

Mid-State Regional Advisory Board January 27, 2026

The Trillium Health Resources Mid-State Regional Advisory Board met Tuesday, January 27, 2026. Due to inclement weather, the meeting was held via Web-Ex at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Commissioner David Allen, Commissioner Melvin “Skip” Alston, Kishia Dunlap, Commissioner J. Carlvena Foster, Mary Hassell, Leann Henkel, Dr. Tommy Jarrell, Commissioner Priscilla Little-Reid, and Commissioner Dr. Rick Watkins

Members Absent:

Commissioner Jeffrey Pope and Ann Shaw

Staff Present:

Anthony Ward, Anne Kimball, Dr. Robert Nelson, and Sherry Bynum

Guest Present:

Randy Abbott

I. Call to Order

Chair Commissioner David Allen called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

Chair Allen noted that since the meeting was being held virtually, items that needed a vote could not be addressed tonight and would be held until the March meeting.

II. Certification of Quorum

Sherry Bynum, Clerk, certified a quorum.

III. Adoption of Agenda

Chair Allen stated the adoption of the agenda would be by unanimous consent. *Chair Allen stated that the Agenda will be approved as distributed if there are no objections. With no objections, the Agenda is approved as distributed.*

IV. Approval of Minutes

Approval of the November 25, 2025 meeting minutes was tabled until March.

V. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VI. Regional Vice President Report

Anthony Ward, Regional Vice President, provided the following:

A. North Carolina Medicaid Rebase Update

Mr. Ward gave an update on North Carolina Medicaid Rebase, stated that while no new funding has been allocated for Medicaid services for the current Fiscal Year, on December 20, 2025, Governor Josh Stein announced a restoration of the Medicaid reimbursement

rates that were earlier reduced, effective October 1, 2025. In his announcement, Governor Stein indicated that without additional funds being appropriated, Medicaid would run out of funding by Spring 2026, which would lead to even more significant challenges for the Medicaid and healthcare system. Trillium will restore rates back to the September 30, 2025 levels.

B. Children's and Families Specialty Plan Update

The Children and Families Specialty Plan managed by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina under the name Healthy Blue Care Together, launched on December 1, 2025. The initial roll out included a limited population, expansion to additional children, youth and their families is expected later this year. There have been challenges since the transition. Trillium will continue to monitor the issues.

C. Trillium Health Resources Provider Network Management and Claims Submission

Effective July 1, 2026, Trillium intends to transition to a unified claims system for Tailored Plan operations. All providers of behavioral health, physical health and long-term services and supports (LTSS) will submit claims through a single portal.

Currently, physical health and LTSS providers who deliver services to Trillium members submit claims to Carolina Complete Health for payment. Beginning, July 1, 2026, all claims for these services will be submitted to Trillium. This transition will enhance administration efficiency, transparency and accountability in claims processing and payment.

To ensure providers can continue serving Trillium members without any disruption in payment, Trillium is partnering with Andros, a trusted provider network management firm to facilitate contracting directly with Trillium. Trillium has streamlined the contracting process by adding an amendment option for physical health providers that currently have a Tailored Plan Behavioral Health contract with Trillium.

D. THRive Local

To highlight the role of each health plan while reinforcing that all plans are part of the Trillium Health Resources' system, names of each health plan have been introduced:

- Trillium Whole Health (Medicaid Tailored Plan)
- Trillium Direct (Medicaid carve-out plan)
- Trillium Access (state-funded plan for uninsured and underinsured individuals)

The final plan to rollout is **THRive Local** – the county level plan that embodies both the local county funding Trillium receives and the funding Trillium invests locally in the communities.

THRive Local demonstrates to local communities all the ways that Trillium gives back to the communities by highlighting the programs that Trillium funds in each county. The name emphasizes local partnerships, investment and accountability.

THRive Local name and initiative is in the process of launching. In the coming weeks, more information will be announced, including receiving an invitation to a March 13 awards luncheon.

E. Victory Junction Spring 2026 Family Weekends

Trillium continues to partnership with Victory Junction to offer family weekends for members. The Spring 2026 dates have been announced. For families interested, an interest form is available on the Trillium website.

F. Rural Health Transformation Program Funding

On December 29, 2025, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that all 50 states would receive awards under the Rural Health Transformation Program, a \$50 Billion initiative established under Public Law 119-21 designed to strengthen and modernize health care in rural communities across our country.

