

<b>Location</b>	Zoom
<b>Time</b>	9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
<b>Attendees</b>	Employee’s Interests Representative: Joe Kendo Employee’s Interests Representative: Marilyn Watkins Employee’s Interests Representative: Samantha Grad Employer’s Interests Representative: Bob Battles Employer’s Interests Representative: Tammie Hetrick Paid Family and Medical Leave Act Ombuds: Edsonya Charles Employer’s Interests Representative: Julia Gorton Employer’s Interests Representative: Christine Brewer Employee’s Interests Representative: Maggie Humphreys
<b>Guests</b>	Trey Reckling Nick Demerice
<b>Members Absent</b>	Bob Battles Tammie Hetrick
<b>Scribe</b>	Amelia Holl

**Introductions** - Members to introduced themselves.

**Agenda:**

➤ **Operations update**

- Benefit processing – how long it’s taking in total to submit their applications, January to March 2021 (37.2 days total) August to October 2021 (32.8 days total).
- Customers who have been denied are not included in the second view of the data. It includes only customers who had approved applications and at least one approved weekly payment.
- Question for the Advisory Committee about which data is more helpful?
- Marilyn – both informative, the most important is how soon do customers get their money in their account
- What is the medium (25 days) and what are some of the outliers?
- Lisa – emphasis on time to improve applications.
- Paying in advance on qualifying events (more reasonable for people), what will that look like, 33 days is not good enough (significant barrier for low wage worker), we are going to be paying close attention to this.
- Edsonya asked how long it takes funds to show up in someone’s account. John answered that it’s about one business day added for funds to be released and then then it takes a few days for banking processes to run. Debit card payments show up quickly, direct deposit takes 3-5 days.

- Redetermination - timeline was a problem and we have been working hard to improve.
- Most Redeterminations are approved, working on data collection, 2 main categories issue with documentations, fact finding that is needed, change in circumstances.
- Telephony data - ability to contact us has been a challenge, we are working on that and we need to do better. Exemptions launch in October and goes to the same que. It is the same number to call as (PFML/WA Cares) but it goes to different staff and does not impact wait time when calling in.
- Numbers improving in October (down 5 min).
- Marilyn: When are we going to see dramatic improvement?
- Answer time is down for October and we are making a big difference already in November average for yesterday was around 11min. New staff is having a big impact and we are continuing to hire. Mondays are a challenge (volume), and we are working on some improvements to address this.
- Lisa – October 18<sup>th</sup> 12 staff were hired, will are going to have 36 total and we will see a dramatic improvement, still working through this number and a majority will start on 12/1 and the new year.

➤ **2021 accomplishments**

- Implemented the division portfolio
- Issued 1099s to benefit customers
- Increased capabilities in financial reporting and treasury management (back-end work to accurately track the money, completed project but work to be done)
- Phase one of increasing support for customers with LEP (still a lot of work to do, completed phase 1)
- Implemented legislative changes (1073 & 5097)
- Introduced change management processes for Operations (staff is helping staff through this)
- Analyzed fraud risk assessment and protections (analysis is complete)
- Capture features released since January 2021 and work in Progress
- Marilyn – detail in the language proficiency nearly 60% are Spanish
- Alison – working on a draft language plan (feedback on the plan)
- Phase 1 on different types of communication
- Analysis of language to prioritize different language, looking on ways for improvements on Spanish applications (will send out for review/feedback)

- Going ahead with staffing plan that was on the September report (147 new staff). The target date is December 1<sup>st</sup>, and we will have 60 new staff, 36 staff will be dedicated to customer questions (all PFML)

➤ **2022 priorities**

**2022 strategic goals:**

- Improve employer and employee success with our programs.
- Cultivate organizational health through a culture of inclusivity.
- Value and promote diversity, equity and inclusion in all our work.
- Strengthen internal and external partnerships.

**Feedback:**

- **Marilyn** – elaborate on community partnership.
- **Lisa** - Just starting on this activity, piloting with ERG and what will look like to establish a partnership to provide them with training.
- **Alison** – done training for 2 consecutive years, learned that community organizations need technical assistance and the way we deal with external partnerships. It is used as a pilot, working with the Help me Grow and have done some high-level information training and looking at where we can meet their needs.
- **Marilyn** - Trusted messages outreach – Alison, part of the approach, have talked to several health care providers and are identifying, what the program offers with trainings and materials
- 2020-2021 have been a challenge, how do we better leverage the whole agency, give customer, holistic experience will take some time and the organizations direction and how do we bring services to people in a holistic way.

**Key strategies**

- Improve capabilities to ensure employers fulfill their program responsibilities
- Improve employee success and reduce barriers to access
- Implement WA Cares milestones and investments
- Create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace culture
- Establish and grow community partnerships
- Support and align with agency-wide projects, services, and standards

**Measuring Success:**

- Improve capabilities to ensure employers fulfill their program responsibilities
  - Evaluate employers who aren't participating because of CBA exclusion
  - Share list of employers with approved voluntary plans
- Improve employee success and reduce barriers to access
  - Simplify the medical to bonding transition
  - Allow application before qualifying event
  - Clarify the use of medical leave during pregnancy
  - Improved response times to customer questions
- Establish and grow community partnerships
  - Improve the authorized representative process

**Feedback:**

- **Edsonya** – multiple points of contacts and secure messaging
- On our radar, secure messaging exists, get on this list of activities, how can we communicate with employers and how they can communicate with us
- What will success look like for customers and what are our goals?
- **Bob** - Concern with the hospital pre-approval – need a rule fix
- **Marilyn** - employee surgery, medical necessary, qualifying period, top-off
- **Edsonya** – file weekly claim that it's true
- Time limited window – 4weeks
- Potential time limit, when quarters change, how are people getting the best benefit for them, processing when it happens.
- **Marilyn** – time limit NJ allows 60 days in advance to submit all their documents
- **Brenda** – is there a way to create a benefit calculator? We want to get there eventually and be considerate and will have to act on it.
- **Authorized representative process:**
  - **Sam** - Making form available through the application process from the beginning (filling it in on their smart phone).
  - Links to where it mentions representative, working on clear instructions (more work to be done).

- **Marilyn** - Meeting dedicated for communication discussion, flow of information, be beneficial and have more dedicated time, pregnancy, medical, bonding need, revisit and have that convened in the coming months.
- **Lisa** - Worth re-visiting, what's working and not working, overview on the website design.
  
- **Nick** – off-line conversation what that will look like, work, and leverage the committee expertise and different attributes, get a better understanding, and will schedule some time to discuss.
- Send any feedback on website to Matt and Alison.
- Are there any key problem areas we are missing?
- What will the customer experience look like?
- Using next year as an anchor to our conversations, measures of the program and looking at them consistently.
- Next month's meeting will discuss on what we are committing too in the next 12 months.
- What is an acceptable processing time (time frame) applying and getting paid? 2 weeks is reasonable and shouldn't be over that, we will start on that and improve on it.

**Phone hold times:**

- **Marilyn** – less than 10 minutes
- Non-standard hours should be looked at
- The department is also looking a reducing the need to call us. As an example, assure customers that they received their paperwork

#### 4. Agenda Items for December

- **Internal agenda and matt to send an email to all**

#### 5. Open comment

#### 6. Adjourn

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, December 16, 2021 9:00-11:00 AM | This meeting will be held via ZOOM only

