

***PUBLIC HEARING - HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS***

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*June 23, 2011*

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**MERRILL LAD**

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BEFORE THE MARYLAND INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION

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PUBLIC HEARING - HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS

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Baltimore, Maryland

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Thursday, June 23, 2011

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9:56 a.m.

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Job No.: 1-200498

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Reported by: Darlene S. Traficante, RPR, CSR, CMRS

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<p style="text-align: right;">Page 2</p> <p>1 Hearing, held at the offices of:                  2                  3                  4 MARYLAND INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION                  5 200 St. Paul Place                  6 Suite 2700                  7 Baltimore, Maryland 21202                  8 (410) 468-2000                  9                  10                  11 Pursuant to agreement, before Darlene S.                  12 Trafficante, Notary Public in and for the State of                  13 Maryland.                  14                  15                  16                  17                  18                  19                  20                  21                  22</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 4</p> <p>1 ---                  2 EXHIBITS                  3 (Exhibits attached to the original transcript.)                  4 MIA HEARING EXHIBITS PAGE                  5 1 Bulletin 11-12, 5/31/11 Premarked                  6 2 5/17/11 Recommendations Premarked                  7 3 5/18/11 Recommendations Premarked                  8 4 6/1/11 Haglund written comments Premarked                  9 5 6/2/11 Haglund written comments Premarked                  10 6 6/16/11 MHA written comments Premarked                  11 7 PowerPoint hard copy 11                  12 8 MedChi letter 78                  13 9 PowerPoint hard copy 86                  14                  15                  16                  17                  18                  19                  20                  21                  22</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 3</p> <p>1 APPEARANCES                  2 FOR THE MARYLAND INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION:                  3 THERESE M. GOLDSMITH, COMMISSIONER                  4 BETH SAMMIS, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER                  5 DENNIS YU, CHIEF ACTUARY                  6 JOY HATCHETTE, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER,                  7 CONSUMER EDUCATION &amp; ADVOCACY                  8                  9 FOR OLIVER WYMAN:                  10 KAREN BENDER, FCA, ASA, MAAA                  11 TAMMY P. TOMCZYK, FSA, MAAA                  12                  13                  14                  15                  16                  17                  18                  19                  20                  21                  22</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 5</p> <p>1 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: It got very quiet                  2 so I guess that means that we are ready to begin. I                  3 have just about 10:00 a.m. And want to wish everyone                  4 a good morning.                  5 And a welcome to this June 23rd, 2011 public                  6 hearing being held by the Maryland Insurance                  7 Administration.                  8 Can everyone hear me by the way? I                  9 understand we're not going to have mics so everyone is                  10 going to need to speak up a bit. I'm seeing nods and                  11 none of this (indicating) so glad to hear it.                  12 So this hearing is being held pursuant to a                  13 notice issued on May 31st, 2011, that notice was                  14 labeled Bulletin 11-12 and has been marked as Exhibit                  15 1 in this proceeding.                  16 As the notice indicates, the subjects of                  17 this hearing are the findings and recommendations of                  18 Oliver Wyman Actuarial Consulting as set forth in two                  19 reports. Those reports are entitled Recommendations                  20 to the Commissioner on Information Provided to                  21 Consumers, which is dated May 17th 2011, and has been                  22 marked as Exhibit 2 in this proceeding. And</p>

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1 Recommendations to the Commissioner to Enhance  
 2 Regulatory Review and Oversight dated May 18th, 2011  
 3 which has been marked as Exhibit 3 in this proceeding.  
 4 My name is Therese Goldsmith, and joining me  
 5 this morning are two of my colleagues at the Maryland  
 6 Insurance Administration, to my left Deputy  
 7 Commissioner, Beth Sammis, and to my right Chief  
 8 Actuary, Dennis Yu.  
 9 Later today we will also be joined by Joy  
 10 Hatchette, the Associate Commissioner heading up our  
 11 Consumer Education & Advocacy unit.  
 12 By way of just a little bit of background,  
 13 the Maryland Insurance Administration engaged Oliver  
 14 Wyman to do two things; first, to review the  
 15 administration's current actuarial rate review process  
 16 for commercial comprehensive medical insurance  
 17 products, and to make recommendations for enhancing  
 18 that process with one goal being to establish an  
 19 effective rate review program under the Affordable  
 20 Care Act as now defined in federal regulation.  
 21 Secondly, we asked Oliver Wyman to review  
 22 information currently available to consumers regarding

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1 proposed and approved premium rate increases and to  
 2 make recommendations on ways in which to improve and  
 3 to expand that type of information in order to enhance  
 4 the transparency of the rate making process.  
 5 Oliver Wyman's work was funded by a premium  
 6 rate review grant which was awarded to the State of  
 7 Maryland by the US Department of Health and Human  
 8 Services.  
 9 With respect to today's procedure, and order  
 10 of events, Oliver Wyman first will present a summary  
 11 of its findings and recommendations set forth in the  
 12 Recommendations to the Commissioner to Enhance the  
 13 Regulatory Review and Oversight, so Exhibit 3. And  
 14 will answer any questions from me and my colleagues  
 15 with regard to the information contained in that  
 16 report.  
 17 Immediately after that presentation, and any  
 18 Oliver Wyman's answering any questions that we have,  
 19 those of you who are here today who wish to provide  
 20 comment on the subject of that report will have an  
 21 opportunity to do so. We'll then repeat that  
 22 procedure for the consumer information, I'll use for

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1 shorthand, report. So first the rate review report,  
 2 presentation, question and answer, and followed by any  
 3 public comment, followed by the consumer information  
 4 report, same procedure.  
 5 To date we have received written comments  
 6 from two interested parties regarding the Oliver Wyman  
 7 reports. First we received two written comments, one  
 8 regarding the consumer information and the other  
 9 regarding the rate review process from Scott D.  
 10 Haglund of the Federated Life Insurance Company and  
 11 those written comments have been marked Exhibits 4 and  
 12 Exhibit 5 and those will be a part of the public  
 13 record in this proceeding.  
 14 And then also we received comments on both  
 15 reports in one document from Michael B. Robbins on  
 16 behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association and its  
 17 members which has been marked as Exhibit 6.  
 18 We will be holding the record open in this  
 19 proceeding through June the 30th, 2011, for any  
 20 additional written comments that anyone might wish to  
 21 submit for considerations.  
 22 Instructions about how to do that are

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1 included in that written notice that I referenced  
 2 which is available on our website. And if you have  
 3 any trouble finding that, please contact Karen Barrow  
 4 who is our director of Public Affairs, her number is  
 5 (410)468-2007.  
 6 Are there any other housekeeping details  
 7 that I'm not thinking of before we proceed?  
 8 All right. Well, then I think we're ready  
 9 to hear from Ms. Tammy Tomczyk and Ms. Karen Bender  
 10 from Oliver Wyman.  
 11 MS. BENDER: Thank you, Commissioner  
 12 Goldsmith. My name is Karen Bender and I'm a  
 13 consulting actuary and principal with Oliver Wyman  
 14 actuarial consulting. My colleague here is Tammy  
 15 Tomczyk. She's also a principal and consulting  
 16 actuary with Oliver Wyman. And we were two of the  
 17 three authors of both of these papers and we  
 18 appreciate the opportunity to discuss these papers  
 19 with you today.  
 20 This is the proposed overview for today's  
 21 discussion. So we segregated into several main topics  
 22 of which the first one is going to be to review,

