

Minnesota Health Action Group



The Weekly BUZZ

Innovation, Value, Payer Awareness Key to Igniting Specialty Rx Change

January headlines (see "Explore" below) attest to the fact that the need to rein in prescription drugs costs has never been more urgent, which was the area of focus at The Action Group's January 16, 2019, Community Dialogue. The title, **"Driving Transformative Change in the Specialty Drug Marketplace Through Health Policy and Legislative Action,"** informed the discussion featuring local and national thought leaders. (View all of the presentations [here](#).)

"Although we've wrapped up over four years of study on the specialty drug marketplace, the real work to elicit change on health policy and legislative issues is just beginning," says Carolyn Pare, Action Group president and CEO. "It's not just about knowing what to do, it's about innovating, demanding value, and raising payer awareness so expectations are understood...and acted upon. We're all part of the solution."



Specialty drug thought leaders shared key insights at the January Community Dialogue (l-r)
[Leigh Purvis](#), [Steve Schondelmeyer](#), [Carolyn Pare](#), [Maura Calsyn](#),
[Jennifer Reck](#)



- [Specialty Drug Employer Playbook from the Minnesota Health Action Group](#)
- [Secretive 'Rebate Trap' Keeps Generic Drugs for Diabetes and Other Ills Out of Reach](#) (Kaiser Health News, January 18, 2019)
- [House Democrats Launch Drug-Pricing Probe Into a Dozen Major Health-Care Companies](#) (CNBC, January 14, 2019)
- [Trump Summons Advisors to White House Over Drug Price Hikes](#) (Politico, January 8, 2019)
- [Life, Death and Insulin](#) (Washington Post Magazine, January 7, 2019)
- [Drug Makers Resist Pressure From Washington on Prices](#) (CNN, January 3, 2019)
- [Big Pharma Ushers in New Year By Raising Prices of More Than 1,000 Drugs](#) (CBS News, January 2, 2019)

Jon Schloemer Is In. Are You? Employer Benefits Survey Coming Soon!

Open to **all** employers with employees in Minnesota, The Action Group's 2019 [Annual Employer Benefits Survey](#) will open **February 4, 2019**, with the final results meeting scheduled for **April 11, 2019**.

"When I say, 'I'm In' for the Survey, I mean I'm completing it no matter what, and I'm in on employer collaboration," says Jon Schloemer, director of compensation and benefits for Fleet Farm in his [new blog](#). "Dealing with health care and benefits issues is not getting any easier, and I learn so much from my peers about what has and hasn't been effective."

The Survey is designed by employers, for employers, and is free and confidential. Those who complete it receive a benchmark report of employee trends and are invited to attend a collaborative results meeting.

Invitations and access information coming soon! If you do not receive it and would like to participate, please contact [Sue Jesseman](#) (sjesseman@mnhealthactiongroup.org).



View the 2018 Survey
Executive Summaries [here](#).

February Member Meeting: Health Care Fraud, Waste and Abuse

Financial losses due to health care fraud are in the tens of billions of dollars each year, according to the National Health Care Anti-Fraud Association (NHCAA). In fact, losses resulting from fraud and abuse are typically estimated to be between 3%-10% of total health care expenditures. This makes it an important topic for employers in terms of cost and fiduciary plan management. Members are invited to attend our February 28, 2019, member meeting, "**Eye-Opening Insights: Fraud, Waste and Abuse in Health Care**," from 8 a.m.-10 a.m.

We've assembled a panel of industry experts who have made a career of uncovering, analyzing and addressing fraud, waste and abuse in the health care system. Click [here](#) for a full meeting description.



PLEASE NOTE: This meeting is for members only. If you are interested in membership and would like to learn more, please join us! For a meeting pass, contact [Sue Jesseman](#): sjesseman@mnhealthactiongroup.org

[Register](#)

Mental Health 2019 Guiding Coalition Update

At our October 30, 2018, Mental Health Community Dialogue, Liz Beckius of Best Buy and Nance Lee Mosquera of The City of St. Paul carried the message on behalf of employers: "*Join us in accelerating performance improvement in integrated mental health care.*"

There has been an excellent response to this call to action, and we have assembled a highly engaged

Mental Health Guiding Coalition. This includes employers that were part of the 2017-2018 Mental Health Learning Network, as well as new employers with a shared commitment to accelerating performance improvement in integrated mental health care. There is diversity in public and private employers, of all sizes, and various industries.

Several employers will wear “dual hats,” also representing health plans, care systems, and providers. In addition, our multi-stakeholder group includes representatives of NAMI Minnesota, Minnesota Community Measurement, and the Minnesota Medical Association. We are also honored to have an elite group of key advisors to bring additional insight, connections, and national leverage to our work. These include: Darcy Gruttadaro, Henry Harbin, and Mike Thompson.

