs are meeting this week for further discussion on federal guidelines for vaccine schedules.

Meeting Adjournment

- Dana announced the next MAC meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2026 and is open to the public.
- Dana requested members send her any suggested agenda topics that they have.
- Cato and Dana thanked the group for their time and participation.
- The call concluded and attendees left the call.