

Massachusetts Health Connector Strategic Plan 2024–2028 Milestone Report

June 2024

About this report

The Health Connector is taking intentional steps to integrate the goals enumerated in the 2024-2028 Massachusetts Health Connector Strategic Plan into the day-to-day work of the agency and all of its staff. This approach is focused on bringing the strategic plan to life through tactical action plans, and bringing the tenets of the strategic plan front and center in the minds of staff and as organizational decisions are made. With this new endeavor, the Health Connector is developing tools to better track its work, remain aligned with its goals, and share its progress internally and with its external partners.

The 2024 Strategic Plan Milestone Report is intended to provide high-level insight into active Health Connector projects and their key components. The Health Connector has identified key milestones of over 25 project work tracks and the progress expected in each over the next 12 to 18 months. Each work track includes the project's expected impact on how residents experience Health Connector coverage and services, in the Health Connector's relationships with its market and its partners, or how the Health Connector operates as an agency.

This initial stage of the first year of the Strategic Plan is largely comprised of establishing baselines against which progress, and impact can be measured going forward. Key progress indicators may reflect a general direction the Health Connector expects the impact of its work to have, rather than yet being tied a specific measure or quantitative figure. After this year, the Health Connector expects to have established the baselines necessary to increase the precision with which it measures the specific progress and impact of its work.

The Health Connector remains grateful for the commitment and support of its Board of Directors and external stakeholders who support its mission to ensure that all Massachusetts residents have affordable, comprehensive health coverage, and looks forward to continuing to apprise the public of its progress implementing its 2024-2028 Strategic Plan.

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Strategic Focus: Improve and Modernize the Applicant and Enrollee Experience

Goal: Ensure residents can seamlessly and quickly enroll in and easily maintain coverage

Tactic 1: Reduce barriers to the Identity Proofing (IDP) portion of the application

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Formal recommendation of expanding acceptable IDP documents – complete Health Connector and MassHealth cross-agency team finalize a list of additional documents to accept for IDD 	30% complete	Reduce enrollment friction points that disproportionately impact populations without credit histories or with limited access to identifying documents	 Dependency on MassHealth and CMS for approval of expanded proofs of ID
 IDP Begin accepting expanded proofs of ID by winter 2024 		 Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Increase in the number of individuals who respond to IDP verifications 	

Tactic 2: Simplify and reorganize notice language and delivery method

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Complete review of enrollment and premium billing notices and recommend changes by November 2024 	10% complete	 Expected Impact Improved member experience through reorganization and simplification of member messaging through the most effective channels 	 Ability to improve Softheon notices and robocalls, texts and emails but these will not be aligned with HIX notices due to inability to move as quickly with changes on the HIX side
		 KPI Decrease in contact center calls related to member confusion in 2025 	 New Softheon fulfillment vendor onboarding could create delays depending on timing

Tactic 3: Expand additional payment methods and channels

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies	
 Review expanded payment options in more detail, propose alternate payment methods, and develop a work plan 	5% complete	Expected ImpactMembers will have more payment options to choose from	 Foundational systems work must be completed prior to moving forward with implementation 	
work plan		KPIIncrease in member satisfaction	 Potential costs to consumer could be a barrier (credit card fees, processing fees, or transaction fees) 	
			 Decrease in the number of people delinquent for payments or terminated due to non-payment of premium 	 Dependent on outcome of current procurements as well as some changes to current payment methods

Tactic 4: Expand language offerings in the Integrated Voice Recognition (IVR) system

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Planning for enhanced Interactive Voice Recognition system to be implemented in 2025 	0% complete	 Improved ability for individuals who speak languages other than English to self-serve or be directed to the appropriate contact center agent the first time KPI 	Timeline dependency on contact center and technology procurements
		Increase in first-call resolutions in 2025	

Tactic 5: Revise and update the contact center agent workflow system

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Enhancements and improvements delivered into the contact center agent customer relation management system in early 2025 	10% complete	Expected ImpactImproved contact center experience for memberKPI	 Delays could be caused by timing of contact center and technology procurements
		 Increase in first-call resolution 	
		 Increase in customer satisfaction as reported by contact center surveys 	

Goal: Provide a more user-friendly, streamlined online experience for residents and members engaging digitally with the Health Connector

Tactic 1: Update and reorganize content on the non-application portion of the Health Connector website

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Define website refresh goals and objectives - complete Update and develop content, maximizing for search engine 	5% complete	The Health Connector website will be easier for residents to find when searching on the internet, and once	 Staff bandwidth to evaluate and update over 600 published pages plus portable documents
 optimization (SEO) development Implement updated content structure and functionalities for a seamless user experience 		on the website will be able to find relevant information on Health Connector website more easily	
 Monitor performance, gather feedback, and make iterative improvements 		 Improved SEO performance metrics (i.e. keyword ranking) Positive trends in user engagement metrics (i.e. decrease in bounce rate or time on site). 	

