

Texas HIV Medication Advisory Committee
Approved Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2023
1:30 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting:

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting & Physical Location: Moreton Building, Room M-100, 1100 West 49th Street Austin, Texas 78756

Agenda Item 1: Call Meeting to Order, Welcome, Logistical Announcement and Opening Remarks

Mr. Rosas opened the meeting by introducing himself and welcoming members, agency staff and members of the public who were in attendance. Mr. Frank Rosas, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:41 p.m. then introduced and turned the floor to Ms. Tessa Buck-Ragland, Advisory Committee Coordination Office (ACCO), HHSC. She proceeded with the logistical announcement, called roll, asked members to introduce themselves, and certified a quorum with a count of six members at roll call.

Table 1: The Texas HIV Medication Advisory Committee member attendance at the Friday, July 14, 2023, meeting.

Member Name	Attended
Adjei, Margaret, M.D.	Yes
Alozie, Ogechika Karl, M.D.	No
Heresi, Gloria, M.D.	Yes
Hillard, Lionel	Yes
Lazarte, Susana, M.D.	Yes
Rodriguez-Escobar, Yolanda, Ph.D.	No
Rosas, Frank (Chair)	Yes
Turner, Helen in the meeting and fully joined at 2:09	Yes
Vargas, Steven	No
Vacant	
Vacant	

"Yes" indicates attended meeting

"No" indicates did not attend meeting.

Mr. Frank Rosas, Chair, acknowledged DSHS staff: Ms. Rachel Sanor, Director. Ms. Sanor introduced DSHS staff in attendance: Mr. Josh Hutchison, HIV/STD Section Director; Ms. Ethel Garcia, HIV Medications Program Manager; Mr. Nathan Gauldin, Senior Policy Advisor; Ms. Terri Lemuel, Public Health Specialist, THMP, Lisa Starr, Training and Development Specialist, Health Communication and Community Engagement Group and Jasmine King, THMP Medication Program Specialist.

Agenda Item 2: Consideration of April 14, 2023, draft meeting minutes

Ms. Buck-Ragland asked for edits or changes to the draft meeting minutes. Upon hearing no changes or edits requested, Ms. Buck-Ragland requested a motion to accept the draft meeting minutes from April 14, 2023, then she requested a second to the motion.

MOTION

Mr. Lionel Hillard motioned to approve the April 14, 2023, draft minutes as presented. Dr. Susana Lazarte seconded the motion. Ms. Buck-Ragland conducted a roll call vote, and the motion passed by a majority vote with five for (Adjei, Heresi, Hilliard, Lazarte, Rosas), no

disapprovals, and no abstentions.

Agenda Item 3: Public Comment

The committee had two written comments sent prior to the meeting, and one individual pre-registered to provide oral comment. At the time of the agenda item there were no members of the public on the platform or in the public hearing room to give public comment.

Two individuals provided written comments: Januari Fox, representing Prism Health North Texas - STI and HIV Medical Care (phntx.org), and Franklin, representing Low Income Citizens of Texas. Program Staff shared the written comments with members electronically.

Agenda Item 4: Department of State Health Services Updates (DSHS)

Mr. Rosas introduced Mr. Josh Hutchison, Section Director, HIV/STD Section, to provide the following updates.

Highlights included:

a. Agency Update

- DSHS welcomes Ms. Ethel Garcia, PhD (ABD), MS, MEd, Manager, Medication Data and Analysis Group.
- Legislative updates
 - Rider 36 on HB1 passed. The Texas HIV Medication Program (THMP) can provide Cabenuva as long as there are available federal funds. DSHS will analyze future trends to ensure funding availability for other medications in the future, such as Cabenuva. DSHS will also use a new actuarial service company for analysis.
 - The following two bills related to THMP did not pass: HB2798 and HB2235.
 - Under Article IX, Section 17.28, the Legislature passed an additional rider for the HIV/STD Testing Pilot Program. It is a one-time award of \$100,000 for THMP to fund HIV testing or more HIV testing within Cameron, Harris, Hidalgo, and Travis Counties. THMP will work on the implementation plan and provide future updates.
 - The HIV/STD Section put forth two exceptional items for the legislative session. The Texas Legislature passed an exceptional item regarding Cabenuva as discussed earlier. An exceptional item to comply with Policy Clarification Notice 21-01 did not pass.
- 90-day refills and Sunlenca update
 - The DSHS Commissioner approved the reinstatement of the 90-day fills for specified medications. The Commissioner also approved the addition of Sunlenca to the THMP AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) Formulary. These changes will take effect on August 1, 2023. DSHS will track the impacts of these changes on the program.
 - Existing participants requesting 90-day fills or Sunlenca must submit a new THMP Medical Certification Form starting August 1, 2023.

b. Budget report

Mr. Hutchison presented the THMP Financial Report. There are no significant changes to report currently.

