

## Advisory Committee on Healthcare Innovation & Evaluation (ACHIEv)

### Meeting Minutes for July 23, 2025

Virtual Meeting occurred via Zoom

#### Members Present

David Folweiler, DC | Chair  
John Meier | Vice Chair  
Andrew Friedman, MD  
Kirk Harmon, MD  
Laurie Gwerder, ARNP  
Tricia Daniel  
Lloyd Brooks  
Aaron Jorgensen  
Jane Dale

#### Members Not Present

Louis Lim, MD  
Nicole Gomez

#### L&I Staff & Presenters

Cherell Fisher  
Brenda Heilman  
Kirsta Glenn  
Ciara High  
Cindy Gaddis  
Angelique Guppy  
Charla Treise  
Gary Franklin  
Kim Wallace  
Karen Jost  
Diana Drylie  
Amy Updike  
Suzyn Daniel  
Azadeh Farokhi  
Jason Fodeman  
Deborah Havens  
Jennifer Jutte  
Morgan Young

Jason McGrew  
Noha Gindy  
Athena Hightower  
Emily Stinson  
Aaron Hoffman  
Jessica Radcliff  
Troy Parks  
Jessica Sullivan  
Paulina Luke  
Tiffany Meeks  
Victoria Rich  
Todd Bishopp

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## **Welcome & Virtual Meeting Tips (David Folweiler & Kim Wallace)**

### **Introductions**

ACHIEv Chair David called the meeting to order and led introductions. Kim introduced representatives from L&I, while Gary welcomed Deborah Havens, the new Associate Medical Director. Later in the meeting, Kim introduced Cindy Gaddis, Chief Policy Officer, to the committee.

### **Review & Approve Agenda**

The committee reviewed the July 23, 2025 ACHIEv agenda and voted to approve the agenda. Motion approved and carried.

### **Approve Meeting Minutes from May 8, 2025 Meeting**

Committee members reviewed and approved the May 8, 2025 ACHIEv meeting minutes with no changes.

### **Safety Tip**

Victoria Rich reviewed the safety tip on ticks and tick avoidance.

## **Updates**

### **Agency Update (Brenda Heilman)**

Brenda provided an agency update:

- The state budget has been approved for the biennium, but lower than expected revenue projections mean the hiring and travel freeze remains in place. Despite this, key initiatives like the Workers' Compensation Systems Modernization project will continue to move forward with executive support.
- The PTSD legislative report has been completed and is under OFM review before being submitted to the Governor and the legislature.
- Due to current budget constraints, hybrid meetings are not feasible at this time, though Brenda continues to support the return to in-person/hybrid meetings.
- Organizational changes are underway most notably in the divisions of Field Services and Public Safety and Fraud Prevention and Labor Standards. Notably, the Early Return to Work (ERTW) program will transition to the Insurance Services division in October 2025.

- Additionally, funding has been secured for 8-10 new FTEs to support a new claims unit.

### **Insurance Services Operational Health Dashboard (Brenda Heilman)**

Brenda presented the latest dashboard data, noting that 1) claim manager caseloads remain high and 2) new state fund claims, pension claims, and overall claim volumes are steady. Medical cost growth is rising, consistent with national trends. The committee discussed cost drivers and possible areas of influence.

### **Continuation of Priority Topic: “Getting the worker the most appropriate care and back to work as quickly as possible” (Kirsta Glenn)**

Kirsta led a discussion on the observed increase in time loss duration and its impact on claim costs. Possible contributing factors include PTSD presumptive coverage, fewer IMEs, and internal staffing/technology shifts. Committee members highlighted concerns including claim manager understaffing, treatment delays, and rising numbers of claims for workers with preferred languages other than English. Suggestions were made to explore co-morbidities, aging workforce trends, differences between state-funded and self-insured claims, and specific delay points. An update on the agency’s modernization efforts, including new document processing tools, was also proposed for a future meeting.

### **Workers Compensation Policy Priorities (Kirsta Glenn)**

Kirsta outlined the agency’s 2026 policy priorities, focusing on preventing work disability related to PTSD and expanding opportunities for injured workers to return to meaningful employment. Committee members engaged in discussion around system improvements and strategies to enhance outcomes for injured workers. Policy proposals are currently under review for the upcoming 2026 legislative session.

### **Self-Insurance Office of the Ombuds (Ciara High)**

Ciara provided an overview of the role and responsibilities of the Self-Insurance Ombuds, highlighting the office’s role in advocating for injured workers, offering information on the workers’ compensation system, and handling complaints. She shared her contact information and addressed questions from committee members about how her office differs from the L&I Self-Insurance Program, appropriate dispute resolution channels, and public records applicability.

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## **Rulemaking- Medical Provider Network (Troy Parks)**

Troy provided an overview of the upcoming rule updates for the Medical Provider Network (MPN), originally implemented in 2013. The updates aim to improve clarity, ensure provider compliance, and maintain a qualified network. Key revisions will impact WAC 296-20-01020 and WAC 296-20-01050, among others. The CR101 was filed 7/1. The CR102, which is the proposed draft language, opens up the public comment period and is anticipated to be filed December 2025. Final promulgation of the rule i.e. CR103 is planned to be filed early 2026. The updates are intended to support the enforcement of quality standards and help maintain the integrity of the MPN.

## **Public Comment (David Folweiler)**

None.

## **Meeting Wrap-Up (David Folweiler)**

### **Meeting Debrief**

Kim expressed gratitude to the committee, noting a sense of hope and enthusiasm about the progress made in how agendas are planned and meetings are conducted. She made special note of the quality of discussion and engagement during the meeting.

### **Agenda Requests for October 2025**

The committee proposed several topics for the October meeting, including a deeper look into how workers and providers are supported by L&I via help desks and other channels, the impact of co-morbidities on claims, challenges related to an aging workforce, and trends in claims for workers with preferred languages other than English. They suggested presentations from a nurse case manager for a medical perspective and review of the PTSD report submitted to the legislature.