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 10</p> <p>1 discuss or review of the current processes that the  2 administration is employing to review rates.  3 The rate increase disclosure and review of  4 the existing regulations and the proposed -- no longer  5 proposed, when we started this process they were  6 proposed. They are now final rate regulations  7 regarding the Accountable Care Act.  8 And methods for determining the  9 reasonableness of rate increases, trend analysis, rate  10 filing submission and requirements and then our  11 recommendations.  12 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Ms. Bender, the  13 document that's on the screen here is a slide deck  14 that, that we I believe and the court reporter have  15 received in hard copy entitled Recommendations to the  16 Commissioner to Enhance Regulatory Review and  17 Oversight, and data today, correct?  18 MS. BENDER: That's correct.  19 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: So if the court  20 reporter could mark this document as Exhibit 7,  21 please.  22</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 12</p> <p>1 approved. So all the correspondence that goes on, all  2 the aspects of the reviews that take place. And we  3 actually did this process three times, once for the  4 individual market, once for the small group market and  5 once for the large group market because the process is  6 not identical for those three markets.  7 We also were provided copies of recent, hard  8 copies of recent filings and the correspondence that  9 took place between the administration and the filing  10 carriers. And reviewed that. And once we went  11 through that process we, in our opinion, had a pretty  12 good understanding of the current process that takes  13 place today.  14 We did review that with processes that are  15 currently taking place in other states, based on our  16 knowledge either working with other states, working  17 for carriers, filing, submitting filings in other  18 states and just our general knowledge of those  19 processes. And there is quite a wide variation today.  20 We set up this chart on the bottom and we described it  21 in our report as level of rigor that takes place. So  22 for example on the left-hand side that's labeled 1,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 11</p> <p>1 (MIA HEARING Exhibit 7 was marked for  2 identification and attached to the transcript.)  3 MS. BENDER: And Tammy is going to talk  4 about the review of the current processes.  5 MS. TOMCZYK: Thank you, Karen.  6 In order to make recommendations for  7 enhancements and changes to the process, first we had  8 to understand thoroughly what the current process was.  9 We reviewed, we were provided and reviewed current  10 statutes, regulations and regulatory bulletins. We  11 also reviewed the information that's currently  12 included in the filing requirements. Everything from  13 information that carriers are required to submit,  14 timing of those submissions, timing of the  15 administration's review, as well as lost ratio  16 demonstrations that are required to be made.  17 Once we reviewed this information we spent  18 two days on site with the chief actuary and another  19 actuary on staff with the administration going through  20 in very thorough detail the process starting from the  21 point in time when a filing is received, all the way  22 through to the point in time when a filing is finally</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 13</p> <p>1 that might be where a state would fall that either has  2 no regulatory authority to review rates today, or very  3 limited authority. Progressing to the other extreme  4 where you have a state that perhaps has authority to  5 review rates in all three market segments, individual,  6 small group and large group, may frequently use the  7 rate hearing, the rate hearing process, engage  8 independent experts to perform independent  9 calculations, and provide expert witness testimony at  10 rate hearings.  11 So based on all of that you can see that we  12 place Maryland between a 3 and 4 on that scale. And  13 that indicates that the process that's taking place  14 today is, is quite comprehensive.  15 So once we understood the current process  16 our next step was to compare that to the proposed  17 regulations that outlined the requirements of an  18 effective rate review process as defined by HHS. And  19 Karen is going to talk about that process in a little  20 more detail.  21 MS. BENDER: I should note that I think we  22 have alluded to it before, but when we were developing</p>

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1 these recommendations we were using what we called the  
 2 draft regulations. And the day after we submitted our  
 3 final reports when the final regulations came out, and  
 4 so we have noted differences on the slides where  
 5 pertinent, we will followup with the commissioner on  
 6 noting some -- some adjustments in the report because  
 7 of the final regulations. There were just some minor  
 8 differences in our opinion.  
 9 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: And that will be in  
 10 the form of an addendum to each report, correct?  
 11 MS. BENDER: This is correct, it will be in  
 12 the form of an addendum.  
 13 So I'm going to give a real brief overview  
 14 of ACA. And this overview only pertains to the rate  
 15 regulation portion that we are dealing with here.  
 16 Obviously ACA is a very large bill so we're only  
 17 focusing it on the rate regulation portion.  
 18 Firstly, the HHS regulations apply  
 19 technically only to non grandfathered policies. And  
 20 non grandfathered policies, the easiest way of saying  
 21 that is for practical purposes, for our purposes here  
 22 they essentially are those policies that were issued

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1 after March 23rd, 2010 which was the effective date of  
 2 the Accountable Care Act. There are some  
 3 technicalities how you keep grandfathering and non  
 4 grandfathering, but for our purposes here that's  
 5 probably the easiest definition.  
 6 So technically these rate regulations as  
 7 promulgated by HHS, again, don't apply to all policies  
 8 at the federal level.  
 9 The state's definition of small group may  
 10 apply until 2014 when one life groups would now be  
 11 included. There are some, again, some technical  
 12 differences in how to count employees, but that wasn't  
 13 really the purpose of our analysis here which was to  
 14 review the rate review process. Now, in 2016 the  
 15 definition of small group is going to be increased to  
 16 100. And that our understanding is going to be  
 17 mandatory.  
 18 And it's also our understanding that HHS  
 19 based upon their final regulations is considering how  
 20 to include fully insured associations. And so that is  
 21 probably an outstanding issue as of right now.  
 22 The rate regulations would apply to all --

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1 okay, I got to get this right -- rate regulations are  
 2 going to take effect September 1st. If you are -- if  
 3 you meaning a carrier is in a state that does not have  
 4 an effective rate review program, then it is policies  
 5 that are effective September 1st. If you are a  
 6 carrier in a state that has an effective rate review  
 7 program, it is policies filed September 1st and later.  
 8 That's our interpretation.  
 9 Right now the effective rate -- I would say  
 10 the -- yeah, the effective rate review or the policy  
 11 subject to review, filing subject to review are those  
 12 that would have a 10 percent or greater increase at  
 13 the September 1st trigger date.  
 14 So if HHS is going to do the review, then  
 15 any policies submitted for September 1st effective  
 16 date would be subject to -- that have a rate increase  
 17 of 10 percent or greater would be subject to this  
 18 review. For states that have an effective rate review  
 19 program they would need to report on their reviews of  
 20 rate filings that have a 10 percent or greater  
 21 proposed rate increase to HHS for rate filings  
 22 submitted on or after September 1st, 2010.

