Memorandum

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| To: | Commissioners |
| From: | Caroline Broder |
| Date: | June 1, 2022 |
| Re: | Annual report on communications activities |

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

MACPAC’s efforts to disseminate information about the Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) continue to grow. In calendar year (CY) 2021, we produced 2 separate reports to Congress, the *MACStats Medicaid and CHIP Data Book*, 19 issue briefs, 15 fact sheets, 5 contractor reports, 6 comment letters, and 2 separate 50-state policy compendia. Thus far in CY 2022, MACPAC produced the March report to Congress, 11 issue briefs, 4 comment letters, 1 contractor report, 9 fact sheets, and 1 50-state policy compendium. In addition, MACPAC jointly produced with MedPAC a data book on beneficiaries who are dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare. We also updated the reference guide to federal Medicaid statute and regulations on our website, which garnered more than 16,000 impressions on Twitter.

In CY 2021, we improved the search function on MACPAC’s web site, making it easier for users to find the information they are looking for. In the first few months of 2022, MACPAC’s site has had an average of 31,500 visitors per month, up from an average of about 24,000 visitors per month in 2021 and more than double the average number of monthly visitors (14,800) in 2020. Over 87 percent are returning visitors, a number that has held steady since 2017.

After the home page, the most popular pages on MACPAC’s web site thus far in CY 2022 have included our page on people with disabilities (more than 12,000 page views), our Medicaid 101 page on provider payment and delivery systems (9,150 page views), and an overview of the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid (about 8,400 page views). These pages also were ranked in the top page views in 2021. The most popular publications in 2022 have included our reference guide to federal Medicaid statute and regulations, the databook on beneficiaries who are dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare, and the March 2022 report to Congress.

Most users come to MACPAC’s web site through an organic search, by directly typing in our web address, or through referrals from other web sites such as the Kaiser Family Foundation, *Health Affairs,* and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). However, social media is increasingly a driver of traffic to our web site. In the first few months of 2022, Twitter accounted for almost 50 percent of sessions that were driven by social media. LinkedIn contributed close to 37 percent of MACPAC’s traffic from social media platforms during the same time period.

MACPAC’s Twitter followers grew by 42 percent in 2021. As of May 2022, we now reach more than 3,746 followers who include many influential health policy reporters, organizations, and researchers who often amplify our work. For context, MedPAC has around 3,110 followers. In addition, MACPAC began sharing work on LinkedIn in 2021, and now has 1,228 followers. In addition, each page on our website has buttons that allow visitors to easily share content via email or with their followers on Facebook, Twitter, or Google+.

Email is another vehicle for driving traffic to MACPAC’s web site and its work. MACPAC sends news announcements, major publications such as reports to Congress and *MACStats*, as well as Commission meeting announcements, to MACPAC’s email list. The MACPAC mailing list has more than 4,400 subscribers that include key agency leadership and staff, members of Congress and staff, state Medicaid directors, health policy reporters, and policy organizations. Our average email open rate is 30 percent, and our average rate of those who click on links in the email is 8 percent. This is on par with the average open rate across industries of 29 percent, and well above the average click rate in most industries of 1.32 percent.

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

## Increasing visibility through Commission meetings

MACPAC continued to hold meetings virtually in 2021 and 2022, using the GotoWebinar platform to allow members of the public to view all slide presentations, watch the Commission deliberate, and participate in public comment at selected points during the meeting. Meeting attendance ranged from 158 participants to a high of 639 participants for the March 2022 meeting, far surpassing typical attendance at in-person meetings. The April 2022 meeting was a hybrid of in-person attendees for many of the Commission members and staff, and remote participation from the audience. The number of people participating in public comment remained fairly similar to the experience during in-person meetings.

In September 2022, we plan to continue with the same meeting approach that was used in April, with in-person meetings for Commissioners and a remote participation option for the public.

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

MACPAC has built a solid reputation as an important source of evidence-based non-partisan information on Medicaid and CHIP. Members of the media continually call on MACPAC to help understand and provide context for Medicaid and CHIP policy. This includes national outlets such as the Associated Press, Axios, Bloomberg, CBS News, NBC News, National Public Radio, and the Washington Post, as well as key trade press such as Congressional Quarterly, Inside Health Policy, Kaiser Health News, Modern Healthcare, and Politico. Many local and state news sources such as Florida Politics, the Missouri Independent, and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette continue to cite MACPAC’s work.

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 the coming year,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, as well as the annual databook on beneficiaries dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid that we produce with MedPAC;
* updating the look of our materials. In 2021, MACPAC brought its design support in house, allowing us to visually convey information more easily than we had in the past;
* improving the MACPAC website ([www.macpac.gov](http://www.macpac.gov)). Although improvements were made to the website’s search function in 2021, the website last received a comprehensive overhaul in 2015. Key areas for review include improving the user experience and the updating the look of the site; and
* exploring new ways to communicate with stakeholders, for example, by creating specialized newsletter content on topics of interest (e.g., financing issues, health equity) for our readership.