Tactic 2: Enhance the non-group application platform

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Go-Live of the modernized Individual and Assister Portals for the application and enrollment site (HIX) in July 2024 Go-Live of the modernized Agent (back office) Portal for the HIX in December 2024 	40% complete	 Residents and assisters access an enhanced and modernized portal Revised language and updated "look and feel" on the application will make it easier for members to understand and respond to KPI Affirmative feedback from member, applicant, assister, and Navigator community to confirm improvements satisfy findings from the administrative burdens audit System data confirms an improved member experience in navigating the application and enrollment process, as evidenced through factors such as abandonment rate 	HIX Modernization requires wide- sweeping changes to the HIX system which brings inherent risk and requires in-depth testing and validation to prevent disruption to members' use of the system

Strategic Focus: Maintain and Strengthen Organizational Structure and System Reliability

Goal: Foster an inclusive work environment that centers professional growth and staff empowerment

Tactic 1: Establish a program of professional development training and wellness opportunities for Health Connector staff

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Offer management training, professional development courses, and wellness sessions scheduled for the first half of 2024 – complete 	60% complete	Health Connector staff have the support they need to thrive professionally	 Staff bandwidth to participate in and make significant progress on a number of development initiatives at once
 Invest in on-demand professional development training and skills course subscription for all Health Connector staff - complete Plan for the remainder of 2024 professional development sessions underway 		 KPI Increased use of professional development training subscription Increased reporting by staff of meaningful support for their professional growth 	

Tactic 2: Establish a learning and development team and create a formal onboarding and training curriculum for staff

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
Completion of the first phase of the multi-phase new hire onboarding curriculum by the end of June	50% complete	 New and existing staff will have a strong foundation on the history, culture, and functions of the Health Connector KPI Use of a 'learning library' by new hires and staff Reduction in staff reporting feeling 'siloed' and improved understanding of processes across agency 	 Time and staff constraints vis-à-vis development of content for training materials Possible delays in the review and approval of content

Tactic 3: Creation of Health Connector Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) staff workgroup to center DEIA in the Health Connectors work

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Issue initial recommendation outlining proposed steps for the Health Connector to advance DEIA within the agency and in our work with members 	30% complete	 Centering and advancing equity in its work, to contribute to the reduction of health inequities and disparities Renewing its commitment to serving as a diverse and inclusive workplace KPI 	 Challenges identifying priorities and recognition that this will require dedicated focus and phases in approach

Establish baseline data with respect to diversity of staff and leadership
 Increase in foundational DEIA training to enrich internal and member-facing work

Goal: Ensure, invest in, and cultivate reliable Health Connector organizational functions

Tactic 1: Make incremental process improvements to the annual Seal of Approval (SOA)

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Earlier SOA 2025 launch – complete Additional process improvements planned for 2026 and in process 	33% complete	 Expected Impact Improved stability in the SOA process and predictability for carrier partners KPI Improved carrier engagement, understanding of, and satisfaction with the SOA as a business process 	 Dependency on/need to align with various federal and state processes and deadlines Building capacity to accelerate 2026 process while still completing 2025 review and implementation Potential dependency on carriers' resource, bandwidth, timing constraints, etc.

Tactic 2: Enhance relationships with carrier partners

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Internal reorganization of carrier functions – complete Conduct exec-to-exec level meetings with carrier leadership on an annual basis, starting in 2024 - complete Create a 2025 Health Connector road map to aid carriers in planning 	33% complete	 Expected Impact Health Connector and carriers can jointly strategize regarding market, policy, and business issues with greater ease KPI Decrease in the overall volume of avoidable expedited high-priority carrier issues handled by the Carrier Relations team in 2024 Increase in identification, calendaring, proactive planning, and execution of both Health Connector and carrier-driven projects 	 Dependency on carriers to disclose a comprehensive and accurate list/information for carrier initiatives portion of this scope Dependency on vendors and Health Connector leadership to approve projects, resources, and meet finalized timelines Dependency on vendor resources and potential conflicting priorities to create project plans, execute project plans and meet deadlines that are published to carriers Difficult to account for "unknown" projects that may arise as the result of system defects, new regulatory or statutory requirements, etc.