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1 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: And just one point  
 2 of clarification is something that confused me  
 3 initially when I read it in the report. When in your  
 4 report you refer to an HHS mandatory review, it's my  
 5 understanding that what that means is that if you are  
 6 a state with an effective rate review program, not  
 7 that HHS will conduct the review, but rather HHS has  
 8 mandated that review be conducted.  
 9 MS. BENDER: That is absolutely correct.  
 10 That's our understanding.  
 11 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Okay.  
 12 MS. BENDER: I probably should submit right  
 13 here now, we are actuaries, we are not lawyers. So  
 14 we're not, we cannot give a legal opinion. So all of  
 15 these that we are offering here is based upon our  
 16 interpretation of the law.  
 17 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Right. Thank you.  
 18 MS. BENDER: So if there's, if ultimately a  
 19 legal opinion would decide something different  
 20 obviously then we would modify things as such.  
 21 And we are probably going to use HHS and CMS  
 22 maybe interchangeably. We'll try and stick with HHS.

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1 I think when this first started this was all under  
 2 HHS.  
 3 The threshold of 10 percent is for 2011.  
 4 Beginning in 2012 that threshold can change and HHS  
 5 can change that threshold and they can change it to  
 6 vary by state, or they may not vary by state. But  
 7 they will communicate July 1st what the threshold is  
 8 going to be for each of the states for this  
 9 September 1st effective data cap. And so thereafter  
 10 each June 1st they'll communicate for the effective  
 11 12-month period going forward for the following  
 12 September.  
 13 So what must be included in the, for rate  
 14 filing subject to review. HHS has identified two  
 15 types of information that must be submitted to HHS for  
 16 all rate filings equal to or exceeding that trigger  
 17 point. It does not matter whether you're in a state  
 18 that has an effective rate review program or not.  
 19 Part I and Part II must be submitted to HHS. And Part  
 20 I is a prescribed form and with a prescribed Excel  
 21 sheet that must be filled in with the required  
 22 information.

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1 Part II is sort of what I would call a free  
 2 form right now at least, where the carriers need to  
 3 identify those significant factors that are prompting  
 4 the rate increase, and to provide brief experience,  
 5 overall experience of the policy.  
 6 Now, for states that do not, for carriers  
 7 operating in states that do not have an effective rate  
 8 review program, Part III justification must be  
 9 submitted, which is specific detailed documentation  
 10 supporting any rate increase.  
 11 For those states that do have an effective  
 12 rate review process in place, HHS will accept, or will  
 13 delegate the analysis associated under the Part III  
 14 analysis to the states. And they, then the state will  
 15 need to report their findings to HHS.  
 16 As of right now there's no standardized  
 17 template, to our knowledge, for the states reporting  
 18 their results to HHS for the Part III analysis.  
 19 Now, let me emphasize that Part III is again  
 20 only required for those states that don't have an  
 21 effective rate review program.  
 22 So what does the state have to do to have an

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1 effective rate review program? And I can almost  
 2 classify this as essentially, get data from the  
 3 carriers, review the data from the carriers and  
 4 analyze the data from the carriers to determine if the  
 5 rate increase that they are requesting is and/or are  
 6 supported depending upon the number of policies,  
 7 policy forms that are included in the filing.  
 8 So that really takes care of the first three  
 9 items here.  
 10 The fourth item is that a standard has to  
 11 be -- you have to apply a standard. Like set forth a  
 12 statute of regulation for determining whether a rate  
 13 increase is reasonable. Again, now, this is at the  
 14 state level to have an effective rate review program.  
 15 That doesn't necessarily have to be a numerical  
 16 standard but there has to be some sort of standard so  
 17 that it's not viewed as capricious. And states that,  
 18 states again must provide access to Part I and Part II  
 19 preliminary justification through their website. This  
 20 is one of the changes from the preliminary and the  
 21 final, at least according to our interpretation. From  
 22 the preliminary we didn't see this maybe more as maybe

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1 it might be nice, but in the final it appears to us  
 2 that now the states do have to provide some sort of  
 3 access to Part I and Part II. It can be just a link  
 4 to the HHS website, but it's important.  
 5 And again, as I indicated before, after the  
 6 review is done, then the state has to submit to HHS  
 7 the summary of its results and how they arrived at  
 8 their opinion.  
 9 I overlooked one thing under 5, not only  
 10 must the states provide access to Part I and Part II,  
 11 they also have to have a means of accepting public  
 12 comment on them as well. So that was a change from  
 13 the original.  
 14 Here's some specific rate assumptions that  
 15 must be reviewed. These 12 were listed in the, both  
 16 the prelim-- well the final reg site, I guess there  
 17 was one that was little different. So these are the  
 18 12 that are listed in the final regulations. I think  
 19 it's, the most important point here is where it says  
 20 where applicable, which means that if you have an  
 21 effective rate review program, HHS is recognizing that  
 22 the states need to have flexibility when reviewing

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1 these rate filings. And has enabled them to use their  
 2 judgment that maybe not all of these may be applicable  
 3 for every single filing.  
 4 These are the things, the 12 prescribed  
 5 assumptions that could be subject for review.  
 6 Now we're going to talk about considerations  
 7 for determining the reasonableness of a rate increase.  
 8 When we did our review we wanted to step  
 9 back and say, absent any regulations, what are some of  
 10 the factors that we would consider in addition to the  
 11 components of trend which obviously are some of the,  
 12 is the main driver of rate increases.  
 13 So one of the factors obviously are loss  
 14 ratio and loss ratio requirements. When we started  
 15 this process Maryland had a minimum loss ratio of  
 16 60 percent for individual policies and 75 percent for  
 17 small group. Since that time regulations have been  
 18 changed so that it's going to be 80 percent for small  
 19 group and individual effective July 1st, 2011. And if  
 20 I have my notation right I believe that's SB 183 that  
 21 enabled that.  
 22 Then there are some other questions as to

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1 how would the loss ratio be applied. Should it be  
 2 applied at the form level or at the market segment  
 3 level? The minimum loss ratios under the ACA apply at  
 4 the market level as opposed to the form level. And  
 5 then some discussion as to how credibility should be  
 6 applied.  
 7 We talked about administrative expenses,  
 8 surplus expenses, pricing margins, and those we would,  
 9 we commented on that really you want to focus on there  
 10 is more of the change in levels of these components of  
 11 a rate from one rate filing to another rate filing.  
 12 You have the minimum loss ratios at the federal level  
 13 of 80 percent for small group and individual, and  
 14 85 percent for the large group. So there is sort of a  
 15 safety net that carriers, if they -- they have to  
 16 rebate excess premiums if they don't comply with those  
 17 minimum loss ratios. So you do have that floor. But  
 18 even in addition to that you still want to look at any  
 19 material changes from one filing to another to assess  
 20 for reasonableness.  
 21 And then the last two are investment income  
 22 and loss would be more pertinent probably if a company

