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Health Technology Clinical Committee Information

Health Technology Assessment Program (HTA)

The Health Technology Assessment Program (HTA) is an innovative program that determines if health services used by state government are safe and effective. HTA was created by HB2575 in March of 2006 and is a part of Governor Gregoire’s five point strategy to make the state a leader in the way it buys and uses health care. The focus of the program will be to rely on scientific, or evidence-based, information about safety and effectiveness to inform decisions and improve quality. The primary goals are:

- Make health care safer by relying on scientific evidence and a committee of practicing clinicians
- Make coverage decisions of state agencies more consistent – the program is a joint effort by several state agencies
- Make state purchased health care more cost effective by paying for medical tools and procedures that are proven to work
- Make the coverage decision process more open and inclusive by creating a web site to share information, holding public meetings, and publishing decision criteria and outcomes

The program is staffed and managed by HCA, in consultation with participating agencies. Coverage decisions made by the clinical committee will apply to Medicaid, Labor and Industries, and the Health Care Authority. Department of Corrections and Department of Veterans affairs also voluntarily participate.

Health Technology Clinical Committee

A key component of the HTA program is the use of an independent committee of eleven practicing health care professionals to use the technology assessment reports on the strength of evidence to make coverage decisions. Authorizing legislation requires the Health Care Authority (HCA) Administrator to appoint eleven committee members that include six practicing physicians and five other practicing licensed health professionals who use health technology in their scope of practice. At least two (2) members of the committee must have professional experience treating women, children, elderly persons, and people with diverse ethnic and racial background. See RCW 70.14.090. Committee members cannot work for one of the participating state agencies or have a substantial financial conflict of interest, such as an interest in a health technology company, including the holding of stock options, or the receipt of honoraria or consultant moneys, and must be willing to complete a conflict of interest disclosure form and agree to other membership requirements (e.g. confidentiality).

Health Technology Clinical Committee Selection

HCA seeks a committee with a diversity of knowledgeable individuals willing to actively participate and make decisions based on the evidence and the best interest of the public. Key qualities for the committee include:

- Active practitioners;
- Diverse membership in geographic location, gender, and ethnic and racial background;
- Knowledge of and experience with evidence-based medicine, including experience, training, or education focused on fields relevant to evidence based medicine -
Clinical epidemiology; health economics; health services research; public health; biostatistics; medical quality management; public health system planning and evaluation; cost-effectiveness analysis; decision sciences; access to health care; clinical effectiveness; health informatics; biometrics; or outcomes research

Additionally, HCA required a range of practitioner types and specialties that use health technologies (medical and surgical devices and procedures, medical equipment, and diagnostic tests). The target categories below include some examples, but are not intended to represent an exhaustive list. Practitioners, depending on the services performed, can fit in more than one category.

- **Diagnostic Services** – such as radiology, pathology, internal medicine, emergency medicine
- **Primary Care Services** – such as family practice, internal medicine, nurse practitioner, pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology
- **Surgical Services** – such as orthopedics, neurosurgery, cardiology, anesthesiology, obstetrics/gynecology, podiatry, dentistry
- **Rehabilitative Services** – such as rehabilitation medicine, chiropractic, prosthetics and orthotics, physical, occupational, or rehabilitative therapy,
- **Additional Health Services** – such as mental health, dental, chiropractic, complementary and alternative medicine (e.g. acupuncture, naturopathy), or massage therapy

HCA formed a workgroup of agency medical directors to evaluate and rank the candidates. The following evaluation criteria were considered:

- Length and type of clinical experience
- Clinical experience relevance to health technology
- Experience on committees (internal organizational or external) and/or applying clinical knowledge to policy or other decision making process
- Knowledge of and experience with evidence-based medicine, including experience, training, or education focused on fields relevant to evidence based medicine - clinical epidemiology; health economics; health services research; public health; biostatistics; medical quality management; public health system planning and evaluation; cost-effectiveness analysis; decision sciences; access to health care; clinical effectiveness; health informatics; biometrics; or outcomes research
- Willingness to actively participate, apply results of evidence based review, and make decisions in the interest of the public
- Additional information such as member diversity in geographic location, gender, or ethnic or racial background geographic diversity; experience in treating women, children, elderly persons, and people with diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, and potential conflicts of interest

The workgroup arrived at an initial consensus recommendation, with some additional information needed related to licensure, active practice eligibility requirements, and sufficient expertise in certain specialties. Additional information was obtained, and a final evaluation based on the criteria was conducted. Recommendations for the committee were forwarded to the HCA Administrator, who selected from the recommended list.