

# **MINUTES**

**Massachusetts Health Information Technology Council  
Meeting  
February 19, 2009  
10:00 – 11:30 am**

**Matta Conference Room  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, Massachusetts**



## **AGENDA ITEMS**

### **I. Introduction and Swearing in of Council Members**

- a. Sworn in by Secretary Bigby. Witnessed by Madeline Grant of the Governor's office
- b. Secretary Bigby welcomed the Council members to the first meeting of this Council. She asked that the individuals go around the table and introduce themselves and provide a very brief background.
- c. Secretary Bigby then asked the "audience" seated around the room to give their names and the organizations they represent.

Secretary Bigby explained that this Council is very important to the Commonwealth in the arena of Information Technology in Healthcare. This was highlighted recently by President Obama. It is important because it has the potential to improve care and decrease cost. She further stated that we need to be certain as we go forward with implementation that we do it in a way that we pay attention to the investment that the Commonwealth and other entities are making in this venture. What we do as a Council is important as this plays out in years to come. Secretary Bigby stated that we should always keep in mind it is to benefit the people of the Commonwealth and that is the ultimate measure of our success. She concluded that this will put us on the map as a leader in this area.

### **II. Review of Chapter 268A (Carl Valvo)**

Carl Valvo, an attorney who serves as outside counsel to MTC provided an overview of chapter 268A ethics law. Mr. Valvo went through a handout (incorporated as part of the minutes) and indicated that he would be available to answer specific questions or concerns of the Council members.

Mr. Valvo also provided the phone number of the ethics commission. Secretary Bigby also explained there is an ethics attorney of the day to respond to questions.

Secretary Bigby changed the order of agenda. After Mr. Adams presentation, the Council members will review and discuss the proposed MeHI budget and review the summary of the plan which requires Council approval.

### **III. Mass Technology Collaborative and E-Health Institute (Mitchell Adams)**

Mr. Adams gave a brief overview of the MTC, a quasi-public agency of the Commonwealth. MTC has been involved in eHealth for the past 5 years and for the past four years has primarily focused on the adoption of computerized physician order entry systems. MTC has its own Independent Board of Directors. MTC's goal under this legislation is to facilitate the statewide deployment of Electronic Health Records that are knitted together through a Health Information Exchange and to promote other technologies that save lives and reduce cost.

Mr. Adams further stated that the role of the Council is to approve the plan and annual updates of that plan and any contract with an implementing organization. The role of MTC is to act as a facilitator and operator. MTC is a partner with the Council. The statute is clear as to how MTC is to function. MTC is not the boots on the ground doing the work. MTC plans, funds and provides oversight. The statute anticipates implementing organizations that MTC will contract with to do the actual work.

Several Council members asked questions regarding clarity around the roles of the Council and the MTC Board. Mr. Adams explained that the MTC Board is a part of the MTC apparatus and that the Plan would need to be approved by both the MTC board and the HIT Council. Mr. Adams introduced his eHealth staff: Glen Comiso, Bethany Gilboard, Judy Silvia, Barbara-Jo Thompson and Simon Kennedy from BCG. A portion of their time is allocated to MeHI.

#### **IV. Health Information Technology Council (Secretary Bigby)**

Secretary Bigby walked through a Power Point presentation that explains the statute and the role of the Council. Secretary Bigby specifically highlighted what the statewide plan needs to achieve. She stated that it must be community based, address the uninsured and linguistic minorities. It needs to make sure the information exchange includes the ability of patients to access their own records. It requires that the plan needs to address the common good of the public. It must also include opportunities to improve quality, etc. State and other funds that come to the Commonwealth for disseminating EHRs will go to the eHealth Institute fund. The fund and how moneys are used must be approved by the Council.

Secretary Bigby indicated that the Institute shall consult with Medicaid, since the state usually gets up to a 90% federal government for certain technology. Tom Dehner confirmed it can be up 90 % and the Stimulus does address this.

Several Council members asked for clarifications about dates. Dr. Bell added that the HIE network has to be built by Jan 1, 2015 and that this is a big and important goal. We need to be aware of the enormity of the work the state must get done so we do not miss this target date.

In addition, Mr. Adams stated that community selection will be a joint effort between the Council and MeHI. Dr. Koh asked how Massachusetts ranks compared to the nation in EHR adoption. Dr. Bell indicated that there aren't very good studies but that anecdotally California and Massachusetts appear to be leading the way.

#### **V. E-Health Institute Budget (Mitchell Adams)**

Secretary Bigby asked Mr. Adams who is the Executive Director of MeHI? Mr. Adams replied that Glen Comiso will serve as interim director of MeHI.

Secretary Bigby asked Mr. Adams to describe in detail each line item of the budget. Under personnel there was interest as to what made up that line and how that item was calculated.

Mr. Adams reviewed the budget and explained it is retroactive to July. The Council asked if oversight and evaluation can't be built in the FY09 budget, will money be held back or will it be built into the contract with the IO? Mr. Adams responded that it will be built into the IO work plan. David Szabo requested a break down be provided to the Council of what roles the members of MeHi play and the work they will perform. MTC will need to put in a new category of miscellaneous to address some other possible expenses to reflect planning with regards to the Federal Stimulus.

The Council expressed a need for monitoring outside the parameters of the IO contract/workplan (\$13,000,000). Mr. Adams stated that MTC can have an independent monitoring system taken out of this \$13M to address this.

Karen Bell mentioned the Federal Stimulus package and MeHI may also be able to take advantage of Federal money, but that it may be at least 6 months before we know how money is spent.

MTC in order to avoid redundancy will stay glued to federal standards.

There were many questions regarding the budget so it was requested that the budget be revised prior to Council vote.

Secretary Bigby recognized the need to get this plan approved quickly and acknowledged we tried to cover too much. Secretary Bigby suggested that it might be a good idea to go back and read the documents distributed and come back prepared at the next meeting. She stated any questions should get to Mr. Adams before the meeting. Secretary Bigby will work with Mr. Adams and staff to schedule a meeting in advance of March 11<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Bell asked if it were possible to call in to the meeting. It was stated that you can participate by phone, but you can not vote.

Deborah Adair asked how much can be shared at this point? Secretary Bigby stated that until matters are voted on, it should not be shared. There will be an RFP issued. If you share, you are giving preferential treatment. Eventually documents will become public, but at this point it is a draft and therefore not ready for public distribution.

The remainder of the agenda was not addressed and left for future meetings.

Secretary Bigby indicated they would schedule the next meeting as soon as possible.

Meeting adjourned at 11:34.