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1 was having some surplus issues. Obviously you are  
 2 also tasked with ensuring solvency for a company so  
 3 you must be cognizant of the solvency standards. And  
 4 a cost containment quality of improvement activities  
 5 are also part of minimum loss ratio requirements as  
 6 defined by NAIC and adopted by HHS. So these are all  
 7 considerations that would go into determining if a  
 8 rate increase was reasonable as defined by ACA.  
 9 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Ms. Bender, in  
 10 terms of the administrative expenses, I note that you  
 11 just said and I think you said it in your report, that  
 12 one focus, anyway, would be on material changes in  
 13 expenses from one filing to the next. And I saw in  
 14 your report where you described certain benchmarks or  
 15 standards that are used in other jurisdictions to  
 16 assess the reasonableness of administrative expenses.  
 17 Are there any, you know, besides looking at the delta  
 18 between one rate filing and the next, are there any  
 19 other standards or benchmarks either that you would  
 20 recommend or that you would suggest that we consider?  
 21 MS. BENDER: Well, there are some public  
 22 reports. Sherlock, I mean, these are some public

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1 reports that are obviously in the public domain,  
 2 they're public reports. And they have done some  
 3 analysis on administrative expenses for both what they  
 4 call the blue plans and then for the commercial plans.  
 5 And they also further segregate it between what I  
 6 would call type of business, Medicare, Medicaid, I'm  
 7 not sure if they have Medicare supplement right now,  
 8 but at least also self funded. So that would be one  
 9 source.  
 10 Another source would be to look at the, some  
 11 of the administrative expenses as reflected in the  
 12 NAIC database for companies completing what I would  
 13 call the orange blank or the health blanks. This is  
 14 going to be easier now that they have to, that  
 15 companies are going to be required to submit that  
 16 supplemental exhibit, and please don't ask me what the  
 17 exhibit number is because I don't have it on the tip  
 18 of my tongue.  
 19 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: You could say  
 20 anything and I'd believe you.  
 21 MS. BENDER: I'm sorry, I don't have it.  
 22 MS. TOMCZYK: I think it's called the

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1 supplemental healthcare.  
 2 MS. BENDER: That might be it.  
 3 And that supplemental healthcare exhibit,  
 4 that's what we're calling it right now anyway, is a  
 5 new exhibit required for the purposes of determining  
 6 administrative expenses for the MLR, or at least --  
 7 for the allowable cost containment and quality  
 8 administrations.  
 9 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Right.  
 10 I was thinking more in terms of the other  
 11 administrative expenses category. But okay.  
 12 MS. BENDER: What do you mean?  
 13 MS. TOMCZYK: Operating expenses and claim  
 14 processing.  
 15 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: So the non quality  
 16 improvement cost containment.  
 17 MS. BENDER: I think though that that's in  
 18 there, I think all the administrative expenses are in  
 19 there. But then they also, they just had to fill that  
 20 out, if I'm remembering the exhibit right.  
 21 MS. TOMCZYK: If not it's certainly  
 22 available, is it page 4, I can't remember, the

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1 statement of revenue and expenses that's in the  
 2 statutory statement has that information. And we've  
 3 actually done some studies using that data where we've  
 4 developed benchmark populations or looked at a pool of  
 5 carriers that are of similar size, have a similar mix  
 6 of governmental, non private insurance, Medicaid,  
 7 Medicare business, and within that cohort of similar  
 8 carriers what kind of is the average expenses of the  
 9 percent of premium and some ranges around that. So  
 10 there's some good information there.  
 11 MS. BENDER: And I also believe what I would  
 12 call the state reports, individual state reports  
 13 segregate individual. I mean, sometimes the challenge  
 14 of segregating individual from small group from large  
 15 group sometimes that's the challenge.  
 16 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: What do you mean by  
 17 state reports, what state reports?  
 18 MS. BENDER: It's called state reports, it's  
 19 part of the orange, again, I call it the orange blank.  
 20 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Okay.  
 21 MS. BENDER: It's the health.  
 22 MS. TOMCZYK: Page 29.

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1 MS. BENDER: Page 29.  
 2 MS. TOMCZYK: That one I know.  
 3 MS. BENDER: Okay.  
 4 And then there is also the one that has  
 5 small group segregated too and that's a -- I'm not  
 6 going to tell you the number of that, but we can get  
 7 that to you.  
 8 So there are, like I said, the Sherlock  
 9 reports and then the orange blanks or the NAIC data I  
 10 would think would be another good source of  
 11 benchmarking.  
 12 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Thank you.  
 13 MS. BENDER: So next major component of any  
 14 rate filing is going to be the trend analysis.  
 15 Trend is generally probably 90 percent of  
 16 the time the major driver of change in rates. So  
 17 obviously the trend analysis is the major focus of any  
 18 rate review. And also a miss of trend high or low is  
 19 going to have a major impact on subsequent rate  
 20 reviews as well.  
 21 I.e., if you overstate the trend in one  
 22 year, then the next rate review you'd expect to have

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1 less than trend rate increase. Because you've, you  
 2 have essentially excess premium that one year.  
 3 Conversely, if you understate the trend, the  
 4 next year you can have significantly higher than trend  
 5 increases. Now, sometimes trend isn't the only major  
 6 driver, especially in new products, sometimes it is  
 7 very, for new products it is difficult to get all the  
 8 assumptions that are realized as you anticipate it  
 9 originally. Probably one of the best examples of that  
 10 was initially in the high deductible health plans I  
 11 think carriers made some aggressive assumptions  
 12 regarding the utilization savings that many of these  
 13 plans were going to realize.  
 14 But so, but the trend is the major  
 15 component.  
 16 This lists, I'm sorry, this list  
 17 demonstrates that there are many drivers of trend.  
 18 And which makes this analysis extremely complex.  
 19 Obviously the first two, changes in provider  
 20 reimbursement and changes in the number of services  
 21 utilized, are generally the two that people focus on.  
 22 And generally it's the changes in provider

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1 reimbursement that is the major driver. Although  
 2 other things can, such as a change in the mix of  
 3 services can actually make it appear that changes in  
 4 provider reimbursement, either greater or less, than  
 5 the underlying cost. So a mix in services can distort  
 6 some of these other factors.  
 7       So that's why it's extremely important when  
 8 analyzing any particular rate filing, it's not just as  
 9 easy as comparing, you know, maybe a cost per member  
 10 per month for this year compared to a cost per member  
 11 per month from the year before, and that's your trend,  
 12 it's generally not quite that easy to do. So here all  
 13 the drivers of trend that anyone reviewing a rate  
 14 increase or rate change would need to consider and  
 15 also that someone submitting a rate change should be  
 16 willing to demonstrate that they have considered as  
 17 well.  
 18       Then you have all these other adjustments to  
 19 trends, even if you've, you've considered all these  
 20 others, those other factors in your emerging  
 21 experience if you have large claims they can distort  
 22 the trends upward and as they work their way through

