

BAYOU HEALTH REPORTING

REPORT INFORMATION

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- **Reporting Quarter**

2nd Quarter, June 2023

- **Agenda Topics**

-Introductions
-Health plan updates
-Smoking and vaping cessation
-COVID-19 unwind

- **Introductions**

- **Member Attendees:** XXXXXX and XXXXXX
- **Attendees:** Robert Blue – Healthy Blue Tribal Liaison, Daphne Woodly – Healthy Blue Marketing Coordinator, Robin Bennett – Healthy Blue Community Relations Rep, Rashad Bristo – Healthy Blue Community Relations Rep, Pashion Norman – Healthy Blue BH Liaison, Peter Lambousy – Healthy Blue Marketing Director, Molly Taylor – Healthy Blue Whole Health Director, Monette Bourque – Healthy Blue Community Relations Rep, Cassie Sibenaller – Marketing Coordinator Sr., Stephenie Marshall – DePaul Community Healthcare, Kolletta Davis – Healthy Blue Clinical Quality Project Manager, Brooke Deykin – Healthy Blue HCMS Director, Christopher Wallace – Healthy Blue Program Consultant, Brittany Soteropulos – Healthy Blue Community Relations Rep, Tonya Hoover – Family Tree/Healthy Start, Adriene Gill – Healthy Blue Clinical Quality Auditor Sr., Amy Waters – The Safety Place, Susan Riehn – Families Helping Families of SWLA, Damiane Ricks – Louisiana Department of Health and Brandon Theriot – Intern, Kelly Graham – Truth Initiative EX Program, Riichi Torres-Oyama – Accreditation Consultant, Jessica Brock – Truth Initiative EX Program, Nashieka Malbrough – SWLA Health, Kristen Copenhaver – Acadiana Family Tree, Charmekia Martin – Medicaid Marketing Strat G&E Director, Cornelius Ricks – unknown, Melissa Alvarado – Truth Initiative EX Program, Renee Schwehofer – Truth Initiative EX Program, and Nick Harris – Dillard University

- **Introductions:**
 - Peter Lambousy introduced himself as the Marketing Director of Healthy Blue Louisiana and thanked everyone for joining the 2nd Quarter Health Education Advisory Committee meeting. He explained that these meetings provide members, community organizations, providers, and the Healthy Blue team with an opportunity to discuss things that are going well, as well as ways that Healthy Blue can improve.
- **Health plan updates**
 - Peter shared that Healthy Blue's current membership is 351,293. He also updated everyone about the COVID-19 unwind and how all members should be on the lookout for a packet from the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), because they may need to recertify/redetermine their eligibility for coverage.
- **Smoking and vaping cessation**
 - Renee Schweihofer, Kelly Graham, and Jess Brock from Truth Initiative gave the following information:
 - The EX Program is a digital solution for smoking, vaping, and nicotine addiction. The EX Program is specific to members age 18 and up while the This is Quitting (TIQ) program is for members age 13 to 24 years old. Members can receive help with their nicotine addiction, including a *Personalized EX Plan*, *Live Chat with EX Coaches*, *Thriving EX Community*, text messaging, and nicotine patches, gum, or lozenges.
 - Healthy Blue members can register for the EX Program, at no cost and receive a **Personalized EX Plan**. The *EX Plan* is a self-paced, guided plan with interactive content. It is personalized based on the member's status (vapor or smoker).
 - **Live Chat with EX Coaches** is a subscription also available at no cost to Healthy Blue Louisiana members. When a member registers for the EX Program, there's an entire community ready to engage and help them on their journey. The community is called the **Thriving EX Community**, many of whom remain active just to help others. Currently, there are over 10 million U.S. adults that use this program.
 - Truth Initiative uses national treatment guidelines based on Mayo Clinic protocols and employ certified tobacco cessation specialists with expertise in coaching.
 - Members that sign up for text messaging gain powerful support. They can receive short, tailored text messages and interactive suggestions based on their program activity. This includes medication use and adherence, pregnancy, new parent information, and chronic conditions.
 - Members of Healthy Blue Louisiana can receive an eight-week supply of nicotine replacement treatment in the form of a gum, small lozenge, or patches at no cost. Their EX Coach will gather information, by text, and assist them in figuring out what treatment will work best for them. Their recommendations are based on the member's daily activities such as if they smoke or vape, how much, etc. The EX Coach will also explain how the medicine works, how to use it, and any adverse effects.
 - The Truth Initiative team shared current stats on youth and vaping, possible solutions, and how it can be controlled:
 - A 2022 National Youth & Tobacco Survey showed that more than 2.5 million high school and middle school students use E-cigarettes daily. Over half of young people want to quit vaping. Other studies show that young nicotine or THC vapers are more likely to report anxiety, depressive symptoms, and suicidal thoughts compared to their peers who didn't use E-cigarettes or vape THC.
 - Since 2019, 600,000 young people have enrolled in the program.
 - To enroll in the program, one needs to text VAPEOUTLA to 88709, and respond with their age, when asked. If they are within the age range, they will be fully enrolled. They will see a full 60 days (length of program) of messaging as long as they stay in the program.
 - The program is confidential, anonymous, and available 24/7. Text messages are automated but written by real people.
 - Everyone was asked to text VAPEOUTLA to 88709 so they could share this resource with anyone. The following dialog occurred:
 - A Healthy Blue member stated that she is 54 years old, and she has been smoking for 31 years. "It goes hand-in-hand with mental health. At present, it's not time for me to try because I just, as of June 1st, started with testing. I found out I was ADHD after all these years, so my doctor suggested, no, this is not the time. My question goes back to how many of these kids are not diagnosed that use this as a self-

