

HEALTHCARE FINANCING AND SYSTEMS THINKING LEARNING SERIES

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OBJECTIVE

Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) has designed a serial learning opportunity for the Department of Community Health (DCH), Division of Medical Assistance Plans. The goal of the series was to advance understanding of healthcare financing and refine intra- and inter-agency communication for creation of high leverage solutions to policy challenges.

BACKGROUND

Since 2008, the Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) has offered a legislative health policy learning series to legislators and their staff, to prepare them to address health issues in Georgia. Topics include evaluating health policy from a systems-thinking perspective, health financing, access to care and prevention as well as time to discuss any special health topics. GHPC utilized this series as a model when developing a learning series for the Department of Community Health (DCH), Division of Medical Assistance Plans. GHPC staff presented a “mini-course” in January of 2016, including topics on healthcare financing and systems thinking. Feedback from this half day workshop was used to inform the planning of the longer learning series in May/June of 2016.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Healthcare Finance and Systems Thinking Learning Series was designed as a four day workshop, with sessions spread across six weeks, to meet the scheduling needs of the DCH staff.

Global content and learning objectives were established for each session. Design and structure for each session revolved around the daily content topic to be presented in the morning. Content delivery was interactive and included small group activities to increase learner engagement and to allow real-time application of the concepts discussed. The afternoon portions were focused on systems thinking and/or building conversational capacity among different levels of DCH staff that would afford opportunities to address adaptive problems and have difficult conversations. Prior to adjournment, each participant completed the session evaluation and offered feedback specific to content and facilitation strategies.

Global topics included:

- Health policy and health outcomes
- Healthcare finance
- Health insurance and access to healthcare services
- Tele-health and the rural health crisis in Georgia

Spacing of the sessions allowed the GHPC team to make changes and adaptations to original plans based on feedback from the prior session. For example, there was a two week span between session one and session two. This allowed us to revise the facilitation methodology based on our assessment of the group dynamics in the room. We created more opportunities for learners to engage with each other using customized “group-work” and implemented a “max mix” methodology that created opportunities for representatives of the different service lines within DCH to interact with each other.

IMPACT

Evaluation data demonstrated high impact value to DCH participants. Participants felt encouraged and equipped to engage in a broader, more systemic approach to health policymaking, and better able to solve the difficult issues. DCH staff expressed the value of the learning series and recommended that ALL staff be offered the opportunity to participate. They also identified other topics for future learning series content.

Participants who attended all four sessions were awarded a certificate of completion by the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University, under which GHPC is aligned. There were three staff members who attended three sessions, so we designed a half-day “make-up” session of the core content areas so that these staff could receive certificates as well.

At the completion of the series, eleven Medicaid staff received a certificate of completion. DCH leadership has requested GHPC offer this learning series along with an advanced series and special topic sessions for successive cohorts within the department.

For more information, please contact the Georgia Health Policy Center at 404.413.0314 or visit us online at www.ghpc.gsu.edu