Tactic 3: Improve carrier financial reconciliation and reporting

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Adoption of manual fix by early summer 2024 Improve financial visibility by providing carriers two new reports: Grace Period Write Off (GPW) Report: This monthly report will include 	30% complete	■ Fewer discrepancies between Health Connector and carrier reports resulting in improved member experience and improved efficiencies in processes KPI	 Potential competing projects and resources can delay the rollout of the new reports Importance of explaining how the reports can be used to decrease the number of false discrepancies to avoid carrier confusion

Tactic 4: Improve definition and documentation around agency processes and responsibilities

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Procure for and onboard external vendor to provide support to agency effort to document all business processes – RFQ issuance complete Complete early stages of project launch by end of 2024 	Kick-off	 Increased clarity in internal team responsibilities, subject matter expert roles, compliance management, and quality assurance responsibilities Improved system stability between Health Connector and vendors 	Constraints of staff time and bandwidth to provide expertise needed for documentation project
		KPI	
		Improved staff efficienciesDecrease in incidence of internal business process gaps	

Strategic Focus: Improve Equitable Access to Affordable Health Insurance Coverage

Goal: Expand equitable access to affordable health coverage

Tactic 1: Conduct Navigator Re-procurement

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Issue 2024-2026 Navigator grant cycle Notice of Grant Opportunity - complete Complete procurement and finalize 3-year contracts by July 1 	80% complete	Meet current linguistic and cultural needs in communities throughout the Commonwealth by providing community-based enrollment support directly to communities of highest need Increase coverage acquisition and retention among high priority populations in Commonwealth's coverage expansion efforts	 Given limited remaining milestones of project, there are no known challenges, risks or dependencies
		KPI	
		 Final organizations will be located in communities with the highest need as identified through internal reporting and external sources 	
		 Outreach and enrollment goals continue to be met by Navigators 	

Tactic 2: Establish a strategy for community engagement

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Identify approach and finalize goals by June 2024 Begin hosting community input/perspectives forums end of 2024 	25% complete	 Institutionalization of a way for the public and members to have a seat at the table and detail experiences and perceptions of the Health Connector to inform Health Connector decision-making and strategy Increase in resident and member feedback to the Health Connector and create mechanism to respond back to communities 	 Forming a forum format that engages participants while not overwhelming moderators (yet to be identified) and allows for expansive viewpoints while working through identified areas of inquiry Recruitment of attendees appropriately reflecting a community's needs and perceptions may be beyond existing resources and community partnerships

Tactic 3: Enhance approach to public education and outreach

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Improve the collection and utilization of information gathered during webinar registration and follow-up for attendees Distribution of multi-lingual educational material in 25 MassHire Career Centers 	60% complete	 Share Information and resources with residents interested in coverage offerings, but not able to attend a scheduled Zoom session Reach more potential members in their preferred languages when experiencing life transitions Leverage new and strengthen existing touchpoints to better 	 Establishing relationships with over 25 individual MassHire Career Centers Soliciting feedback from the MassHire Career Centers about their collateral needs

understand the needs of communities and provide supports	
KPI	
 Increase in conversion of public webinar registrants to attendees 	
 Gain metrics on email open rates for those who registered for Health Connector sponsored webinars 	
 Distribution of Health Connector collateral to MassHire Career Centers by summer 2024 	

Tactic 4: Continuation of Community Specialist Program

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Expand the in-person support in community spaces - complete Community specialists are in 9 community-based locations (i.e. libraries) on a recurring and consistent basis Strengthen the new network of recurring, in-person support in community spaces 	60% complete	 Application, enrollment, and coverage support available in highneed communities and locations to increase in-person presence in areas with limited community support to expand reach and engagement KPI Increase in the number of incommunity support locations in 2024 Increase in the number of residents assisted by Community Specialist Increase in the number of residents enrolled in the Health Connector 	 Dependency on availability and willingness of community organizations to host the Community Specialists at their locations

Goal: Evaluate and address health equity initiatives through data analytics and community engagement

Tactic 1: Increase enrollment supports for immigrants

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Research programs in other states designed to support immigrant coverage by mid-2024 Participate in a multi-state work group first half of 2024 Implement new eligibility changes for DACA recipients 	25% complete	Health Connector can better understand enrollment support and coverage best practices for immigrant populations to shape recommendations for future consideration, and close the uninsurance gap for immigrant populations	 Dependency on the approval of the recommendations proposed by Health Connector staff Federal administration/policy changes that could impact any pathway the Health Connector may want to pursue that may have a federal component
		 Recommendation of potential pathways for the Commonwealth to consider by the end of 2024 Enrollment of DACA recipients who newly qualify for coverage during Open Enrollment 2025 	 Outreach to the newly eligible DACA recipients, given that MassHealth definitions were not impacted

