

PRESCRIPTION DRUG AFFORDABILITY BOARD
VIRTUAL MEETING
Monday, September 21, 2020
Minutes

Chairman Van Mitchell called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

Board Members present: Joseph Levy, PhD, Eberechukwu Onukwugha, MS, PhD, and Gerard Anderson, PhD.

George Malouf, MD was absent.

AGENDA ITEM 1.

Approval of minutes

Chairman Mitchell moved that the minutes be approved as submitted. Dr. Anderson made motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Dr. Onukwugha and unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM 2.

Chairman's Update

Chairman Mitchell provided a series of brief updates regarding the Executive Director position, acquiring office space, the recently submitted budget for the upcoming year, and the upcoming session in January. He then introduced Kris Vallecillo to provide the administrative update.

No Action Needed

AGENDA ITEM 3.

Administrative Update

Mr. Vallecillo began by noting that the PDAB website (pdab.maryland.gov) is officially live. He stated that the public can register for future PDAB meetings and review previous meeting minutes and agendas by visiting the website. Mr. Vallecillo also stated that a form would be added to the website for those interested in receiving updates and reminders about the Board's work and upcoming events.

Next, Mr. Vallecillo provided an update regarding the Executive Director position. Since the June board meeting, PDAB staff submitted the necessary paperwork to receive permission to publish the position because of the statewide hiring freeze. PDAB staff then had to submit additional documentation to reclass the PIN number associated with the Executive Director position. Mr. Vallecillo explained that while all forms had been submitted, PDAB staff is awaiting approval for the PIN reclass before the position will be posted.

Chairman Mitchell next provided an update on securing office space. Mr. Mitchell provided that he and James Johnson identified the geographic area where the office would be located as Bowie, explaining that there were many affordable locations in this area that met PDAB's needs. Mr. Mitchell contacted DGS in February and submitted the necessary forms in March. Due to issues related to COVID-19, the forms were re-submitted in June and an RFP was ultimately issued in September. Mr. Mitchell expressed a hope that the Board would be able to review options for office space within the next 60 days, though he cautioned that progress may take longer. Dr. Anderson asked if the Board would meet at the office instead of Annapolis. Mr. Mitchell explained that future board meetings would ideally continue to be held in Annapolis.

No Action Needed

AGENDA ITEM 4.

Update on Data Collection Subcommittee

Following the June board meeting, Mr. Vallecillo notes that the Board agreed to form a committee focused on data collection. The committee was comprised of Gerard Anderson and Ebere Onukwugha, with Mr. Vallecillo supporting the committee's work. Mr. Vallecillo noted the three major areas that the committee focused on addressing are what types of data the Board will need to access, identifying possible sources of this data that the Board could use, and what types of analytic capabilities the Board would to acquire from third parties. The committee meetings occurred bi-monthly, and met with other state agencies, organizations that perform analysis on health care data, and carriers. Multiple organizations have reached out to the committee to explain what services they can offer, including estimation of drug rebate data, drug price benchmarking, as well as other data analytics services. The committee also met with MHCC to discuss access to the APCD. These discussions produced three possible options for the Board: acquire a license to the SSS Enclave, issue an RFP for desired services and data, or pursue an Interagency Scope of Work agreement.

Next, Mr. Vallecillo turned to a memo supplied by a carrier that contained recommendations for the Board, and broke down drug pricing data into three categories. These categories were novel drug treatments, high utilization drugs, and drugs that experience large price inflation. While the Board was grateful for this information, Dr. Anderson noted that the Board was interested in additional information related to drug rebates. This information, Dr. Anderson noted, would reveal the true cost of the drug therapies. Dr. Anderson explained that an additional struggle was getting the most recent data possible.

Mr. Mitchell asked Dr. Anderson if there was a common reporting period across the drug manufacturers. Dr. Anderson replied that there was not, and this presents an issue as the Board would not have access to recent price increases. In response to Mr. Mitchell's question of an acceptable lag, Dr. Anderson stated that a quarter-lag would be acceptable. This was seconded by Dr. Onukwugha, who noted that acquiring the most recent data would be very important. Dr. Anderson expressed a hope that carriers would be willing to share real-time drug data with the Board.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the carrier who provided the data was willing to appear before the Board and present its findings and recommendations. Dr. Anderson and Dr. Levy both stated that they

would appreciate this. Both board members also stated that they would be interested in hearing more information related to rebate data, with Dr. Levy suggesting that the Board offer the carrier an option to share this information in a confidential setting. Dr. Onukwugha expressed an interest in hearing about data related to 2020.

Dr. Anderson expressed an interest in obtaining analytic services from a third party. Mr. Mitchell responded by noting the lack of guaranteed funding mechanism presents certain issues on activities like issuing an RFP, hiring an Executive Director, or acquiring office space. Mr. Mitchell did note that PDAB staff has prepared and continues to prepare for these activities so that the Board is ready to quickly move forward when it is able.

Action: Mr. Vallecillo would report back to the carrier to let them know of the Board's interest in hearing them present at a future board meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 5.

Update Regarding Current Budget

James Johnson provided a brief update with regard to the Board's budget for FY 2020 - 2022. Mr. Johnson provided that in FY 2020, the Board spent \$12,200. In FY 2021, the overall budget dropped slightly (due to statewide, COVID-19 related measures) to \$748,000. Mr. Johnson explained that the Board could anticipate the interview process for the Executive Director position to occur this autumn, and for that person to then help select his or her administrative specialist. This would mean three staff members by the end of the calendar year.

Mr. Johnson noted that the RFP for the office space would close by the end of September, and would need to be approved by the Board of Public Works. Mr. Johnson also noted that the RFP was a sole-sourced lease arrangement because of its size. Mr. Johnson explained that the Board would also need to spend funds on furnishing the office, and may need to spend funds on potential contracts related to data access and analysis. Mr. Johnson explained that this was not likely to exceed the FY 2021 budget allocation.

Mr. Johnson stated that if the legislature overturns the Governor's veto of the Board's funding bill, the Board's budget would be greatly increased. Dr. Levy asked Mr. Johnson if the FY 2021 budget allocation was contingent on the veto override. Mr. Johnson stated that the FY 2021 budget was set, irrespective of the legislature's actions. Dr. Anderson then asked whether the Board has the necessary funds to pursue an RFP in this fiscal year. Mr. Johnson said this was possible, but explained it may be more prudent to wait for the Executive Director to be hired so that he or she can participate and guide the process. Dr. Anderson agreed, and suggested that Dr. Onukwugha, Mr. Vallecillo, and himself work together to identify and recommend best data sources.

Action: Dr. Anderson, Dr. Onukwugha, and Mr. Vallecillo will work together to identify which sources of data to pursue and which organizations would be best to engage with to analyze any data received.

Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Vallecillo, and Mr. Johnson would work together to identify a price range for data purposes.

AGENDA ITEM 6.

Upcoming Events

Mr. Mitchell noted that MCHI will be hosting a Prescription Drug Affordability Town Hall Forum on September 23. Mr. Mitchell noted that potential speakers include Van Mitchell, Ebere Onukwugha, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, and Del. Joseline Peña Melnyk.

Adjourned at 2:47 p.m.