Memorandum

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| To: | Commissioners |
| From: | Caroline Broder |
| Date: | June 1, 2021 |
| Re: | Communications report |

MACPAC’s efforts to disseminate our work and serve as a vital source of information about the Medicaid and State Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) continue to grow. MACPAC reaches the public and policymakers primarily through our website, Commission meetings, e-mail announcements, direct mail of our reports, media reports, as well as social media platforms such as Twitter and LinkedIn. This memo offers a brief overview of how we use various communications channels to reach our audience, and highlights from the past year.

## Communicating the results of our work

In calendar year 2020, we posted 3 separate reports to Congress (March and June reports plus one special report mandated by Congress), 15 issue briefs, 14 fact sheets, 5 contractor reports, 9 comment letters, and 2 50-state policy compendia. In December 2020, we issued an update to MACStats, including data from the Transformed Medicaid Statistical Information System (T-MSIS) for the first time. As a result, the most recent data for complete state-level statistics are for fiscal year (FY) 2018; this marks a significant change from 2019 when the most recent complete data were for FY 2013. As of May 2021, we have produced the March report to Congress, 6 issue briefs, 4 comment letters, 3 contractor reports, 7 fact sheets, congressional testimony, and one 50-state policy compendia.

We added several features to our website in the last year, including a topic page on Medicaid’s response to COVID-19 and a quality dashboard. In anticipation of new members and staff in the 117th Congress, we updated our Medicaid 101 pages, which have consistently ranked in the top page views for our site.

In 2020, traffic to our website increased 60 percent. The site now averages 14,800 visitors each month. As of May 2021, the site has had a little over 196,000 visitors. Over 85 percent are returning visitors, and this number has held steady since 2016. After the home page, the most popular pages thus far in calendar year 2021 have included our page on people with disabilities (9,368 page views), our Medicaid 101 page on provider payment and delivery systems (8,150 page views), and an overview of the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid (7,7260 page views). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the March 2021 report to Congress and the 2020 edition of MACStats have been the two most popular publications thus far in calendar year 2021.

While most users come to MACPAC’s web site through an organic search or by directly typing in our web address, Twitter has become a major driver of traffic to our web site, accounting for almost 69 percent of sessions that were driven by social media thus far in 2021. Because we use Twitter to announce new publications and other updates, we were pleased to see MACPAC’s Twitter followers grow by nearly 40 percent in 2020. So far, in 2021, our Twitter followers have grown another 44 percent, reaching more than 3,060 followers. For comparison, MedPAC has 2,465 followers. Our followers include many influential health policy reporters, organizations, and researchers who often amplify our work.

In addition, MACPAC began sharing its work on LinkedIn in late 2020 and has more than 800 followers. In the last month alone, MACPAC gained 43 new followers on LinkedIn, driven largely by enthusiasm over our announcement about new commissioners. LinkedIn has contributed close to 26 percent of MACPAC’s traffic from social media platforms as of May 2021.

MACPAC’s electronic mailing list has more than 4,269 subscribers that include key agency leadership and staff, members of Congress and staff, state Medicaid directors and staff, health policy reporters, and policy organizations. Our average email open rate is 28 percent, and our average click rate is 32 percent, on par with the average government agency/services open rate of 28 percent, and well above the average government agency click rate of 11 percent.

Our reports to Congress are sent by mail, reaching more than 1,700 people, including members of Congress, key staff, state Medicaid directors, members of the media, and many other influential health policy experts.

## Increasing participation and visibility through Commission meetings

MACPAC held six meetings in FY 2020, quickly pivoting in April 2020 from in-person to virtual meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. MACPAC has held three virtual Commission meetings thus far in 2021. The virtual meetings have allowed for increased attendance, with people from all over the United States, including territories, attending. Our January 2021 meeting had 374 attendees, the March meeting had 429 attendees, and the April 2021 meeting had 278 attendees. Participants include key staff from the Senate, House, and agencies such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Office of Management and Budget, as well as state government officials and members of the press.

In September 2021, we plan to resume in-person meetings, moving from a virtual-only format to one that includes audio plus slides to allow attendees to continue participating remotely if they wish.

## Serving as an evidence-based non-partisan resource on Medicaid and CHIP

In the year ahead, MACPAC will continue to build its reputation as an important source of evidence-based non-partisan information on Medicaid and CHIP. The Commission is increasingly sought out by the media as a source of unbiased information on Medicaid and CHIP. This includes both national outlets such as *Associated Press*, *Axios*, *Bloomberg*, *Congressional Quarterly*, *Forbes*, *The Hill*, *Inside Health Policy*, *Kaiser Health News*, *Modern Healthcare*, *NBC News*, *National Public Radio*, *PBS Newshour*, *Politico*, *ProPublica*, *Stateline*, *StatNews*, *Vox*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*, as well as many local and state newspapers such as the *Albuquerque Journal*, the *Miami Herald*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and the *St. Louis American*.

MACPAC’s work is frequently cited in highly regarded peer-reviewed journals such as *Health Affairs*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Policy organizations, including the Bipartisan Policy Center, Commonwealth Fund, Institute for Medicaid Innovation, Kaiser Family Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, and Urban Institute, often cite MACPAC’s work. Federal agencies (e.g., CMS, Congressional Research Service, U.S. Government Accountability Office) and states continue to cite our products.

In addition to our statutorily required deliverables, MACPAC plans to continue producing other products on a wide range of topics. In FY 2022, we plan to keep building and updating such information by:

* publishing new and updating previously published issue briefs, fact sheets, and policy compendia on a wide range of Medicaid and CHIP topics;
* resuming publication of the annual databook on beneficiaries dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid that we have produced with MedPAC now that T-MSIS data are available (expected release in January 2022);
* building content and improving the MACPAC website (www.macpac.gov). Although we have continually added new content and features, the website last received a comprehensive overhaul in 2015. Key areas for review include improving search functions and analyzing ways to improve the user experience; and
* exploring new ways to communicate with stakeholders, for example, by creating specialized newsletters on specific policy issues or for specific audiences.