



TennCare Health Plan Meeting Highlights Report

February 22, 2024



Meeting Objectives

As Tennessee's designated External Quality Review Organization (EQRO), Qsource facilitates health plan meetings to benefit TennCare and its managed care contractors (MCCs). These triannual meetings provide opportunities for learning from guest subject matter experts who can share success stories and best practices, for earning nursing and the Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ) continuing education units (CEUs), and for networking to stay abreast of pertinent topics to Medicaid and managed care. Objectives for February attendees were the following:

- ◆ Discuss a high-level overview of EQR Protocol 4, Validation of Network Adequacy (VNA) and the new steps that will be taken to evaluate the activities.
- ◆ Review the steps taken within the Performance Measure Validation (PMV) Protocol and the Annual Network Adequacy (ANA) Protocol.
- ◆ Discuss the challenges facing oral health professionals and the social determinants of health that impact their patients.
- ◆ Receive an update about TennCare's renewals after the public health emergency was officially ended, the shared savings initiative, and their closed loop referral system.
- ◆ Understand the history, mission, and vision of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, and its role in ensuring policies and programs of the state effectively promote and protect the health and well-being of children and youth.

While our shared goal has always been to improve the quality of care and services provided to TennCare members, this program was informed by your feedback and suggestions, and carefully designed by Qsource and TennCare to cover topics relevant to the requirements, needs and concerns of your health plan. It is our hope that you will find the presentations both helpful and informative when preparing procedures and crafting policies. This document contains highlights for a quick refresher on the day's speakers and topics.

2024 Performance Measure Validation, Network Adequacy Validation/Annual Network Adequacy: An Overview of Protocols, Changes, and Impact

Elisabeth Hunt, MHC, CHCA

Leslie Arendell, MS

Natalie Honeycutt, MHA/Ed, BHSA, RN

Health Services Advisory Group, Inc.

- ◆ The steps taken in the evaluation of the Performance Measure Validation (PMV) protocol were reviewed. The protocol is broken down into three segments for each MCO and PBM that is being evaluated:
 - Pre-Virtual Audit Review,
 - Virtual Audit Review, and
 - Post-Virtual Audit Review.
- ◆ The steps taken in the evaluation of the Annual Network Adequacy (ANA) evaluations were reviewed. The ANA evaluation reviews availability and accessibility and benefit delivery in terms of both member accessibility and provider information.
- ◆ The Validation of Network Adequacy (VNA), or the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Protocol 4, was officially published in February 2023. Throughout 2023, states worked with their Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) to plan and implement routines to fulfill this protocol. This year, 2024, will be the first year where VNA will be evaluated and added to the annual technical report.
- ◆ While ANA and VNA may appear similar at first glance, and some aspects of data will build off each other, they are separate protocols and evaluate different aspects of network adequacy. There are six activities within VNA:
 - Activity 1: Defining scope of validation;
 - Activity 2: Identify data sources for validation;
 - Activity 3: Review information systems;
 - Activity 4: Validate network adequacy monitoring data, methods, and results;
 - Activity 5: Communicate preliminary findings to MCOs; and
 - Activity 6: Submit findings to state.

Improving Oral Health Equity and Access

Dr. Rhonda Switzer-Nadasdi

DMD, Interfaith Dental

- ◆ Nationwide, data shows that the lower a person's income, the higher the likelihood of having oral health symptoms and/or disease. 1 in 5 children ages 6-11 and 1 in 4 adults

have untreated cavities. Social determinants of health also play a role in disparities in oral health, just as they do in other medical settings.