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1 them they can also make it appear that trends are  
 2 decreasing when in fact they aren't. You have benefit  
 3 changes, you have demographic changes, all of these  
 4 items here require adjustments to the emerging  
 5 experience to ensure that you're not overstating the  
 6 trend or that you're not understating the trend. And  
 7 additional considerations which I would maybe benefit  
 8 unique, if you have a high deductible health plan then  
 9 the deductible, what we call deductible leveraging  
 10 which in essence is just an actuarial term for  
 11 recognizing that the value of a fixed dollar  
 12 deductible decreases over time because of inflation.  
 13 And that's what we call deductible leveraging. And  
 14 then aggregate trends versus trends by types of  
 15 service that there is not a universal trend between  
 16 hospital inpatient, hospital outpatient, physician,  
 17 X-ray, lab, pharmaceutical. So these are other  
 18 considerations and you might want to look at isolating  
 19 some of these trends, particularly between what I  
 20 would call medical and pharmacy to get a better handle  
 21 or estimate and see the true underlying trend.  
 22       One of the considerations in our discussions

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1 was, is there just as you asked, Commissioner, about,  
 2 are there any benchmarks out there for maybe  
 3 administrative expenses, are there some benchmarks  
 4 other than the emerging experience in any particular  
 5 rate filing available to test trend assumptions to.  
 6 And we identified two entities currently in Maryland  
 7 that are tasked with gathering information pertaining  
 8 to specific types of medical care. And the first one  
 9 is the health service cost review commission, HSCRC,  
 10 and I'll have to look at this to make sure I get the  
 11 acronym right, and they are responsible for collecting  
 12 data on the hospitals all payer system. Their data  
 13 can identify, they can identify the data by hospital  
 14 and insurer, the challenge with that particular data  
 15 is that they can't really identify or segregate  
 16 between insured and self funded, or market segment,  
 17 i.e., the non group market or non group HMO or small  
 18 group, PPO, intermediate group, they don't have that  
 19 capability right now. But the advantage of this data  
 20 is that it is very timely. They gather this and so  
 21 this data is available 45 to 60 days after each  
 22 quarter ends. So that is a real advantage of this

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1 particular data set.  
 2       Now, there are some barriers to it. Right  
 3 now they don't have a corresponding membership data.  
 4 So you have the hospital data but you don't have the  
 5 underlying membership so it's very, very difficult if  
 6 not impossible to get that utilization component of  
 7 trend. When we're going back on the other slide we  
 8 were talking costs of providers and then utilization  
 9 of services. So because we don't know the underlying  
 10 membership we also can't really normalize it for the  
 11 change in any demographic mix that may be occurring.  
 12 This also is on an aggregate level, even if we could  
 13 isolate, can isolate it for the commercial, and it's  
 14 still not at that same level that would appear in any  
 15 particular rate filing for any particular insurance  
 16 carrier. So that is a barrier.  
 17       Currently they do not have what we call  
 18 professional charges, those physician charges, or they  
 19 do not have any information on prescription drugs, and  
 20 those are two major, major components of regs. The  
 21 data set includes only Maryland hospitals, which is  
 22 good, but contracts that are issued in Maryland don't

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1 limit members only seeking services in Maryland  
 2 hospitals. So the carriers -- and I'm using carriers  
 3 and HMOs together, I'm not going to try to segregate  
 4 those two. When I say carriers I mean carriers and  
 5 HMOs as one. You know, they are going to be liable  
 6 for, or have to pay hospitals that are outside  
 7 Maryland, either because they have their insureds who  
 8 live outside of Maryland, or you have Maryland  
 9 insureds who may seek services to hospitals outside of  
 10 Maryland. So even if we used, even if this data had  
 11 some of these other barriers overcome, you would still  
 12 have the issue that they're not covering all the  
 13 claims that any particular carrier would have.  
 14 So as a result the use of this data would  
 15 represent only the cost component to hospital, either  
 16 hospital inpatient or hospital outpatient, for  
 17 essentially a sub group of the total claims that may  
 18 be included in any particular filing.  
 19 So those are sort of the barriers associated  
 20 with that particular database.  
 21 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: So in terms of the  
 22 primary drivers of trend that are listed on slide 12,

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1 as the HSCRC data currently exists, in your view it  
 2 would provide relevant information with respect to  
 3 which of these primary drivers of trend?  
 4 MS. BENDER: It would provide relevant  
 5 information obviously to changes in provider  
 6 reimbursements for hospital services only. And it  
 7 would provide I think that you could use this to  
 8 assess the changes in the mix of services utilized.  
 9 Changes in the mix of providers to a degree in that if  
 10 services were switching among hospitals within  
 11 Maryland, and between inpatient and outpatient, so it  
 12 would provide maybe what I would call a subset of  
 13 that. Changes in mix of providers utilized. It would  
 14 provide a portion maybe of technical advances, those  
 15 that take place in a hospital setting, either as an  
 16 inpatient or an outpatient. It would not include  
 17 those that might be taking place in only the  
 18 physician's office, or on the drug side,  
 19 pharmaceutical side.  
 20 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: And how would it  
 21 provide that, like at the procedure level?  
 22 MS. BENDER: Technical advances?

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1 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Um-hum.  
 2 MS. BENDER: Well, I think theoretically you  
 3 could start to list some of the services provided  
 4 and/or on the outpatient side some of them, and on the  
 5 inpatient side, maybe the inpatient by DRGs and start  
 6 drilling down in to see if there are some new -- I'm  
 7 trying to think of an example, would that be like a  
 8 neonatal intensive care? Or advances in cancer  
 9 treatments that you would be able to track. It might  
 10 not be easy but I think you might be able to glean  
 11 some of that information.  
 12 You would not be able to do the age of the  
 13 population, I think it would be very problematic on  
 14 the cost shifting side because of the unique Maryland  
 15 situation where you have sort of the single payer or  
 16 single, same payment for all payers. The cost  
 17 shifting you don't, theoretically you don't have cost  
 18 shifting on the hospital side, the cost shifting more  
 19 on the physician side, you would not have that at all  
 20 here.  
 21 Changes in claim coding methodology you  
 22 might be able to do that. That would be more of a

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1 longitudinal comparison of type services on the  
 2 outpatient side and maybe on the hospital, again the  
 3 hospital, either the DRG or the ICD-9 codes until  
 4 ICD-10 codes come. You might be able to -- which in  
 5 those codes, the DRG codes and the ICD-9 codes are  
 6 essentially codes that are used on the institution  
 7 side to indicate type of services -- no, type, what do  
 8 I want to call it, diagnosis, heart problems, those  
 9 kind of things.  
 10 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: But the DRG for  
 11 example, won't necessarily tell you what the treatment  
 12 was or what level of technology was employed to  
 13 provide the treatment or to conduct an evaluation?  
 14 MS. BENDER: The only thing you could  
 15 probably do is if there's a shift of DRGs from one,  
 16 you know, compare one set to another and for some  
 17 reason a shift to more complex DRGs.  
 18 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Okay.  
 19 MS. BENDER: You might be able to do that.  
 20 You know, theoretical you might have a chance of that.  
 21 Changes in morbidity I think would be very  
 22 problematic to get from that. Changes in care