North Carolina was awarded \$213 Million based on North Carolina's application submitted in November 2025. That application included North Carolina's planned investments across the six (6) eligible categories, including:

- **Community-Rooted Care Networks:** Establishing locally governed "NC ROOTS" Hubs that connect medical, behavioral health, and social services, making it easier for rural residents to access comprehensive care close to home.
- **Prevention and Chronic Disease Management:** Expanding programs for diabetes and hypertension control, cancer screening, maternal health services, and nutrition support including "food as medicine" initiatives.
- **Behavioral Health Expansion:** Growing mental health and substance use disorder services through new clinics, mobile crisis teams, school-based programs, and integration with primary care.
- **Workforce Development:** Training and retaining healthcare professionals through rural residency programs, incentives and innovative career pathways—creating jobs while addressing provider shortages.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Helping rural practices and hospitals transition to value-based payment models that reward keeping people healthy, not just treating illness.
- **Technology and Innovation:** Deploying cutting-edge artificial intelligence to support rural providers, expanding broadband access, improving health information sharing, and ensuring digital literacy for all residents.

G. Enhanced Affordable Care Act Subsidies

Mr. Ward discussed the Enhanced Affordable Care Act subsidies. The Act was introduced during the pandemic and extended by the Inflation Reduction Act, which made coverage premiums free for some and capped costs at 8.5% for others, expired on December 31, 2025. With these subsidies ending, some covered through Affordable Care Act coverage may see premiums increase significantly, with a projected 114% average increase, in early 2026. Trillium will be watching this change closely to monitor the impact it may have on State funded services available locally.

H. Changes in Authorization Requirements for Innovations Waiver Services

Mr. Ward reported that effective April 1, 2026, prior authorization for Innovations Waiver Services will be required for all service codes under the benefit of Innovations Waiver, except for Specialty Care Services which will remain no prior authorization.

Specialty Care Services include requests for:

- Assistive Technology- Equipment and Supplies/Connectivity/Monitoring/ Nutritionals
- Home Modifications
- Vehicle Modifications
- Community Networking Class/Conference

The information was distributed to the Provider Network in early January to provide notice in advance of the change.

I. Operations Report

Mr. Ward called attention to the December 2025 Operations Report. He highlighted the Health Plan Eligible Members section, stating that next month's meeting will show a decrease of 10,000 Medicaid Direct members, which is a result of children in foster care

transitioning to the Children and Families Specialty Plan December 1, 2025, managed by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina. Mr. Ward highlighted the Utilization Management section calling attention to the decrease in the Medicaid Requests Received, which is due to some authorization requirements being rolled back, resulting in a decrease.

VII. Governing Board Report

Governing Board member, Commissioner Priscilla Little-Reid, highlighted items from the December Governing Board meeting.

- The meeting included Board action to appoint the new At Large Governing Board member. Lizzie Toler of the Recovery Alliance Initiative was selected.
- The Board also received the appointment of:
 - Commissioner David Allen from the Mid-State Regional Advisory Board
 - Lorraine Washington from the North Central Consumer and Family Advisory Committee
 - Bo Dean from the Council on Health Disparities (Non-Voting Member)
- The Governing Board is scheduled to meet next on Thursday, February 26 at 4:00 p.m. for their regular meeting.

VIII. Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) Report

Leann Henkel, CFAC Chair, provided a Mid-State Consumer and Family Advisory (CFAC) report, highlighting:

- Meetings – are held the third Tuesday of each month.
- Reports and updates are provided by staff.
- Highlights from the January report –
 - CHES Health e-Recovery was the topic of discussion at the December meeting.
 - Mid-State CFAC Chair attended the December Governing Board meeting.
 - Mid-State Vice-Chair attends the monthly State CFAC meetings as well as the monthly State to Local CFAC meetings.
 - CFAC members continue to attend internal and external committee meetings and events.
 - The combined membership of all five (5) Trillium CFAC's constitutes the Member Advisory Committee (MAC). The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for March 4.

IX. Regional Advisory Board Comments

Chair Allen recognized Governing Board member Randy Abott.

Chair Allen thanked staff for all their work.

X. Other Material

- Chief Executive Officer Report
- Financial Report/Budget Ordinance
- Tailored Plan Operations Report
- Tailored Plan Operations Report PowerPoint

XI. Adjournment

With there being no other business, Chair Allen called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. *Leann Henkel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner J. Carlvena Foster seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.* The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 24, 2026, starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Asheboro Office, 938 New Century Drive, Asheboro, NC.

David Z. Allen
Commissioner David Allen, Chair

3-24-26
Date

Sherry Bynum
Sherry Bynum, Clerk

3-24-26
Date

Packet Material:

- January 27, 2026 agenda
- Draft November 25, 2025 minutes
- Mid-State Regional Vice President Report
- Mid-State Regional Governing Board Report
- Mid-State CFAC Report
- Chief Executive Officer Report
- Financial Report
- Tailored Plan Operations Report
- Tailored Plan Operations Report PowerPoint