

## OFM Forecasting and Research Division

# Medical Assistance Expenditures Forecast Charter Project Summary



**Purpose:**

This document describes the Charter Project Summary for the Medical Assistance Expenditure Forecasts.

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## Background

The Medical Assistance Expenditures Forecast Workgroup (MAEFW) is responsible for developing the Medical Assistance Expenditure Forecast, which informs financial analyses and the tracking of expenditures for the Health Care Authority (HCA). Led by the Office of Financial Management's (OFM) Forecasting and Research Division staff, the MAEFW includes staff from HCA, OFM's Budget Division, OFM's Forecasting and Research Division, Senate, and House of Representatives. Twice each year, workgroup members collaborate to prepare and approve the official Medical Assistance Expenditures Forecast using projected caseload data from the Caseload Forecast Council and expenditure information from OFM's official accounting system.

In 2021, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) reviewed HCA's Budget Structure and prepared a final report of recommendations<sup>1</sup>. The Legislative Auditor's report recommended that MAEFW formalize their workgroup's purpose and structure, as outlined below:

"OFM should lead the medical assistance forecast workgroup in developing a charter that specifies its purpose, structure, and decision-making protocols. The essential elements of the charter should include:

- The purpose of the forecast and the workgroup;
- Its intended customers;
- Detailed roles and responsibilities of each member of the workgroup;
- Protocols, such as the level of agreement necessary, to finalize a decision;
- Rules for settling a disagreement;
- How inquiries and requests for analysis are prioritized;
- How assumptions are documented and communicated to intended customers;
- How to compare prior forecasts against expenditures; and
- Quality assurance mechanisms."

Although SSB 5620 did not pass during the 2021-2022 legislative session<sup>2</sup>, Section 5(4) of the proposed bill outlines identical recommendations for OFM to develop a charter and consult MAEFW members throughout the process.

This summary outlines MAEFW's efforts to develop and implement a charter with the nine essential elements listed above.

## Approach

The forecast lead and forecast manager are the two OFM Forecasting and Research Division staff responsible for convening and overseeing MAEFW's forecast process. In spring 2022, the forecast lead and manager convened a charter project steering committee and a charter project team to prepare the charter by the Dec. 31, 2022, implementation date. Another OFM Forecasting and Research Division staff member with project management and facilitation expertise served as the project manager of this

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<sup>1</sup> McCord, R., Connolly, R., Freeman, Z., Whitener, V., and K. Konopaski. (December 2021). "Review of the Health Care Authority's Budget Structure." 21-04 Final Report. Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, Olympia, Washington. [https://leg.wa.gov/jlarc/reports/2021/HCA/f\\_3/print.pdf](https://leg.wa.gov/jlarc/reports/2021/HCA/f_3/print.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://app.leg.wa.gov/bills/summary?BillNumber=5620&Year=2021>

charter development work, coordinating with the forecast lead and forecast manager to develop each charter component collaboratively with the charter project team.

**Charter project steering committee**

The charter project steering committee included the assistant director of OFM’s Forecasting and Research Division, along with the forecast manager and forecast lead.

<b>MAEFW Charter Project Steering Committee Members</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Marc Baldwin	Assistant director / executive sponsor
Mandy Stahre	Forecast manager
Eddy Rauser	Forecast lead
Megan Schoor	Charter project manager

The project steering committee provided the project team with guidance on the agency budget and forecast processes. The steering committee also ensured that the project team had the resources necessary to prepare the required elements of the charter outlined in JLARC’s report. Steering committee members reviewed drafts of each charter component and voted to approve or reject them for testing by the MAEFW in Fall 2022 and Spring 2023.

The project steering committee and project manager met six times during the same timeframe. Additional project manager check-ins with steering committee members were scheduled as needed to draft and approve meeting agendas, review action items, and discuss the MAEFW’s progress on the various charter tasks. After the project team and steering committee approved the charter for testing, the steering committee and project manager met biweekly through September 2022 to prepare this project summary and supporting deliverables before the December deadline.

**Charter project team**

The forecast manager and forecast lead recruited 13 existing MAEFW members to join the charter project team, as listed in the table below. The charter project team provided insight about the MAEFW’s forecast development processes, purpose, and decision protocols. The charter project team kicked off on March 22, 2022, and the charter draft was finalized for testing on July 29, 2022.

<b>MAEFW Charter Project Team Members</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency / Division</b>
Marc Baldwin	OFM Forecasting and Research
Mandy Stahre	OFM Forecasting and Research
Eddy Rauser	OFM Forecasting and Research
Megan Schoor (project manager)	OFM Forecasting and Research
Jason Brown	OFM Budget
Robyn Williams	OFM Budget
Robin Brake	HCA
Catrina Lucero	HCA
Christy Vaughn	HCA
Megan Atkinson	HCA
Madina Cavendish	HCA
Carl Yanagida	HCA
Michaela Snook	HCA
Abby Frazier-Cole	HCA
Suman Majumdar	HCA
Sandy Stith	Senate
Meghan Morris	House of Representatives

OFM Forecasting led a series of 13 project team meetings that convened up to twice each month between March and July 2022. Each meeting lasted one to two hours and involved collaborative discussions that were facilitated by the project manager, forecast lead, and forecast manager.

### **Individual interviews and online survey to gather initial feedback**

Shortly after the March kickoff, the project manager conducted a series of one-on-one interviews with each project team member outside of OFM's Forecasting and Research Division. During these interviews, members described their role in the MAEFW and various aspects of MAEFW dynamics and processes, including key workgroup strengths, potential barriers or challenges, recurring issues that arise during the forecast process, and any strategies or suggestions to improve the workgroup's decision-making process. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes to 1 hour. Members also completed an electronic survey to share their thoughts about the MAEFW biweekly meetings, member participation in different phases of the forecast process, member accountability for resolving forecast issues, and the level of detail covered in meetings about critical forecast components. After analyzing the interview and survey data for major themes, the project manager compiled the results into a summary handout that the project team reviewed and discussed in mid-April 2022.

