

MEMORANDUM

To: Health Connector Board of Directors
Cc: Louis Gutierrez, Executive Director
From: Jason Lefferts, Director of Communications and Media Relations
Date: June 5, 2015
Re: Work Order for Weber Shandwick to Perform Public Outreach and Messaging Support for Fiscal Year 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the Massachusetts Health Connector looks ahead to the 2016 Fiscal Year and the 2016 Open Enrollment period that starts on November 1, 2015, it is reprioritizing finding the state’s remaining uninsured, and will focus its public outreach and message on that population.

Over the last two years, the Health Connector has been focused on transitioning its legacy members to Affordable Care Act (ACA) coverage. This effort included a sharp focus on messaging tailored to members, particularly for 2015 Open Enrollment during which Health Connector members needed to submit a new application in order to keep coverage, as did people who were in Qualified Health Plans and temporary MassHealth coverage that needed to transition.

Over the last two years, the Commonwealth’s overall insured rate has remained steady – and highest in the nation – and the Health Connector’s total membership has remained similarly stable (after factoring in the transition of over 100,000 enrollees to MassHealth through Medicaid expansion). However, there are still thousands of the Commonwealth’s residents who are uninsured. The Health Connector is shifting its public outreach and messaging focus back to this population, as it had before the transition to the ACA. Using data from a variety of sources (including recent published reports and internal data following member transition), the Health Connector has identified communities with higher uninsured rates, and by working with local community leaders and organizations, focusing on local and ethnic media and using non-traditional platforms, the Health Connector plans to intensely target these communities.

Throughout its history, the Health Connector has had a strong, fruitful relationship with Weber Shandwick. The marketing and public relationship company has provided messaging and outreach consultation services, and communications development and placement services, for the Health Connector since 2007. Along with Weber Shandwick staff, Weber Shandwick engages Sawyer Miller and KRC Research as subcontractors to provide additional communications and market research counsel. Weber’s strong team and institutional knowledge has the company positioned to continue to provide the Health Connector with strategic counsel that intuitively matches the agency’s needs. Health Connector staff will work closely with Weber Shandwick throughout Open Enrollment, collaborating on public education and outreach that best positions the Health Connector’s message throughout the Commonwealth, particularly in high-priority communities.

SCOPE OF WORK

Weber Shandwick will be providing an array of services supporting the Health Connector's messaging during Fiscal Year 2016, with a focus on the 2016 Open Enrollment period of November 1, 2015-January 31, 2016.

Strategic Messaging Development

Weber Shandwick will provide recommendations for messaging substance and tone, and will conduct focus groups in two or three of our high-priority communities to ensure the message resonates in targeted communities. The Health Connector and Weber Shandwick conduct regular meetings, with frequent updates as necessary to manage and update messaging.

Outreach Communication Development

Weber Shandwick will coordinate the development of a series of media communications that will encourage those who are uninsured to take action. This includes radio, print and digital/online media touching every part of the Commonwealth, with a focus on areas with larger uninsured populations. The work involves developing messaging, as well as producing and editing the pieces. Weber Shandwick will also help develop print and radio public education campaigns focusing on the Health Connector's Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP) that will run in winter 2016 (in line with the Health Connector's most common small group renewal periods).

Communications and Messaging Placement

The Health Connector will be working closely with Weber Shandwick to identify the best outlets for delivering our outreach and education message. This may include some very small, focused programs in local stores or gas stations, a stronger presence in high-impact areas through billboards and public transportation and local media outlets. Because of this intense focus on a handful of key communities, and in order to maximize the Health Connector's budget, television advertising will not be used for 2016 Open Enrollment. More broadly, to ensure coverage throughout the Commonwealth and deliver a secondary message to current members to review their plans during Open Enrollment, Weber Shandwick will identify the most productive radio, print and digital platforms to reach wide audiences. Weber Shandwick will also develop a similar plan for SHOP messaging in winter 2016.

Corporate Sponsorship Development

Throughout the year, the Health Connector considers corporate partnerships that support the Health Connector's messaging and brand development, and provide benefit to the Health Connector's mission of expanding health care access throughout the Commonwealth. Weber Shandwick plays a role in this development, engaging entities in discussions with the Health Connector regarding potential relationships, scheduling sponsorship activities, and providing material as needed in sponsorship locations.

Social Media Support

Weber Shandwick will continue to play a role in growing the Health Connector’s social media platforms, advising the Health Connector on messaging and providing opportunities on emerging platforms and creating content as necessary. The Health Connector will steer public messaging and outreach funding in 2015-2016 toward promoted posts and targeted content to expand awareness, possibly create additional projects such as enterprise digital (through web videos or compelling infographics) and providing on-call member outreach as necessary.

WORK ORDER TERMS

The term of this work order extends from July 2015 through June 2016, and represents the last part of a three-year contract agreement with Weber Shandwick. This work order is capped at \$2,500,000. This work order is funded through the Health Connector’s operations budget, and is similar to the Fiscal Year 2013 budget (the last before ACA transition) of \$2.3 million. The current Weber Shandwick work order, which supported our member transition efforts, is for \$4.27 million, with the expectation that by the end of the Fiscal Year all of that funding will have been spent. The 2013-14 work order for Weber Shandwick totaled nearly \$6.8 million for the first year of full ACA transition for members, however approximately \$2.5 million of that funding was held as part of strategic outreach decisions and was used for 2015 Open Enrollment.

Scope of Work	Allotted Budget
Strategic Counsel	\$200,000
Public Education Campaign Development (Open Enrollment and uninsured residents):	\$1,550,000 (\$400,000 in production and staff costs, \$1,150,000 in purchased messaging time and space)
Public Education Campaign Development (SHOP)	\$450,000 (\$150,000 in production and staff costs, and \$300,000 in purchased messaging time and space)
Corporate Sponsorship Development	\$250,000
Social Media Support	\$50,000
TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED	\$2,500,000

BOARD RECOMMENDATION

Health Connector staff recommends entering into a Work Order with Weber Shandwick as described above for a total cost not to exceed \$2,500,000. This work order would be funded through the Health Connector’s operations budget.

We look forward to presenting the above information and providing our formal recommendation at the Board meeting on June 11, 2015.