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*Delaware Nursing Home Residents  
Quality Assurance Commission*

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**DNHRQAC Meeting of May 20, 2025**

**9:30 a.m.**

**Virtually via Cisco Webex**

**Anchor Location: DE CLASI – Georgetown**

**20151 Office Circle**

**Georgetown, DE 19947**

**FINAL**

Commission member(s) present: Lisa Furber, DNHRQAC Chair; Cheryl Heiks; Norma Jones; Mary Peterson; Jennifer McLaughlin, OT; Kori Bingaman, RN, NHA; Chris Marques, Esquire; Senator Mantzavinos (by phone) and Brian Frazee. Brandon Williams served as Senator Mantzavinos' proxy for a portion of this meeting.

Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Patrick Smith, Esquire was not in attendance.

Commission members not in attendance: Hooshang Shanehsaz, RPH; Dr Avani Virani, MD and Representative Eric Morrison.

Ms. Peterson and Ms. Furber attended in-person @ the anchor location. The remainder of meeting participants attended virtually or by phone. A quorum of commission members was present.

Others Present: Margaret Bailey, DNHRQAC; Tiffiney Butcher, DNHRQAC; Ngozi Dom-Chima, DNHRQAC; Kevin Andrews, Public; Staci Marvell, DMMA; Judith Ramirez, LTCOP; Dave Parkinson, Lorelton; Brandon Williams, Delaware Senate; Jim McCracken, LeadingAge; Casey Robinson, Public; Jessica Nieves, Public; Paul Smiley, Gilpin Hall; Annette Moore, The Moorings @ Lewes; K Bumgamer, Public and 2 individuals by phone (not identified).

1. Call to Order

This meeting was called to order @ 10:13 am by DNHRQAC Chair, Lisa Furber.

2. Approval of the meeting minutes

Meeting minutes draft for April 15, 2025 were approved as written.

3. Discussion of

Recent Governor Appointments

Ms. Furber announced that Governor Meyers Office recently reappointed the following commission members with a 3-year term: Mary Peterson, Jennifer McLaughlin & Norma Jones. Additionally, Dr. Melissa Winters did not seek reappointment and recently began a new position in the Attorney General's Office. Ms. Furber publicly thanked Dr. Winters for her time, commitment and service relating to DNHRQAC.

Medicaid (DMMA) Eligibility Unit

Staci Marvel, Chief of Operations for DMMA Eligibility Unit, shared information relating to the Unit, which is responsible for determining the financial & medical aspects of Medicaid eligibility.

Total # of Long Term-Care (LTC) Medicaid applications in CY 24 = 4,120. Thus far in CY 25, the Division has received 2,165 LTC applications.

The average # of days it takes the Eligibility Unit to complete an application (from receipt of a completed application to the determination) = 39. The Division's processing goal is 45 days. The Federal rule states an application must be completed within 90 days.

Current # of: SNF Medicaid clients – 2,758  
ALF Medicaid clients - 175

The Division has a training team that provides outreach efforts within the community relating to Medicaid services and supports. Additionally, workshops are offered by the Division.

The Complex Case Unit assists with securing placement for challenging cases.

Eligibility Unit has the following workforce:  
62 merit financial positions – there are currently 6 vacancies  
20 nurses (medical eligibility) – no vacancies

The Eligibility Unit anticipates a significant increase in the volume of Medicaid applications in the future.

DMMA's primary focus in 2024 was to get through the challenges of the public health emergency unwinding period. Additionally, the Division utilized the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved waiver for assets test during renewal, to benefit their Medicaid members. Finally, the standard personal needs allowance was \$50 and now \$75 (individual) and \$100 to \$150 (couple). Residents may keep this amount of money monthly for personal use.

#### Delaware Healthcare Association (DHA)

Brian Frazee, DHA, President & Chief Executive Officer, provided an overview and updates relating to the Association.

DHA represents Delaware hospitals, health systems, and healthcare related organizations.