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1 management I think would be very, very problematic.  
 2 Catastrophic claims since most of the cost of  
 3 catastrophic claims are at hospital institutions that  
 4 you probably could get absolute number of catastrophic  
 5 claims. The problem is that you don't have the  
 6 membership underlying, so, you know, if you have a  
 7 larger membership you might expect a larger number of  
 8 catastrophic claims. But you might be able to say,  
 9 you know, X percent of our claims last year were over  
 10 a hundred thousand, now Y percent are, something like  
 11 that.  
 12 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: But again limited  
 13 to the slice that represents Maryland hospitals?  
 14 MS. BENDER: Only Maryland hospitals, you're  
 15 absolutely right. And not the professional charges  
 16 associated with that, just this very, very small  
 17 slice.  
 18 You wouldn't be able to do changes in  
 19 benefits and I don't think you would be able to do  
 20 selection from that.  
 21 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Thank you.  
 22 MS. TOMCZYK: I'll just add two things to

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1 that. One, back on the DRG discussion, if the data  
 2 has the revenue code on there, so within a DRG that  
 3 revenue code will tell you the breakdown between, for  
 4 example, drugs and radiology and how much of the claim  
 5 is due to the room and board, so you could  
 6 theoretically look at within a given DRG is the  
 7 percentage of the claim that's made up by radiology  
 8 charges changing.  
 9 And the other thing I just was going to  
 10 comment that some of these are almost intertwined  
 11 where it's hard to distinguish in the sense that if  
 12 you're starting to see more claims under a given DRG  
 13 is it because the morbidity is changing? Is it  
 14 because the coding is changes? Is it because the mix  
 15 of services is changing?  
 16 MS. BENDER: Or the aging population.  
 17 MS. TOMCZYK: Exactly. Yeah.  
 18 So it would be very difficult to look at the  
 19 data, I think, and say this is due to this particular  
 20 factor. Which makes trends analysis even more  
 21 complicated.  
 22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SAMMIS: If we accept

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1 that because of the limitations in the data, that the  
 2 HSCRC can't be used in a quantitative sense as the  
 3 opposite of the actuaries reviewing the rates, is it  
 4 possible in your view to be able to get a report or  
 5 some sort of an analysis on a quarterly basis from the  
 6 HSCRC that might tell us in a qualitative sense how  
 7 changes in, just for Maryland hospitals, what changes  
 8 they're seeing in terms of admissions, severity of the  
 9 cases, things like that so that the actuaries may be  
 10 able to have a more, a different kind of dialogue with  
 11 the carrier about the trends that they're seeing for  
 12 that particular product as opposed to what's being  
 13 seen globally at the Maryland hospitals?  
 14 MS. BENDER: Sort of like a leading  
 15 indicator.  
 16 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Yes.  
 17 MS. BENDER: You're saying that, no, we  
 18 can't take this information and dump it into the rate  
 19 filing and have it pop out with here's what's going to  
 20 be your trend. But as a leading -- yes, I think you  
 21 can. How strong it's going to be I think time will  
 22 tell. And it might be one of these, like once you

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1 start tracking it you'll have a real better feel for  
 2 how strong an indicator it is.  
 3 Obviously we have different issues between  
 4 the individual market as it currently is now, where  
 5 it's medically underwritten, accept, reject, there's  
 6 certain uniqueness to that particular market that as  
 7 opposed to the small group market which is guarantee  
 8 issue rate now, that doesn't have some of those other  
 9 characteristics sort of what I would call complicating  
 10 or masking, or exaggerating trend appearances of trend  
 11 shall I say.  
 12 CHIEF ACTUARY YU: I mean, well, in using  
 13 basically hospital trends as a leading indicator, if  
 14 you could -- as -- well, a couple questions come to  
 15 mind. How big a portion are hospital claims roughly  
 16 of total claims? And the second question is, are  
 17 trends for different types of services, so hospital  
 18 inpatient versus professional or prescription drugs,  
 19 are they necessarily correlated?  
 20 MS. BENDER: I don't have the tip of my  
 21 tongue what the distribution of claims are. I can  
 22 give you something that on an allowed basis drug

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1 claims are somewhere between what, 15 and 20 percent  
 2 of total allowable charges. And I would say that  
 3 hospital claims, inpatient and outpatient, what, 40 to  
 4 50 percent, depending upon -- the network.  
 5 CHIEF ACTUARY YU: Okay. I was just looking  
 6 for a ballpark.  
 7 MS. TOMCZYK: Yeah, I tend to have a better  
 8 feel on the paid side, I usually see close to  
 9 50 percent being inpatient/outpatient combined. Maybe  
 10 40 percent for professional and other miscellaneous  
 11 and 10 for drugs, on a paid basis.  
 12 MS. BENDER: The drugs really get leverage  
 13 because the coinsurance generally go to about 50  
 14 percent one way or the other, I mean copays. So then  
 15 you said, so that was the first part, then what was  
 16 your second part, the correlation between --  
 17 CHIEF ACTUARY YU: Well, to the extent that  
 18 we get a general feel, we use HSCRC results as a  
 19 barometer of the general feel for hospital trends.  
 20 Are hospital trends necessarily correlated with other,  
 21 other types of services? Transfer other types of  
 22 services?

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1 MS. BENDER: Well, there obviously has been  
 2 a shift between inpatient and outpatient on the  
 3 hospital side going on for the last many, many years.  
 4 So to the extent that you're having services take  
 5 place in an outpatient setting that used to be in an  
 6 inpatient setting, you could actually have a decrease  
 7 in hospital inpatient charges, but I'm not -- with not  
 8 the corresponding decrease in professional services to  
 9 the extent. You'd have a little decrease but maybe  
 10 not as much of a decrease as you would maybe for what  
 11 the hospital inpatient would decrease.  
 12 But we've also seen the hospital outpatient  
 13 costs have been increasing rather rapidly.  
 14 I would like to say generally, yes, there's  
 15 going to be a correlation because I said it's a very  
 16 general yes. And it would be better to track this  
 17 information and to tie that, whether it's a strong  
 18 correlation, I would like to think that there is going  
 19 to be a relatively strong correlation in the  
 20 direction, not in the absolute magnitude, but if all  
 21 of a sudden hospital utilization starts to, inpatient  
 22 utilization starts to increase dramatically, I would

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1 say that you can expect that your general claims  
 2 trends are going to increase as well. Will they  
 3 increase one for one, I can't say that.  
 4 MS. TOMCZYK: I think the correlation, what  
 5 correlation there is is probably tied more to the  
 6 utilization. More so than the cost. I don't know how  
 7 much correlation just because the cost on a per unit  
 8 basis is going up in hospital necessarily means drugs,  
 9 that is probably more independent. But if hospital  
 10 utilization is going up and, you know, one of the  
 11 causes is because the population is becoming more  
 12 morbid or is aging, it's likely that the more drug  
 13 claims are going to be incurred as a result.  
 14 So from a utilization perspective there  
 15 probably is some correlation. But again, the HSCRC  
 16 data as it is today without having membership you  
 17 really can't get at the utilization component, it's  
 18 really the cost component.  
 19 MS. BENDER: You definitely cannot get at  
 20 the, like a day's per thousand or things like that.  
 21 You might be able to, when you're saying just the  
 22 absolute number, you would have to track that and see.