medication? I just think that's something that has to go hand-in-hand. In our world today, advertising helps because many kids who are vaping switch to marijuana cartridges without parents knowing. Access is easy, and I just think access goes hand-in-hand."

- Many young people who experience symptoms of anxiety, stress, and depression probably genuinely believe that nicotine or THC helps with those symptoms, but it can have the opposite effect in certain people.
- A Healthy Blue member stated, "I've seen it in my kid, but new research has shown that ADHD has obviously doesn't. I'm not saying it's just in bipolar; I'm saying, a lot of kids being misdiagnosed or not diagnosed. Kids don't know the stuff they can get into. I wish there was a way teachers could test in school rather than just let this go. That's just my opinion. So we not addressing now not until I get enough medicine in my system. I'm bipolar in case you missed it, but the ADHD diagnosis came from the University of Pennsylvania. It was a book they found in 1902. So autism kind of gets off to the side when it comes to this diagnosis and some bipolar. I just wanted to add that. I just think advertising because kids look at their phones and their computers; I can't even say TV because they're so into their phones. Even if the school system had a number to use as an advertisement tool, I think it's a good starting point. It's ability to test privately or randomly or at random, however, it can happen without evading privacy. That's a good starting point, especially in teens."
- Peter Lambousy thanked the member and shared some things that Healthy Blue carefully considers: how to get information and resources out to members; if specific conditions will be worsened by smoking or vaping; some members say they want to stop, but they aren't willing to admit that they smoke or vape.
- Tonya Hoover, Family Tree/Healthy Start, asked in the chat: "Is there a cost with the EX Plan if you are not a Healthy Blue member?" Kelly Graham, Truth Initiative, replied in the chat: "You can join for free. You would just have a limited subscription. With the free subscription, you would not be able to chat with an EX Coach or get the free eight weeks nicotine replacement therapy. Truth has a self-guided vaping prevention curriculum for students at <https://truthinitiative.org/curriculum>. If you have connections with schools in your area, please share this resource with teachers/administrators." A Healthy Blue member stated, "Thank you, but I still think things should be put in classrooms for teenagers. As I see in the school system, there's nothing."
- Peter Lambousy shared that the State also offers a smoking cessation program, called "Quit With Us" and "Smoking Cessation Trust." Damiane Ricks, of the LDH, confirmed this and stated that some local municipalities offer resources as well. She asked the group to touch base if they need help getting in touch with them. A Healthy Blue member stated, "It's definitely an asset that the State has these resources. The kids these days are our biggest priority. Those little tips to teenagers can help a lot."
- Kolletta Davis, Healthy Blue's Clinical Quality Program Manager, stated that, as part of our Quality Program, we have flu vaccine interventions, and we want to get the members' input and feedback about flu vaccines. A Healthy Blue member stated, "I've never taken one, and I'm not interested in. As a former nurse, I'm able to research, but that's just my personal preference. I haven't suffered from any flu symptoms, but there's a stigma out there that if you take the flu shot, you will get the flu. It would just be moderate. So that's what needs to change."
- Peter Lambousy stated, "What we are seeing after COVID is that immunizations and flu shots, we saw a lot of decreases. There have always been people who didn't take it because it's a choice. We had 60% of our members get flu shots in 2019, but then in 2021-2022, it went down to 50%. We've seen that with childhood immunization, whether or not it was mistrust brought about due to the COVID pandemic, people couldn't get to the doctors or other things." A Healthy Blue member stated, "I'm not against childhood vaccines. COVID, I took restrictions from it, but that was as a nurse because I didn't feel it was investigated enough. I didn't have none of the shots for COVID, and I used the religious barrier to get by with that."
- Brooke Deykin, Healthy Blue's HCMS Director, asked if any of the community partners hear why people don't want to get vaccinated?" A Healthy Blue member stated, "Nobody trusted getting the COVID shot in my area. So yes, they are fearful of getting the flu shot for many

