

Minutes
EVALUATION SUBCOMMITTEE
Legislative Audit Commission
March 8, 2013

Members Present:

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair

Senator Mary Kiffmeyer
Senator James Metzen

Members Absent:

Representative Andrew Falk
Representative Mary Liz Holberg

Senator Warren Limmer

Other Members Present:

Representative Michael Beard

Senator Ann H. Rest

Representative Hansen, Chair, called the Legislative Audit Commission Evaluation Subcommittee meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. The purpose of the meeting was to release the evaluation, *Medical Assistance Payment Rates for Dental Services*.

Representative Hansen introduced Jim Nobles, Legislative Auditor, to give a brief summary of the evaluation. Mr. Nobles said that the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) was directed to evaluate the methods Minnesota has used to set payment rates for dental services provided through the Medical Assistance (MA) program. Mr. Nobles introduced Valerie Bombach, evaluation manager, to give more details. Ms. Bombach said that the overall conclusions of the evaluation are that (1) Minnesota's fee-for-service payment rates for MA dental services are often insufficient, (2) rate setting and payment processes are complicated by Minnesota's use of multiple payment methods, and (3) rates and payment practices likely have had negative and opposing outcomes on dentist participation and MA recipient access to dental services. She said the evaluation recommends that (1) the Legislature and the Department of Human Services (DHS) better coordinate payment policies and rate setting for MA dental services, and as part of this, the Legislature should increase fee-for-service rates for dental providers; (2) the Legislature and DHS implement a separate benefit and payment structure for the MA population with special needs; (3) DHS more closely monitors MA recipients' access to dental services; (4) DHS improves its information system, MN-ITS, to better support dental providers' inquiries of patient eligibility and state restrictions on benefits; and (5) DHS ensures that service authorization criteria and benefit changes are more clearly defined and communicated to dental providers.

Representative Hansen invited the representative from DHS to address the subcommittee. Scott Leitz, Assistant Commissioner, said that the department supports the evaluation's recommendations, but that it is a challenging and complex issue. He said that oral health is important to the overall health of MA recipients and that the Dayton administration has placed a high priority on improving health care. He said that the Governor's budget proposal of a 5 percent increase to the fee-for-service and managed care organizations dental services base rates is a good start to helping dental providers. Mr. Leitz said that the department is working on simplifying the rate structure as well. He thanked OLA staff for their thorough work on the issue of rates for dental services.

With no further business, Representative Hansen adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair

Shelly Watterud, Recording Secretary