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1 As long as you're not having a huge shift in  
 2 population that might be, again, just a leading  
 3 indicator. But I would say you would probably have to  
 4 go back and either try to reconstruct it or track it  
 5 forward to see how strong a correlation that was.  
 6 I must have skipped one here, huh? Did I  
 7 skip one? I'm all confused here.  
 8 MHCC data is the other data source that is  
 9 available in Maryland. And Maryland healthcare  
 10 commission maintains a statewide medical care  
 11 database. Historically they only carried or only  
 12 kept, captured I should say, professional and  
 13 prescription drug claims. But in 2009 they began to  
 14 incorporate hospital claims. And membership in 2010.  
 15 So ultimately this is going to be a, what I would call  
 16 a complete database that could be an independent  
 17 source for emerging experience.  
 18 Just for the record, it only contains payers  
 19 with at least \$1,000,000 in earned premium. That does  
 20 not diminish its worth materially whatsoever. So --  
 21 The biggest barrier to using the MHCC data  
 22 when it gets complete is really what I would call a

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1 timing issue. And that is that the data is not  
 2 reported until six months after the year end, so that  
 3 they can make sure that they, they've gathered all the  
 4 service dates. And then it's generally not available  
 5 until 10 to 12 months after the year end because once  
 6 they get the data they have to, we call it scrub the  
 7 data, we have to make sure that, that it's  
 8 appropriate, you know, that it's clean and valid.  
 9 So the first full set of utilization data  
 10 that includes all types of services as well as all  
 11 membership isn't going to be available until the Fall  
 12 of 2012. And that is going to be for 2011?  
 13 MS. TOMCZYK: Well, it would be the data  
 14 representing 2010 and 2011, but to develop trends you  
 15 need realistically two years of data to look at the  
 16 change. So. And because the 2011 data is not  
 17 reported until the Summer of 2012, and then by the  
 18 time the data is validated it's going to be the Fall  
 19 of 2012 before you can probably get some good trend  
 20 estimates.  
 21 MS. BENDER: So and then you would still  
 22 need to normalize that data to make sure that it, but

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1 that can be done. I mean, that's not -- because you  
 2 have the membership so you, but you want to make sure  
 3 that it's normalized for changes in membership.  
 4 Now, this data set only includes Maryland  
 5 residents. So you have a little mismatch in that,  
 6 again, the premiums that carriers are charging are  
 7 for, especially in the group market, for all employees  
 8 whether or not they live in Maryland. And it's very,  
 9 very common that people will live in one state,  
 10 especially in some of the smaller states and work in  
 11 another state. So you could have people working in  
 12 Maryland who are not Maryland residents. And they  
 13 would not capture that data.  
 14 This has potential, again, but it's the  
 15 timing issue. Right now rates are being developed for  
 16 2012, or it will shortly be developed for 2012, if  
 17 they haven't already. Based upon 2010 experience.  
 18 Whereas, that experience for 2010 will for the MHCC is  
 19 not going to be available until, what, September or  
 20 October of 2011 at the earliest. This is one though  
 21 that if you begin to track this, there may be -- you  
 22 may be able to develop some trends from this and see

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1 what the, what the lag is. Can you use this data to  
 2 augment some of the information that you are seeing in  
 3 the rate filings. And that's how I can best describe  
 4 that. Again, it's not going to be one that you can  
 5 dump in.  
 6 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Augment, could you  
 7 elaborate a little bit, augment in what way? To what  
 8 use? I'm just wondering if the data is too stale by  
 9 the time it's available to be of meaningful use.  
 10 MS. BENDER: It may be challenging. What I  
 11 was envisioning is, if you have a course of years, not  
 12 just two or three, but over the course of years, and  
 13 this data has been running, I'm just going to make up  
 14 some numbers, you know, 6 percent, 7 percent,  
 15 8 percent, even though you have a gap, if someone is  
 16 coming in with 14 percent, maybe you would say, okay,  
 17 help me. Help me understand, you know, how I'm  
 18 getting from here to here. There could be a perfectly  
 19 rationale justification. You're not going to be able  
 20 to, like I said, take this experience in 2010 -- I  
 21 suppose another way that you might be able to do it is  
 22 take this experience and project it using the emerging

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1 experience, but you would be projecting it longer time  
 2 periods than maybe are included in the rate filings  
 3 and you might have some mismatch there.  
 4 Again, I would say it's not going to be to  
 5 use this in lieu of. It just isn't. The timing is  
 6 going to be problematic. But if you develop enough of  
 7 a history, and maybe in conjunction with -- I got to  
 8 get the HSCRC data, you might be able to get some  
 9 sort, since that's what I would call a leading  
 10 indicator, more frequent indicator, you might be able  
 11 to do some analysis to say, hey, when this says this  
 12 then this, then the MHCC generally says this. You  
 13 know, and -- but that's going to take sometime.  
 14 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: With the idea being  
 15 it might prompt further inquiry, for example?  
 16 MS. BENDER: Yes.  
 17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SAMMIS: But it would  
 18 help us then, in your view, if the MHCC were to do  
 19 some of this analysis to inform us as to whether or  
 20 not it's worth continuing to use the HSCRC data as a  
 21 leading indicator?  
 22 MS. BENDER: That would, and I think that we

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1 might be jumping ahead a bit, but yeah, that's one of  
 2 the things that we had recommended that the MIA and  
 3 the MHCC and the HSCRC to collaborate and see what is  
 4 the potential. There's lots of good data out there,  
 5 is there a way of using this in the rate review  
 6 process? There may be, it's not going to be a turnkey  
 7 operation, would be the best way of phrasing. There  
 8 may be but it's going to require some resources to  
 9 investigate and maybe some resources to do some  
 10 econometric analysis, actuarial analysis as predicting  
 11 powers.  
 12 So that takes us to rate filing submission  
 13 requirements. And tammy gets to explain these.  
 14 MS. TOMCZYK: Okay.  
 15 So our next step we wanted to look at the  
 16 different aspects of the filing requirements and  
 17 whether there was a feasible or whether it could be  
 18 feasible to perhaps standardize them in some capacity.  
 19 There is going to be a lot more work with having an  
 20 effective rate review program. And to the extent that  
 21 things can be standardized or made more efficient we  
 22 just wanted to look at it from that aspect. So we

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1 looked at both the requirements in terms of the data  
 2 that's being submitted and the format that that data  
 3 could be submitted in.  
 4 So for completeness we looked at, you know,  
 5 what kind of standardized templates are out there that  
 6 are being used today. And probably the most common  
 7 one is the one that's used in the Medicare advantage  
 8 market for the bid, it's called the bid pricing tool  
 9 for the bidding process that carriers participating in  
 10 that market use. It's, for those who aren't aware,  
 11 it's an Excel based spreadsheet, it comes with a set  
 12 of instructions about that thick in terms of how you  
 13 have to fill it out. And the Medicare Advantage  
 14 carriers use it. It prescribes the data that has to  
 15 be used and essentially the formula so all carriers  
 16 are using the same formula.  
 17 We talked about in our report some of the  
 18 pros and cons to that template. The pros are, I  
 19 guess, that it's uniform which could lead to more  
 20 efficient, more efficiency. And the ability to take  
 21 that data from a tool and dump it into some type of  
 22 analytical tool.

