



Minnesota Health Insurance Exchange (MNsure)

Update to 2015 Evaluation Report

March 2016

Problems Identified

- **Technical Problems with Enrollment Process.** MNsure is Minnesota's state health insurance exchange. Consumers, counties, and health insurers encountered numerous technical problems during 2013-14 (the first year of enrollment) when they tried to use MNsure enrollment or case processing systems. The 2013 Legislature had exempted MNsure from most oversight by the state's information technology agency (the Office of MN.IT Services), and this contributed to technical problems when MNsure and other agencies created these systems.
- **Governance Issues.** The governor did not have authority in law to appoint the MNsure chief executive officer; MNsure was only accountable to the governor indirectly, through the governor's appointment of MNsure board members. Also, there was no statutory authority for oversight of the enrollment system created by MNsure, DHS, and the Office of MN.IT Services; this system (now known as the Minnesota Eligibility Technology System, or METS) plays a key role in enrolling individuals into publicly funded health care programs.
- **Inadequate Consumer Assistance.** Many calls to MNsure's customer service center were not answered promptly during the first enrollment period. MNsure's network of consumer assisters initially received too little training, and their roles were confusing.
- **Inaccurate Eligibility Decisions.** 2016 audits by OLA and the federal government found problems with many eligibility decisions for people who enrolled through MNsure. Also, some MNsure billings for MinnesotaCare have been inaccurate.

Changes Implemented

- **Information Technology Oversight.** The 2015 Legislature amended state law to make MNsure's information technology projects subject to review by the Office of MN.IT Services.
- **Fewer Enrollment Problems.** According to MNsure, consumers had better enrollment experiences in MNsure's second and third years than they did in the first. MNsure has fixed some technical problems, and last year it implemented a tool that allows consumers to compare the costs of coverage options. MNsure has also implemented changes that enable customer service staff to access consumer enrollment data more quickly. However, there have still been occasional reports of people waiting long periods to reach MNsure customer assistance.

Action Needed

- **Clarify Governance.** The Legislature should amend state law to give the governor, rather than the MNsure Board, authority to appoint the MNsure chief executive officer. In our view, an agency with MNsure's importance and visibility should be directly accountable to the governor. In addition, there is still no formal authority for the governance structure that oversees MNsure's enrollment system; this should be clarified in statute.
- **Improve Accuracy of Eligibility Decisions.** The problems identified in recent audits will need continued attention from MNsure, DHS, and the Office of MN.IT Services.
- **Improve the Functionality of "Back-End" Systems.** Counties and health plans still have significant concerns that "back-end" MNsure processes—for example, for transmitting information to insurers and managing cases—are insufficient.