reasons. Time has given them time to think about vaccinations. The trust is not there anymore since COVID, and I think that's a big problem."

- **COVID-19 unwind**

Peter Lambousy shared the following information about the **Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Medicaid Renewal Process**:

- In response to the pandemic, **Medicaid** eligibility rules changed. Prior to those changes, members had to renew/recertify their eligibility in their renewal month (the month they joined Medicaid). Federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) protections included no eligibility closures for most Medicaid members. ***The recent passage of the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act ends this continuous Medicaid coverage.*** Not every member will have to renew. Some will auto-renew because the State has information through other State programs or from income data. If you get a letter from Louisiana Medicaid, read it and follow the instructions. It will almost always require you to send Medicaid documentation or information.
- The LDH has begun sending letters and renewal packets to members to determine if they are still eligible for Medicaid. The mailings will occur over a 12-month period. **It is VITAL that Medicaid recipients make certain Medicaid has their current contact information**, including their mailing address, phone numbers, and email address so that they can receive important health insurance coverage-related information.
- Members who do **not** respond to renewal letters or requests for information risk losing their coverage — even if they are eligible.
- The LDH, Healthy Blue, and the other five managed care organizations (MCOs) or health plans that are part of the Healthy Louisiana Medicaid program want everyone who is eligible for Medicaid to maintain their coverage. We are sending out text messages, phone calls, emails, social media posts, advertisements, and letters to remind everyone to look for a packet from the State, which includes an application and other documents.
- Medicaid members can go online to the LDH website, go to the **Medicaid** section, go to secure member login, and check their renewal information. Members can also make changes to their contact information by:
 - Logging on to mymedicaid.la.gov.
 - Emailing mymedicaid@la.gov.
 - Calling their health plan at the number on their member ID card.
 - Calling Medicaid's Customer Service hotline at **888-342-6207** Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
 - Visiting a regional Medicaid office. For an office closest to you, visit ldh.la.gov/medicaidoffices.
- People enrolled in Medicaid are guaranteed 12 months of coverage postpartum.
- Molly Taylor, Healthy Blue's Whole Health Director, asked if the members present were receiving texts, emails, or communications from Healthy Blue. She also asked if they found them helpful and if they prompted them to schedule appointments. One member responded that she does not get reminders or texts from Healthy Blue. Peter Lambousy asked if she placed herself on the National Do Not Call List; she stated that she probably did.
- Molly asked the members present about the timeliness of provider appointments. One member stated that it has been a challenge. "I saw the social worker right before seeing the actual doctor. However, I came across a social worker that tested me based on what world psychologists actually test on. Now waiting two months, I stayed on the same medicine and that's unacceptable to me. It took me so much time to get to the point, and I had to do my own research to find out the medication I was on was causing me more problems. Most people don't know how to navigate this. My PCP was only comfortable with so much, so the two-month waiting period was a no. I don't think counseling is better. I think counseling goes hand-in-hand right now as well as assessing because I was just diagnosed with ADHD, which kind of takes the lift off proper assess in my situation." Molly thanked the member for being so open and forthcoming today with feedback.