Tactic 2: Implement new data tools to enhance eligibility and enrollment analytics

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators		Challenges and Dependencies
 Develop and implement a new business intelligence platform 	65% complete	Expected Impact Ability to monitor metrics that	•	CMS security approval of new technology housing member data
 Use new business intelligence platform to design and monitor 		indicate disparities in eligibility and	•	Need for reassessment deliverable timelines to accommodate for

metrics to indicate disparities in
the eligibility and enrollment
process

 Institutionalize the business intelligence tool and internal dashboards to provide business owners with information needed to assess performance and overall customer experience



enrollment and inform future policy decisions

KPI

- Implementation of the business intelligence platform by August 2024
- Development of internal dashboard to support Open Enrollment by fall 2024
- Development of customer experience dashboard to support broader Health Connector business needs by February 2025

staffing changes and organizational reorganization

Quality of underlaying vendor data to populate/power the business intelligence tool

Strategic Focus: Deliver High-Value Coverage Options to the Residents of Massachusetts

Goal: Ensure Health Connector coverage is comprehensive, affordable, and meets residents' needs

Tactic 1: Implementation of communication efforts with carriers to reduce forgone preventive care among lower-income enrollees and members from communities of color

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Coordinate and ensure carriers distribute communications (via email, text, or mail) to members encouraging cancer screenings and other high-value preventive care by the end of 2024 Carriers to report data on campaign engagement, outcomes, changes in utilization tied to forgone care 	25% complete	 Expected Impact Decrease in forgone preventive care, particularly among lower-income enrollees and members from communities of color KPIs New carrier report delivered to the Health Connector detailing member engagement with the campaign, and known utilization trends in the plan year 2025 Decrease in reports of forgone care via carriers or members in a survey relative to prior years beginning in 2025 and 2026 	Identifying the timing of outreach to carriers and further coordination

Tactic 2: Incorporation of maternal health and cardiometabolic disorders into Seal of Approval (SOA) quality metrics

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Discussion and coordination with MassHealth on quality metrics Issuance of Quality Improvement Strategy documents in July 2024 as part of the 2025 SOA 	30% complete	Shared goals and methods across agencies will allow for targeted improvements and more member-focus KPI Establish a baseline of existing carrier programs and efforts to impact maternal and cardiometabolic health positively	 Ensuring selected measures are relevant across populations Observing improvements may take time and be confounded by other market activity

Tactic 3: Leverage the expertise of stakeholders and Board members to identify and pursue Seal of Approval approaches that deliver high value for members

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Develop future Seal of Approval in collaboration with input from range of stakeholders (e.g., providers and health experts, patient advocates, carriers, researchers, and others) Continuation of Board work group to address specific topics tied to the key issues of affordability, equitable access, and quality coverage Focus on positively impacting equity health topics: maternal 	25% complete	Deliver high-value plan options to members that demonstrate incremental improvements to patient outcomes KPI Convene at least two forums during 2024 to gather Board and stakeholder input on the development of the 2026 Seal of Approval	Building capacity to accelerate 2026 process while still completing 2025 review and implementation

health and cardiometabolic (CMB) health		

Tactic 3: Advance access to linguistically appropriate and culturally sensitive health care

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
 Conduct a review of best practices among State-Based Marketplaces and the broader health care landscape to identify opportunities to improve impact on access to culturally sensitive care and review potential pathways to implement in the Commonwealth 	25% complete	 Increase utilization of health care services among populations more likely to forgo care due to a lack of providers who provide culturally sensitive care KPI Reduction in reported barriers to care due to lack of culturally responsive providers 	 Health Connector is unlikely to solve "upstream" problems related to the provider pipeline

Goal: Increase awareness of the value and brand of Health Connector products

Tactic 1: Develop "Value Plan" for small group market

Key Milestone(s)	Milestone Progress	Key Progress Indicators	Challenges and Dependencies
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- Go live with the "Value Plan" model by November 2024 (PY2025 Open Enrollment), which includes highlighting small group plans within the Health Connector for Business (HCB) shopping experience that are beating market average premiums
- Wrap with outreach campaigns highlighting Health Connector for Business's flexibility and premium rebates for small employers

25% complete



Expected Impact

 Provide small employers of the Commonwealth with a more simplified way to identify lower-cost employee health plans that continue to provide value

KPI

 Increased interest in products demonstrated through increased quoting, and enrollment activity for Health Connector for Business small group offerings in 2025 Articulating a framework to support employers in defining what "value" means to them where they may have varying priorities beyond premiums (e.g., network access and other plan features)