The group kicks off on **February 15, 2019**, and will be meeting throughout the year with a focus on action. The Guiding Coalition will leverage the unique assets of Minnesota, create a “common table” for the exchange of perspectives and ideas, identify and prioritize opportunities for collaborative action, agree upon meaningful measures, and monitor progress toward goals. Please watch for additional updates throughout the year. If you are not part of this group but are interested in learning more, please reach out to Deb Krause (dkrause@mnhealthactiongroup.org).

EDITORIAL

Business community lends its muscle to improve mental health care in Minnesota.

Business leaders' involvement could have 'incredibly positive impact.'

By Editorial Board Star Tribune | NOVEMBER 5, 2018 — 5:24PM



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This finding in a new report on Minnesota's health care outcomes is heartbreaking: Just 8 percent of adults who seek medical care for depression — one of the most common mental illnesses — will be in remission at six months.

The situation is even grimmer when looking at past years' findings from the nonprofit Minnesota Community Measurement (MCM) group, which gathers and reports information on health care quality, cost and patient experience to drive state improvement. The 8 percent remission figure hasn't changed in the last three years, according to MCM's latest report, which came out last week. That's shocking in a state that's home to world-class medical providers.

"We are consistently hearing that we are 'further ahead' on mental health, we know we have unique assets in our state, and we sense the appetite for Minnesota to be the leader on 'something big.' By convening a multi-stakeholder Guiding Coalition with the right sense of purpose and urgency, we believe that this potential will be realized."

**Deb Krause
Action Group Vice President**

Deb has two compelling blogs about mental health: "Let's Make It Happen," and "Mental Health Parity: It's Time to Fulfill the Promise."



- [Mental Health: A Workforce Crisis Report](#)
- [MN Community Measurement's Depression Care in Minnesota 2018 Report](#)
- [Presentations and Case Studies from The Action Group's Mental Health Community Dialogue](#)
- [Working Well in Minnesota: Insights and Actions to Help Minnesota Employers Advance Mental Health Care in the Workplace](#)



From the CAPITOL

Health Care Issues on the 2019 Legislative Agenda

Dozens of newly elected officials arrived at the State Capitol this month to officially open the 2019 Legislative session, and Governor Tim Walz and Lt.

Governor Peggy Flanagan have been working diligently to fill out their administration. Their presence, combined with an incoming DFL House majority comprised of 40 percent freshmen, lends an air of freshness to the Capitol.

There are still many familiar faces: Tony Lourey, long-serving State Senator and chair of many Health and Human Services committees, is taking his experience to the Department of Human Services as its new commissioner. At the Department of Health, Jan Malcolm is one of the few Dayton-era commissioners asked to stay on in a leadership role.



Click on the image to find additional information about the Minnesota State Legislature and current activities.

There will be no shortage of health care issues being discussed in 2019. The following issues either remain unresolved from the 2018 Legislative session or are a priority for elected officials this year:

- Pharmacy costs and policies to respond to the growing opioid crisis.
- Whether or how to initiate a public buy-in option to the MnCARE insurance program.
- Dealing with funding the reformed high-risk insurance pool for the individual market.
- Investments in mental health for all.
- What to do with the scheduled repeal of the Provider Tax, which funds the state's Health Care Access Fund.

We will update you on issues as they come up throughout the Legislative session. In the meantime, you can find additional information about the Legislature and its activities [here](#).



Save the DATE

The Action Group offers many opportunities for HR and benefits professionals to participate in professional development meetings and events. If you are considering membership and would like to attend a member meeting to learn more, complimentary passes are available through [Sue Jesseman](#) (sjesseman@mnhealthactiongroup.org).

Member Meetings:

- **February 28, 2019: Eye-Opening Insights: Fraud, Waste and Abuse in Health Care**

All member meetings begin with networking at 8 a.m. and conclude at 10 a.m. They are held at the Hilton Airport/MOA. Members who miss a meeting or are interested in viewing the presentations may log into the Member Center from the [homepage](#) and select Member Meeting Presentations.



Public Meetings and Events:

- **February 4, 2019: Annual Employer Benefits Survey**

- opens (*The Survey is open to all employers with employees in Minnesota*)
- **April 11, 2019:** Annual Employer Benefits Survey Results Meeting (*for Survey participants only*)
 - **May 2, 2019:** Action Group Annual Employer Leadership Summit: [Change @ the Speed of Life: Investing in the Workforce of Tomorrow](#)
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THOUGHT for the Week

"Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

Will Rogers
American Entertainer and Humorist



The Minnesota Health Action Group is a coalition of public and private purchasers whose sole purpose is to represent the collective voice of those who write the checks for health care in Minnesota. Action Group members collaborate with community stakeholders to drive innovations that support high quality health care, create engaged consumers, and ensure the economic vitality of all Minnesota communities. Based in Bloomington, MN, the Minnesota Health Action Group was formed in 1988 as the Buyers Health Care Action Group. To learn more, visit www.mnhealthactiongroup.org. Follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter: @actiongroupmn