- THMP will push any unspent federal care grant fund to the next fiscal year, beginning in September 2023. THMP plans to spend the federal care grant fund by March 2024.
- THMP spent more money on medication during the 2023 fiscal year compared to 2022.

- Federal partners notified DSHS that they are pulling back the Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) Award, a \$18 million-a-year grant. This means a reduction in the HIV/STD program as well as other programs. DSHS will plan and watch the 2024 fiscal year budget closely to handle these changes.

Discussion

- Mr. Frank Rosas asked Mr. Hutchison to elaborate more on the DIS Award and how its termination will impact the program. Mr. Hutchison provided clarifications on the \$18 million per year DIS award. Mr. Hutchison responded that it funds disease intervention specialist work, including partner services. Mr. Rosas followed up and asked if DSHS notified the state partners about changes and impacts. Mr. Hutchison confirmed that DSHS has informed partners about these upcoming changes.
- Dr. Margaret Adjei asked if THMP approved Sunlenca on the formulary and whether Sunlenca is good to go. Mr. Hutchison confirmed that this is correct. Dr. Adjei followed up and asked if Cabenuva was not approved due to funding availability. She also asked if THMP will consider adding Cabenuva to the formulary in the future if there is funding availability. Mr. Hutchison also confirmed that this is correct.
- Dr. Susana Lazarte praised the program's progress and stated she was looking forward to seeing the viral suppression. In response, Mr. Hutchison accepted the praise. He also thanked all stakeholders for the work they have contributed to this progress.
- Mr. Rosas mentioned that the San Antonio local pharmacy assistance program added Cabenuva.

Agenda Item 5: THMP Updates

Mr. Rosas turned the floor over to Ms. Rachel Sanor, HIV Care and Medications Unit Director, DSHS.

Highlights included:

- a. Standard Deduction Update
 - Take Charge Texas (TCT) has updated and implemented standard deductions in its system.
 - Initial reports indicated that the standard deduction implementation reduced the time burden on staff.
 - THMP staff can now explain the standard deduction implementation to clients more effectively.
- b. Medicaid Unwinding
 - THMP, DIS staff, and agency staff contacted individuals affected by the Medicaid unwinding.
 - Staff also provided outreach services to these individuals to connect them to Ryan White or other services as needed.
- c. 340B and THMP-contact pharmacies and rebate revenues
 - Medication purchased under SPAP and TIAP does not fall under 340B stock. As such, THMP can file for manufacturer rebates for medications under SPAP and TIAP.
 - THMP uses rebate funds to continue supporting ADAP, SPAP, and TIAP.
 - Participating pharmacies under ADAP receive medication from the DSHS warehouse. These pharmacies are not considered contract pharmacies because they do not buy medications.
- d. Take Charge Texas

- Quarterly TCT Applications Submitted
 - Client Portal
 - TCT received 694 applications from March 1, 2023, to May 31, 2023.
 - Of the 694 applications, 638 were for THMP.
 - The total number of applications for both care services and THMP was 552.
 - Agency Portal
 - TCT received 14,823 applications from March 1, 2023, to May 31, 2023.
 - Of the 14,823 applications, 10,901 were for THMP.
 - The total number of applications for both care services and THMP was 8,107.
 - The total number of pharmacy order batches was 1,268.
 - THMP approved a total of 8,051 new clients during this period.
 - Quarterly TCT Support Issues
 - Many issues have gone down compared to the previous quarter.
 - The highest number of issues in TCT were login issues this quarter.
 - There were a couple of TCT outages that occurred very briefly and caused a few application issues which were resolved quickly.
 - Annual TCT Applications Submitted
 - Client Portal
 - From June 1, 2022, to May 31, 2023, the total number of applications submitted was 2,718. Of this number of applications, 2,536 were for THMP.
 - The total number of applications for both care services and THMP was 2,251.
 - Agency Portal
 - TCT received 57,691 applications from June 1, 2022, to May 31, 2023.
 - Of the 57,691 applications, 41,597 were for THMP.
 - The total number of applications for both care services and THMP was 30,763.
 - The total number of pharmacy order batches was 30,763.
 - THMP approved a total of 20,995 new clients during this period.
 - Annual TCT Support Issue Types
 - As people get more adjusted to the system over time, there is less need for TCT support.
 - TCT saw more clients applying through the client portal who wanted assistance with medications and other services through care services.
 - THMP is asking for TCT feedback. If you are a user and would like to provide TCT feedback on future enhancements, please send an email to the Help Desk at TCTHelpDesk@dshs.texas.gov. Please write "TCT Feedback" in the subject line of the email.
- e. Application Processing Update
- THMP remains out of the backlog.
- f. THMP – Staff Updates, Demographic Information, and Projections
- Staff Updates
 - THMP filled all its permanent positions except one. The manager position that Rachel Sanor previously held is still vacant. DSHS posted this position on April