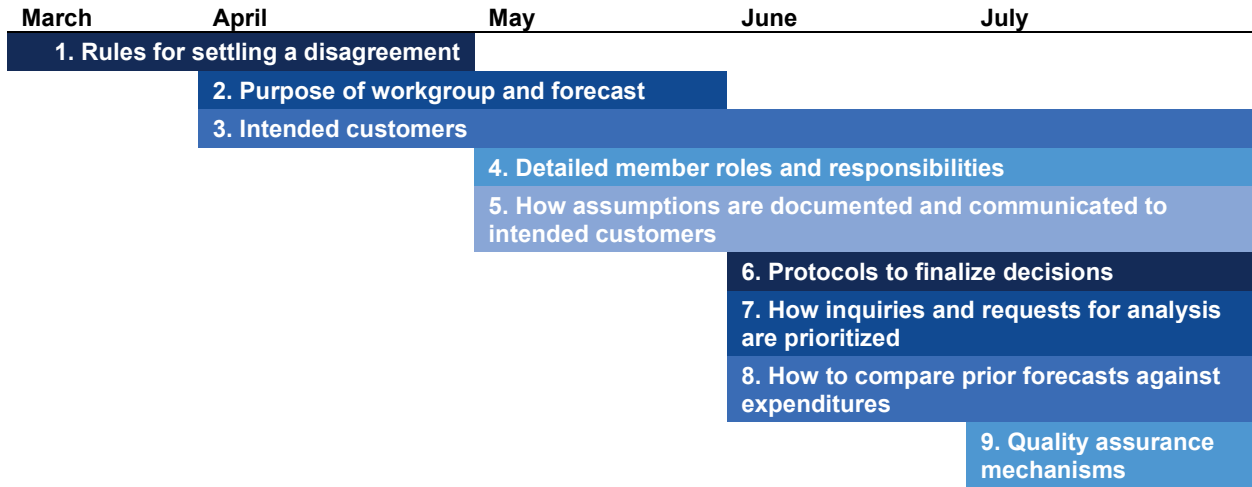
### **Facilitated group discussions to inform and prepare each charter element**

Working together in virtual meetings and individually outside of meetings, project team members participated in a variety of facilitated meeting discussions, small group meetings, and individual assignments to help draft each essential element of the workgroup charter. Microsoft Forms surveys and Microsoft Teams polls were also used during meetings and in between meetings to gather member feedback to shape the content and assess their level of support for each element of the charter.

As illustrated in the MAEFW Charter Project Timeline of Tasks (below), some charter elements were drafted in tandem and informed the development of related charter elements. For example, team members started to identify the workgroup's intended customers as they began formulating the purpose of the MAEFW and the forecast's purpose.

Project team members expanded the utility of many preexisting MAEFW governance policies and procedures during this project. Members reviewed and refined the detailed list of roles and responsibilities, while also updating the group norms and ground rules for each meeting. The forecast lead also developed a series of visual process maps that outline the critical steps, decisions, roles, and artifacts for each phase of the MAEFW forecast process. The forecast lead's virtual walk-throughs of each map helped to highlight key details about the eight process phases and engage project team members about the steps, roles, and level of consensus required for each decision made.

## MAEFW Charter Project Timeline of Tasks



In July, the steering committee and project team developed a series of quality assurance mechanisms that the MAEFW can easily implement at the end of each forecast cycle and in between cycles. The steering committee finalized the MAEFW Charter and voted to approve it for testing in late July. The project team received a copy of the charter shortly afterward, with a list of next steps for how the group will use the quality assurance mechanisms to test and update the charter in the future.

### Quality assurance testing

The MAEFW will use the following mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of this charter and identify opportunities to improve key aspects of the workgroup’s forecast process. The forecast manager and lead will carry out each mechanism and relay the results to MAEFW members for review.

Component	Testing Mechanism examples	Testing Frequency
Forecast cycle	Pluses and deltas Lessons learned discussion	In between forecast cycles
Charter updates	Pluses and deltas	In between forecast cycles
Group norms and ground rules	Member survey Individual check-ins as necessary post-survey	At forecast cycle kickoff meeting At the end of the forecast cycle
Decision-making protocol	Member survey Periodic check-ins with members and discussion at pluses and deltas meeting	At the end of the forecast cycle

## **Deliverables and Next Steps**

The MAEFW Charter was approved for testing by the Charter Project Steering Committee on July 28, 2022. The charter is 11 pages long and includes links to additional supporting documents such as the visual process maps, detailed member roles and responsibilities, decision log, and details of each quality assurance testing mechanism.

The project manager and project steering committee collaborated between July and October to prepare this project summary and a separate charter overview document for distribution. These documents are available on the new public facing MAEFW webpage, which the forecast manager and forecast lead launched in November 2022.

In late Fall 2022, the forecast lead launched a member survey and periodic member check-ins to assess the MAEFW's group norms, ground rules, and decision-making protocol. Results were shared and discussed with MAEFW members. The forecast lead will continue this practice at the end of each forecast cycle. In Spring 2023 and in between future forecast cycles, the forecast lead will coordinate a pluses and deltas exercise to identify lessons learned and potential improvements to forecast processes. After reviewing the ongoing list of action items and improvement ideas, the MAEFW will determine which improvement efforts to prioritize.