

Advisory Committee on Healthcare Innovation & Evaluation (ACHIEv)

Meeting Minutes for October 23, 2025

Hybrid Meeting occurred via Zoom/Tukwila Conference Room

Members Present

David Folweiler, DC | Chair
John Meier | Vice Chair
Andrew Friedman, MD
Kirk Harmon, MD
Laurie Gwerder, ARNP
Lloyd Brooks
Jane Dale
Louis Lim, MD
Nicole Gomez
Jessica Hauffe

Members Not Present

Aaron Jorgensen
Tricia Daniel

L&I Staff & Presenters

Elizabeth Smith
Cherell Fisher
Kirsta Glenn
Ciara High
Cindy Gaddis
Angelique Guppy
Charla Treise
Gary Franklin
Kim Wallace
Karen Jost
Diana Drylie
Suzyn Daniel
Azadeh Farokhi

Jason Fodeman
Deborah Havens
Jennifer Jutte
Morgan Young
Jason McGrew
Zach Gray
Jennine Griffo
Noha Gindy
Athena Hightower
Megan Lemon
Aaron Hoffman
Jessica Radcliff
Sarah Martin

Kim Mayhew
Daniel Aguilera
Paulina Luke
Marc Hobbs
Kelly Boykin
Peggy Halstead
Fernando Herron
Tina Vorse
Tiffany Meeks
Victoria Rich
Todd Bishopp

Welcome & Virtual Meeting Tips (David Folweiler & Kim Wallace)

Introductions

ACHIEv Chair, David Folweiler called the meeting to order and led introductions. Kim introduced representatives from L&I and new ACHIEv member, Jessica Hauffe.

Review & Approve Agenda

The committee reviewed the October 23, 2025 ACHIEv agenda and voted to approve the agenda. Motion approved and carried.

Approve Meeting Minutes from July 24, 2025 Meeting

Committee members reviewed the meeting minutes from July 24, 2025. Two corrections were noted: (1) the meeting date should read July 24, 2025, instead of July 23, 2025, and (2) Jane Dale was present and should be recorded accordingly. With these revisions, the minutes were approved, and the official record will be updated to reflect the changes.

Safety Tip

Victoria Rich reviewed the safety tip on hearing protection.

Billing Adjustment Timeline Revisions (Tina Vorse)

Tina presented on future revisions to the billing adjustment timeline, including potentially reducing the adjustment period from 90 to 60 days to align with the protest period. Committee members expressed concern that the change could burden providers and suggested instead extending the protest period to 90 days, which would require legislative action. Tina noted that feedback will be considered and that updates will be shared at a future ACHIEv meeting.

Light Duty Panel Discussion (Cindy Gaddis)

Cindy facilitated a panel consisting of: Peggy Halstead, Early Return to Work Program Manager, Fernando Herron, Vocational Services Specialist, and Kelly Boykin, Operations Manager, Claims Administration. The presentation focused on the benefits of light duty work and highlighted

L&I's Early Return to Work Program, which assists employers in developing return-to-work strategies and offers statewide consultant support through virtual and in-person presentations. Panelists and attendees further discussed the practical considerations and overall benefits of return-to-work programs for both workers and employers.

Light Duty Complaint Resolution (Cherell Fisher)

Cherell provided an overview of the Light Duty Complaint Resolution Office (LDCRO), highlighting its role, background, and strong performance in resolving complaints. The LDCRO currently resolves state fund complaints within about three business days and self-insurance complaints within about 20 business days, showing a significant improvement from previous timelines and exceeding established goals.

Workers Compensation System Modernization (WCSM) Update and Discussion (Elizabeth Smith & David Folweiler)

Elizabeth provided an update on the WCSM project, which aims to consolidate multiple legacy systems into a modern platform to improve efficiency and service for injured workers. WaTech paused the project in August 2025 to examine questions around scope and schedule. L&I, WaTech and the Governor's Office are engaging in efforts to define next steps. Committee members discussed project funding, vendor selection, data security, and implementation strategy. Elizabeth confirmed that prior work completed and lessons learned will inform future phases. She emphasized that modernizing workers comp technology is imperative. David requested an update around Fall 2026.

Physical Medicine Alignment (Marc Hobbs, Morgan Young)

Marc and Morgan provided an update on the Physical Medicine Alignment project, which aims to align agency policy, practice, and WAC 296-21-290 governing physical medicine services. The project's goals include improving worker outcomes, promoting provider parity, and modernizing policies through updates to both agency guidance and the WAC, informed by stakeholder feedback. The public comment period is scheduled to begin in February 2026, followed by a public hearing in March, with implementation targeted for July 2026. Committee members expressed support for the initiative.

Updates (Cindy Gaddis & Kirsta Glenn)

Legislative

Cindy gave an update on the following bills:

Past Sessions:

- HB 1197 - Adding psychologists as attending providers on mental health only claims.
- HB1275 - Authority to administer self-insured municipal claims if municipality is decertified for violation of good faith and fair dealing obligations.
- SB5463 - Expansion of good faith and fair dealing obligations for self-insurers.
- HB 1788 - Amendment to wage replacement benefit calculation for unmarried and married workers.

2026 Agency Request Legislation:

- Z-0433.3 - Modernizing Communication: Updates methods of communication specified in statutes to provide future flexibility and preserve customer choice.
- Z-0444.1 -Workers' Compensation Adjustments- Addresses the volatility of rates funding cost of living adjustments.
- Z-0442.1 - PTSD Pilot- Pilot program to improve outcome for workers with occupational disease claims for PTSD.

Agency

Kirsta gave an agency update, noting continued increases in long-term disability rates and high claim manager caseloads. To address these challenges, the agency is prioritizing overtime support for claims managers and expanding training classes to add new staff and improve workload balance.

Public Comment (David Folweiler)

None.

Meeting Wrap-Up (David Folweiler)

Meeting Debrief

Lloyd Brooks expressed appreciation for the quality of today's presentations. Gary Franklin offered to present at a future ACHIEv meeting on the risk factors associated with long-term disability.

Agenda Requests for January 2026

The committee proposed the topic of immigration-related concerns/considerations in workers' compensation, including possible PTSD resulting from detainment and deportation, as well as potential avoidance of medical care due to fear of detainment. Members also raised questions regarding how the agency will manage claims for injured workers who are deported.