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AGENDA ITEM

For Possible Action

Information Only

Date: June 18, 2024

Item Number: VII

Title: Update on Public Comment Period & Workshops & Proposed Final Language Access Plan for possible action

PURPOSE

Exchange Board of Directors consideration for approval of final language of the Silver State Health Insurance Exchange Language Access Plan per regulatory requirements for the implementation of a Language Access Plan per Senate Bill 318 (2021) & NRS 232.0081.

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Senate Bill 318 (SB318), signed into law during the 2021 Nevada Legislative Session, requires all state agencies to create a Language Access Plan (LAP) to improve access to government services, programs, and information for Nevadans with limited English proficiency.

The Governor’s Office for New Americans (ONA) is requiring each state agency to develop and update their LAPs. Along with the Northern NV International Center, ONA is assisting state agencies in further developing their LAPs since the 2021 Legislative Session.

As outlined in Senate Bill 318 (2021) & NRS 232.0081:

- The head of each agency of the Executive Department shall designate one or more employees of the agency to be responsible for **developing and biennially revising** a language access plan for the agency.
- A language access plan must assess the existing needs of persons served by the agency for language services and the degree to which the agency has met those needs. The plan must include recommendations to expand language services if needed to improve access to the services provided by the agency.
- Each agency of the Executive Department shall: Solicit public comment concerning the language access plan.
- Make recommendations to the Legislature concerning any statutory changes necessary to implement or improve a language access plan.
- Include any funding necessary to carry out a language access plan, including, without limitation, any additional funding necessary to meet the needs of persons with limited English proficiency served by the agency.

The Exchange will be innovative and proactive in engaging individuals from different cultures, backgrounds, and businesses throughout its programs and activities. Among the state's existing population, the following language groups have been identified as being the most relevant to Nevadans with limited English proficiency: Spanish; French; German, or other West Germanic languages; Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages; other Indo-European languages; Korean, Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese), Vietnamese, Tagalog (incl. Filipino), or other Asian and Pacific Island languages; and Arabic.

The Exchange continues to enhance its language access resources to better serve this diverse community. In a proactive step towards inclusivity, the agency is currently in the process of translating the Nevada Health Link fact sheet into the top spoken Asian languages in Nevada, including Tagalog, Chinese, and Cantonese; aiming to ensure crucial information about what Nevada Health Link is and offers is accessible to a wider audience. Furthermore, the Exchange is extending its efforts by translating all GetInsured platform notices into Spanish, recognizing the significance of this language within Nevada's enrollee population. These measures are just two examples of the Exchange's continued commitment to fostering clear communication and accessibility for all Nevadans.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD & WORKSHOPS UPDATE:

The Exchange held a public comment period that opened on February 21, 2024, and closed on May 1, 2024. During this period the public and stakeholders were encouraged to provide their feedback on the Exchange's existing Language Access Plan. All comments were to be directed to Kaitlyn Blagen at kblagen@exchange.nv.gov. During the public comment period, Kaitlyn received no written communications from the public for public comment.

Additionally, there were two public comment workshops held by the Exchange specifically for the purpose of soliciting public and stakeholder comments on the Language Access Plan. The first workshop was held on April 3, 2024 at 1:00 pm. The second workshop was held on May 2, 2024 at 1:00 pm.

OUTCOME OF THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD & WORKSHOPS:

Both the public comment period and the workshops were characterized by a notable lack of critical feedback. As noted above SSHIX received no written comments during the public comment period, and the discussions during the workshops consisted primarily of clarifying questions regarding existing language access resources (e.g. the real-time translation service available through the Exchange's call center). The Exchange considers the relative scarcity of public comment to be an encouraging sign, suggesting that the language access needs of its stakeholders are largely being met.

FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL:

The Exchange is requesting that the Board consider for approval the attached revised draft of the SSHIX Language Access Plan. If approved the draft will be updated for a final release before eventual transmission to the ONA.