

**Bylaws of the
Healthy Connections Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council
Effective January 1, 2026**

PREAMBLE

In recognition of the importance of meaningfully engaging Medicaid beneficiaries, also referred to as Medicaid members, in the development and administration of Medicaid policies and programs, and in accordance with the 2024 Access Final Rule updating the requirements in 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 431.12, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) hereby establishes the Healthy Connections Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC).

To comply with Title 42, Section 431.12 of the CFR, the state must establish and maintain a beneficiary advisory council composed of current or former Medicaid members and individuals with direct experience supporting Medicaid members. This includes family and paid or unpaid caregivers of Medicaid members.

The BAC will serve as an advisory body to the state, providing insights and recommendations based on lived experiences with the Medicaid program. The council will advise the agency on policy development, issues of concern to beneficiaries and matters related to the effective and equitable administration of the Medicaid program. The BAC may be an existing group that meets these federal criteria and will be supported by the state to ensure meaningful engagement and representation of Medicaid beneficiaries in decision-making processes.

ARTICLE I – NAME

Section 1: Council Name

The name of this council shall be the Healthy Connections Medicaid Beneficiary Advisory Council, also referred to as the BAC, of SCDHHS.

ARTICLE II – OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

Section 1: Objectives

This council is formed to advise SCDHHS about health and medical care services providing a consumer driven approach to optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of the South Carolina Healthy Connections Medicaid program while addressing the healthcare needs of the state's Medicaid population. The council will focus on building and strengthening joint efforts to represent the needs and concerns of the uninsured, underinsured and members of vulnerable populations. The council will provide consultation to the agency regarding marketing policies required of Medicaid managed care organizations.

Section 2: Purpose

This council will work cooperatively to provide recommendations to the director of SCDHHS on the policies, procedures and operations of the Healthy Connections Medicaid program. This council will provide recommendations to the director of SCDHHS in the following areas:

- a. Operation and administration of programs provided through Medicaid;
- b. The application and renewal processes;
- c. Outreach and consumer engagement strategies and resources;
- d. Medical, behavioral health and substance abuse services;
- e. Quality and cost-efficient care; and
- f. Affordability.

This council shall strive to make recommendations to the director of SCDHHS that are creative and innovative to meet the needs of South Carolina's Medicaid population.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP PROVISIONS

Section 1: Appointment of Members

The director of SCDHHS must select members for the BAC for a two (2) or three (3) year term for the initial council members, which may not be followed immediately by a consecutive term for the same member, on a rotating and continuous basis. All subsequent members will serve a three (3) year term.

Section 2: Council Membership

The membership of the council will be composed of up to 12 Healthy Connections Medicaid members and/or their representatives. Representatives may include legal guardians and paid or unpaid caregivers.

- a. The council will aim for a diverse representation of Medicaid members, ensuring members reflect the demographic, geographic and social characteristics of the Medicaid population, and that they represent different eligibility categories within Healthy Connections Medicaid.

Section 3: Compensation

Members will receive a \$100 stipend for each BAC meeting attended. They will also get mileage reimbursement for any in-person meeting travel at the established General Services Administration rate.

Section 4: Attendance

If a member has two consecutive absences, the member will be contacted regarding his/her continued membership on the council.

Section 5: Member Resignation or Inability to Complete Term

In the event a member of the council resigns or is otherwise unable to complete his or her term, the member shall notify the agency of the vacancy as soon as practicable. The director of SCDHHS shall appoint a replacement member to serve out the remainder of that individual's term.

Section 6: Conflict of Interest

A council member shall not take any action that may materially benefit the financial interest of that member, their family member or a member's close associate, unless and until that member first discloses that interest for the record. The member who discloses an interest may be present to answer questions related to that interest but shall not advocate for nor vote on the action. If a council member concludes his or her interest does not create a conflict, but there may be an appearance of a conflict, he or she shall disclose the interest for the record before participating in discussion or voting on an action.

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS

Section 1: Meeting Times

The director of the Medicaid program shall convene council quarterly meetings at such times, manner (whether in-person and/or virtually) and place in Columbia, South Carolina, as the director of SCDHHS or their designee shall determine.

Section 2: Notification of Meetings

Written and/or email notice of all regular meetings shall be sent to BAC members at least ten (10) business days in advance of the time and place of the meeting. Each member will file with the director of SCDHHS the physical address, email address and telephone number to which such meeting notice is to be sent.

Section 3: Special Meetings

Special meetings of the council may be held when called by the director of SCDHHS. Notice of special meetings will contain a brief statement of the purpose of the meeting.

Section 4: Meeting Minutes

The minutes of any meeting shall be made available to all BAC members prior to the next meeting.

Section 5: Meeting Types

The council meetings will be held using a variety of meeting attendance options. These options are all in-person attendance, fully virtual attendance and hybrid (in-person and virtual) attendance. Regardless of which attendance type of meeting it is, the meeting will always, at a minimum, have a telephone dial-in option for members.

ARTICLE V – LIABILITIES

Section 1: Liabilities

The council membership shall not become liable for the actions of the BAC, which may result in legal actions brought by the public.

ARTICLE VI – PROHIBITED MATTERS

Section 1: Prohibited Matters

The introduction or discussion of sectarian matters or partisan politics is prohibited at any meeting of the BAC, and the name or records of the council shall not be used for any sectarian, business or political purposes.

ARTICLE VII – AMENDING BYLAWS

Section 1: Director

The director of SCDHHS may amend these bylaws at any time.

Section 2: Council Members

All members of the BAC will be consulted regarding amendments to the bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII – CERTIFICATION

Section 1: Adoption of Bylaws

These bylaws were adopted by the director of SCDHHS January 1, 2026.

Eunice Medina
Director
South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services