Since he began in October 2023, DHA staff has doubled in size. The Association advocates at the Federal and State level relating to healthcare.

The Association has navigated major healthcare policy issues affecting Delaware hospitals including negotiating a hospital provider tax and opposition for establishing a hospital cost review board (HB 350).

#### Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP)

Judith Ramirez, State Ombudsman, was introduced briefly. Dr. Ramirez began in her role – December 2024. Currently, LTCOP has 2 staff vacancies.

DNHRQAC hopes to have LTCOP present data relating to their work in Delaware nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

#### DNHRQAC Strategic Planning

Ms. Furber asked commission members for their opinion relating to a ½ day strategic planning session to discuss long and short-term goals.

Ms. Bingaman offered to host the event in Sussex County. Ms. Furber & Ms. Bailey will begin to identify suitable dates and move forward with planning an in-person event.

Ms. McLaughlin asked if it makes sense to conduct the satisfaction survey prior to a planning session to identify topics the commission may want to consider as a future priority. Ms. Furber mentioned that perhaps Ms. Dom-Chima may be able to pull together some data for the Commission to utilize while planning long/short term goals.

#### Volunteers

Ms. Furber stated it appears the satisfaction survey is going to be grant funded by the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) in FY 26. As a result, the Commission might need to consider volunteers to assist residents and family members with completing the satisfaction survey/questionnaire. Ms. Furber imagines the Commission may want to figure out the criteria for volunteer services (i.e.: background checks, etc).

Ms. Dom-Chima is in the process of putting together a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Delaware relating to use of volunteers for a resident, family and staff satisfaction survey. More information will be forthcoming about this project.

#### 4. Old Business/New Business

#### DNHRQAC Subcommittee Updates

##### DNHRQAC Legislative/Advocacy:

Subcommittee members will be meeting next on May 28, 2025 @ 11:00 am. There are several items this group has been discussing including the background check center and Senate Bill (SB) 155, regarding changes to DNHRQAC statute.

Ms. Peterson also mentioned this subcommittee should also look at SB 67 w/Senate Amendment (SA)1 about background checks and service letters. A motion was raised, seconded and passed by DNHRQAC members to write to DHCQ Director, DHSS Cabinet Secretary and legislators about concerns relating to possible changes for service letters. One member abstained from voting.

##### Eagle's Law Waiver Application:

Ms. Furber advised members that since the January 1, 2025 waiver application implementation date, there have not been any applications submitted. DNHRQAC Waiver Application Decision Subcommittee has a weekly standing meeting scheduled, posted on the Delaware Public Meeting Calendar, to review applications and provide feedback on application's disposition to the full Commission. The waiver application decision disposition meetings are cancelled, at least 2 days in advance, if there are no applications in process.

##### DNHRQAC Hiring Committee:

Staff members, Tiffiney Butcher and Ngozi Dom-Chima started with DNHRQAC on May 5, 2025. Both individuals introduced themselves during the meeting and were welcomed by commission members.

#### 5. Public Comment

Mr. Jim McCracken, LeadingAge, provided public comment related to concerns about the service letter. He also shared his opinion about language that appears in SB 155, stating he believes it's "lobbying language".

Mr. Paul Smiley, Gilpin Hall, shared history about service letters, impact on human resources staff and the financial penalty to employers if they do not comply. He further stressed the importance of the service letters function within the long-term care industry.

Mr. Dave Parkinson, Lorelton, stated "I have concern about by-passing legislation like last year's bills and believe it's a common theme that is worry some."

6. Next DNHRQAC Meeting – June 17, 2025 @ 9:30 am. This meeting will be conducted via virtual platform and in-person anchor location. Meeting invite and details will be forwarded to commission members & available on the Delaware Public Meeting Calendar.

#### 8. Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 11:33 am.

Attachments: DNHRQAC Meeting of 5/20/2025 – meeting agenda  
DNHRQAC Meeting of 4/15/2025 – minutes draft