- 13, 2023. DSHS encourages THMP-MAC members to share this information with their networks.
 - There are five vacancies among the temporary staff assignments. However, THMP still has the capacity for processing at this time. THMP is following up with clients who are not assigned to a particular agency. THMP is especially vigilant when there are incomplete applications.
 - THMP works with ADAP liaisons to ensure that clients are receiving their medication.
- Demographic Information
 - The medications used by ADAP clients in the last quarter have remained steady. Biktarvy was the most frequently used medication.
 - Among the ADAP population, there have been no significant changes from the last quarter.
 - Among the SPAP population, the proportion of clients who identify as male is greater than that of the ADAP population. The majority of the population is white and non-Hispanic or Latino.
 - The TIAP is the smallest of the three programs. From March 2023 to May 2023, the program filled medications for 91 clients.
 - A majority of participants identify as white, non-Hispanic or Latino, and male, which is similar to ADAP clients. There are no significant changes to report at this time.
- Projections
 - ADAP estimates the cost for this year to be about \$95 million, with estimated increases in 2024.
 - SPAP data indicates a lot of stability in these numbers. The utilization of this program tapers off throughout the year. This is because participants are getting through the Medicare Part D donut hole with reduced expenditures.
- TIAP data indicates a lot of stability.

Discussion

- Dr. Lazarte asked if the new clients approved for THMP are only for TCT or for everybody. Ms. Sanor confirmed that it is for everybody. Dr. Lazarte followed up and asked if this meant that we just absorbed 8,000 new clients or if this number also included dropped clients. Ms. Sanor stated that this number is for those who are new. If clients have been off the program and THMP enrolled them back into it, THMP considered these clients new as well.
- Dr. Lazarte asked why there are only 1,200 pharmacy order batches, and she requested clarification on the term "order batches." Ms. Sanor stated that order batches can vary in size. Some large batches can have up to 300 orders at a time. If the processing team runs into an exception or issue with an order, the team can process this one order as a batch all by itself. When the ordering team processes orders for medication, they process these orders in batches. That way, TCT can show batches. So, this tells THMP more about the volume than the actual number of medications processed. This is a limitation of TCT.
- Ms. Helen Turner stated that she is still receiving complaints from consumers. Clients were not receiving their medication on time due to delays. These clients wondered if they did something wrong or did not qualify because of the medication delays. Ms.

Turner asked if the reason for the delay was because THMP puts the medication orders in bigger batches.

- Ms. Turner also shared questions on whether pharmacy orders that are coming in too soon could cause delays on other on-time orders. Two to four pharmacies that she spoke with were also concerned about whether THMP has adequate staffing. These pharmacies experienced difficulties trying to get help. For example, they were unable to get through the phone system to receive help; or they reached staff who were not adequately trained to answer their questions; or they reached staff who were rude. Ms. Turner also shared that these pharmacies wanted to thank Ms. Rachel Sanor for making their job easier.
- Ms. Rachel Sanor thanked Ms. Turner for bringing all this information and updates to THMP. Ms. Sanor stated that the system identifies when orders are too early or on time. But she was unsure if there were any system issues with orders placed too early. Ms. Sanor confirmed that THMP will do research to see if there are any issues with regard to the pharmacy orders that are coming in too early.
- Ms. Sanor also explained the pharmacy order process. If the system receives a batch with both eligible and ineligible orders, the pharmacy should receive a fax with a list of ineligible orders. The remaining eligible orders should move forward in the system. THMP then fills the order. If pharmacies are experiencing issues and are not following the process mentioned, please contact THMP.
- Regarding staffing issues, Ms. Sanor confirmed that THMP has enough staffing for the phone. THMP has been training staff to answer questions about ordering. Contract staff were focusing on answering eligibility questions before. The delays in answering questions on orders may have been due to the learning curve of these staff. However, staff being rude is not acceptable. Ms. Sanor will follow up on these issues and work on providing more training for staff.
- Mr. Hillard asked about the process for a pharmacy to sign up for ADAP. Ms. Sanor responded that the new pharmacy will need to send in a form to show their interest. THMP will see if there is already a pharmacy providing services in that same area. If there is already a pharmacy there, then THMP will not approve the new pharmacy's request unless there are mitigating circumstances. If there is a clear need for this pharmacy's services in that area, the pharmacy will then work with contract management on the next steps to join ADAP.
- Mr. Frank Rosas commented that he also received suggestions from many clients to add HEB pharmacies to the network. Clients like these pharmacies because they have better customer service and longer hours. Ms. Sanor thanked Mr. Rosas for the feedback.
- Dr. Margaret Adjei thanked Ms. Mary Richards and THMP staff for helping her pharmacy team and clients.