- ◆ Tennessee is currently ranked 38th in the United States in terms of poor oral health, with only 59.9% of people ages 18+ having visited the dentist in the past year.
- ◆ Poor oral health may impact a person’s social standing. The front six teeth are known as “social teeth”; if or when these teeth are damaged or lost, a person can experience less confidence, less employability, and a heightened rate of bullying. Oral health also impacts more than just the mouth. Gum and periodontal disease from untreated cavities can impact:
 - The cardiovascular system: people with severe periodontal disease have a 3.2x greater risk of cardiovascular disease;
 - Respiratory health: people who lack teeth and/or have dentures (dentures are often reservoirs for pathogens) are at a higher risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease;
 - Those with diabetes: people with diabetes are 86% more likely to have periodontal disease; this risk is bi-directional;
 - Other oral systems: connections between oral health and other bodily systems include osteoporosis, arthritis, dementia, adverse birth outcomes, oral cancer, and exacerbated mental health.
- ◆ Some steps towards making a positive impact are:
 - Better access to preventative care for underserved populations – a major struggle is that non-white patients are more likely to lack insurance, and many states do not offer dental coverage through Medicaid. Even in states that do offer dental coverage, there is a widespread lack of access to preventative care.
 - Dental and medical systems need to be integrated – dental care is isolated from other medical care despite the impact oral health has on the rest of the body.
 - Current care model – the current care model is fee-for-service, which often creates misaligned incentives, which reinforces the lack of care in more impoverished areas.
- ◆ Patient experiences need to be equitable and holistic – addressing language barriers, supporting pathways to dental careers for underrepresented populations, offering flexible office hours, and incorporating teledentistry all go a long way to meeting people where they are and allowing better access and more comfortable opportunities for more people to receive the care they need.

Improving Child Well-Being Through Data-Driven Advocacy, Education, and Collaboration

Richard Kennedy, MA

Melissa McGee, MS, MA

Kaylie Graves, MSW

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

- ◆ The commission’s main goal is to “lead systemic improvement for all children, youth, and families through data-driven advocacy, education, and collaboration.”
- ◆ The commission works in four major sectors:
 - Data and Insights: Monitors various child and youth indicators to identify trends and areas of concern and keeps up with best practices for addressing issues affecting children and youth.
 - Collaboration: Brings together various agencies and organizations throughout the state who are leading efforts to improve services for children and youth.
 - Policy Advocacy: Reviews data and outcomes of various policies related to children and youth to provide evidence-based suggestions for improvement.
 - Public Awareness: Promotes public awareness about children’s issues and advocates for community engagement in addressing these concerns.
- ◆ The four sectors are addressed through four actions:
 - Coordination through the Regional Councils on Children and Youth;
 - Administration through the groups on Youth Justice, Racial Ethnic Disparities, and Court-Appointed Special Advocates;
 - Education through resource mapping, the Resilient Tennessee Collaborative, the *State of the Child* report, and county profiles; and
 - Collaboration through the Second Look Commission, the Young Child Wellness Council, the Council on Children’s Mental Health, the Home Visiting Leadership Alliance, and the Youth Transitions Advisory Council.
- ◆ Excerpts from the *State of the Child* report:
 - 29% of students reported, within the last month, that their mental health was not good most of the time or all of the time. 42% of students reported symptoms of depression within the last 12 months, representing a 63% increase since 2011.
 - More than one in five high school students reported they had seriously considered attempting to take their life within the last twelve months; more than one in six high school students reported they had made of plan for ending their lives within the last twelve months; and nearly one in seven high school students reported they had attempted suicide within the last twelve months.
 - Of surveyed substance use and mental health treatment facilities, 52% served children up to age five, 72% served children ages 6-12, 78% served ages 13-17, and 86% served 18–25-year-olds. 35% of facilities had dedicated or

exclusively designed programs for children and adolescents with a serious emotional disturbance, and 54% did not have a crisis intervention team.

- ◆ Tennessee’s Maternal Mortality Review Commission found, in 2021, 134 women across the state died during or within a year after their pregnancy ended. This was largely driven by COVID-19.
 - 57% of pregnancy-associated deaths occurred between 43-365 days postpartum. Nearly three out of four could have been prevented with appropriate resources and interventions.
 - Women over 40 had a pregnancy-associated mortality ratio 2.75x higher than those under 30.
 - Two-thirds of deaths occurred during pregnancy through 42 days postpartum; four out of five were determined to be preventable.
 - Nearly four out of five women who died from COVID-19 were unvaccinated; 80% of COVID-19 deaths among pregnant or postpartum women were deemed to be pregnancy related.
- ◆ The Resilient Tennessee Collaborative’s mission statement is as follows: “The Collaborative leads cultural change in Tennessee so that our philosophy, policies, programs, and practices for children, youth, and young adults utilize the latest brain science to prevent and mitigate childhood adversity, promote trauma-informed systems, and build and support resilient families and communities.”