Agenda Item 6: Sub-Committee Reports

a. Eligibility – Mr. Frank Rosas

- The eligibility subcommittee met on May 9, 2023, to discuss THMP updates. The ADAP liaisons, who represent different regions of Texas, shared their updates as well.
- Mr. Rosas wanted to acknowledge the importance of the ADAP liaisons.
- Hailey Malcolm is the liaison for the Houston and East Texas regions. She brought a lot of important information about the Beaumont area and Port Arthur. She also provided information on the rural areas that she served.

- Kofi Bissah is the liaison for the Dallas and North Texas regions. He covered the Dallas Eligible Metropolitan Area and Tarrant County. He is currently teaching in the transitional grant area.
 - Jenny Deck is the liaison representing the University Health System on the South Texas Development Council. She served pretty much all of Bear County and San Antonio. She has also picked up El Paso and surrounding areas of West Texas.
 - Riley Lasell is the liaison representing Brazos Valley. This includes the Bryan College station area. She represents a lot of rural areas in South Texas and parts of East Texas not covered by the Houston-Harris County area. She also served the Panhandle area, including San Angelo.
- b. **Governance and Data – Mr. Steven Vargas**
- There was no meeting due to the insufficient number of attendees.
- c. **Formulary – Dr. Susana Lazarte**
- The Formulary Subcommittee met on January 31, 2023. During this call, they discussed that the top ten non-HIV medications are back on the 90-day refills. They also considered reinstating Pitavastatin. In April, the subcommittee requested to reinstate Pitavastatin in the formulary.

Agenda Item 7: Consideration of Pitavastatin (Livalo)

Mr. Rosas introduced Dr. Susana Lazarte, Vice Chair to present details related to Pitavastatin (Livalo) and Formulary recommendation.

Highlights included:

- Pitavastatin Magnesium (Lipitor) is a cholesterol-lowering medication.
- The reason to bring Pitavastatin back was because of the results of a huge multinational clinical trial. The study assessed if a statin would have an impact on cardiovascular events in people living with HIV and on antiretroviral therapy. They use Pitavastatin because of the lower drug-drug interactions. Pitavastatin has a lower risk of having those myopathies. The Formulary Subcommittee knows the side effects that occur with statins are also lower.
- The Formulary Subcommittee voted to include both generic and brand-name prescriptions. The brand-name medication would come up for cost assessment by the THMP program in general.

Discussion

- Ms. Sanor mentioned that there are two medications. One is Pitavastatin calcium, and the other is Pitavastatin magnesium. The brand name for Pitavastatin calcium is Livalo. The brand name for Pitavastatin magnesium is Lipitor. Ms. Sanor asked the committee to clarify which one of those medications they wanted to add or both.
- Dr. Lazarte responded that her motion would be to consider reinstating both medications because the formulary previously had both.

Motion

Dr. Susana Lazarte motioned to consider adding Pitavastatin Calcium (Livalo) and Pitavastatin Magnesium (Lipitor) to the THMP formulary as presented and seconded by Mr. Lionel Hillard. Ms. Buck-Ragland asked for further discussion by members on the motion; hearing none, Ms. Buck-Ragland conducted a roll call vote, and the motion passed with six for (Adjei, Heresi, Hillard, Lazarte, Rosas, Turner), no against, and no abstention.

Agenda Item 8: Review of action items and agenda topics for next meeting

Mr. Rosas, Chair, asked Ms. Sanor about the recap of action items, she turned the floor over to Ms. King. Mr. Rosas then allowed members to provide additional topics or presentations to consider for the next meeting and stated the next meeting is scheduled for October 6, 2023.

Agenda items for the next Committee meeting included:

- Proposal for the removal of medications

Action items:

- Update on pharmacy shipment issues.
- Presentation or a list of all the participating THMP pharmacies in Texas

Agenda Item 9: Adjournment

Mr. Rosas, Chair, thanked the members and the public and adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m.

To view and listen to the archived video of the July 14, 2023, Texas HIV Medication Advisory Committee meeting in its entirety, click on the link below.

[Texas HIV Medication Program Medication Advisory Committee - July 14, 2023](#)