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1 The cons are it's very, very different from  
 2 how pricing is done in the commercial market today.  
 3 It would require a lot of modification, Medicare  
 4 Advantage is more of a community rated product, there  
 5 is no age variation to the rates, that's not true of  
 6 the commercial market. And it, it only uses one year  
 7 of experience. So it's just really not conducive to  
 8 being used for commercial pricing without a lot of, a  
 9 lot of work. So not to jump ahead to our  
 10 recommendations, but in our opinion the cons really  
 11 outweigh the pros at this time.  
 12 That doesn't mean that it couldn't be  
 13 investigated further but certainly not something we  
 14 would recommend.  
 15 The other standardized type template is the  
 16 preliminary justification form that Karen talked about  
 17 that's going to have to be submitted for all, per the  
 18 regulations, HHS regulations, for all carriers that  
 19 exceed that threshold, that 10 percent in 2011. And I  
 20 guess one of the pros to that is the carriers are  
 21 going to have to submit it for those filings that are  
 22 over the threshold and they'll become familiar with

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1 it. So, so that was the pro to that.  
 2 We also did a little bit of research to see  
 3 if there are other states that use a standardized  
 4 template in the commercial market. And we found two,  
 5 New York and Colorado, and we included them in the  
 6 appendix of our report. I'm not really going to talk  
 7 about those much more than that.  
 8 So then we looked at the filing requirement,  
 9 the filing requirements and is there any way to  
 10 standardize that. Again to help promote efficiency of  
 11 the work flow process that the office of the actuary,  
 12 office of the chief actuary is going to conduct.  
 13 So there were several states that we found  
 14 that had them, these that we list here, Oregon,  
 15 Washington, Minnesota and Colorado are probably those  
 16 that in our opinion were more robust in their  
 17 checklist as well as contained data items that we  
 18 thought were most valid to, or applicable I should say  
 19 to all, all reviews or all filings.  
 20 So with that and other, just our general  
 21 knowledge and working with carriers in other states  
 22 and pricing, as actuaries, we developed a sample

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1 checklist that we included in the appendix as well for  
 2 your consideration. I just want to state that that  
 3 checklist is not by any means intended to be  
 4 exhaustive or fully inclusive of all of the  
 5 information that should be reviewed. It's intended to  
 6 represent common data elements that are appropriate  
 7 for, or should be reviewed in every filing, but that  
 8 doesn't mean that on a case-by-case bases or  
 9 filing-by-filing basis there's not going to be the  
 10 need to go back to a carrier and ask for  
 11 clarification, more information, and probably more  
 12 common than not that that will have to occur.

13 So I just wanted to clarify it's not  
 14 intended to be an all inclusive list.

15 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: But the idea would  
 16 be that it would cut down hopefully on the amount of  
 17 time it would take given the back and forth that often  
 18 occurs between the office of chief actuary and the  
 19 carrier to try and streamline the process and get as  
 20 much of the information required for the review  
 21 submitted in the first instance as possible?

22 MS. TOMCZYK: Exactly. And as you almost

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1 alluded to, it will make the process more efficient.  
 2 Having conducted rate filing reviews myself in other  
 3 states, when you do a review and ask for more  
 4 information from the carrier and then it kind of sits  
 5 there for two weeks, or three weeks, and you get the  
 6 information back, you almost have to refamiliarize  
 7 yourself with the case. So to get most of the  
 8 information up front would hopefully review, or  
 9 increase the efficiency and it would decrease  
 10 hopefully the need for significant followup. And  
 11 perhaps shorten the timeline so that there's a shorter  
 12 period between when the filing is submitted and when  
 13 the approval date actually occurs. So carriers aren't  
 14 having to implement the rate increase beyond the  
 15 proposed effective date, which in a sense means the  
 16 next time they file for a rate increase they missed a  
 17 couple months of trend and only makes the next rate  
 18 increase greater. So it perhaps even would stabilize  
 19 the rate increases to some small extent, I'm not sure  
 20 to what extent.

21 And then the last thing we just wanted to  
 22 touch on was the actuarial standards of practice. The

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1 actuary signing the certification that's submitted  
 2 with the filing is required to comply with actuarial  
 3 standards of practice, ASOP-8 and so the American  
 4 Academy of Actuaries has recommended that these are  
 5 items that the actuary should include in their review  
 6 and analysis in preparing the filing. So that's  
 7 another, I guess, checklist that inherently is  
 8 included in that process.

9 On to our recommendations.

10 I'm going to summarize the recommendations  
 11 here, certainly if there are any questions feel free  
 12 to ask. They're outlined in quite a bit of detail in  
 13 the report, not only do we present our recommendations  
 14 but some rationale for each one as to why, why we've  
 15 come to form that recommendation.

16 And we've tried to classify them I guess in  
 17 broad categories. The first what we thought were the  
 18 most important in the primary subject of our work was  
 19 those that were going to need to be made, the changes  
 20 that were going to need to be made to have an  
 21 effective rate review program.

22 So there aren't a lot here and that probably

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1 goes back to that first slide where we showed that  
 2 little first graft down at the bottom and it showed  
 3 that Maryland had quite, in our opinion, quite a  
 4 thorough review process in place today. So these are  
 5 really just additional requirements that are needed  
 6 because they're outlined in the regulations from HHS.  
 7 A couple of them may require a couple of regulatory  
 8 changes, I'm trying to remember, see if I can get this  
 9 right off the top of my head.

10 For example, administrative expenses, I  
 11 don't believe for all carriers, carriers meaning non  
 12 profit health service corporations, HMOs and insurance  
 13 companies, I don't believe you have that authority for  
 14 all three today and I can't remember exactly off the  
 15 top of my head which one, but I just bring that to  
 16 your attention that you may not have, and again a  
 17 legal question, as Karen said we're not lawyers, there  
 18 may be the need to have some regulatory changes.

19 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Or some legislative  
 20 activity.

21 MS. TOMCZYK: Legislative, I'm sorry, yes.  
 22 And again, I'm not sure if that needs to be done

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1 through legislature or regulatory. And so I'm not  
 2 going to try to address any legal issues here.  
 3 The next group was around the type of  
 4 review. And while the regulations only require these  
 5 enhanced reviews be performed on non grandfathered  
 6 filings, and those that exceed that threshold, again,  
 7 10 percent, 2011, we're recommending that they be  
 8 performed for all individuals/small group filings.  
 9 For a couple of reasons, first it provides the same  
 10 level, equity amongst all Maryland consumers.  
 11 Everyone is getting that same level of scrutiny, if  
 12 you will, to all the components of the rates that  
 13 they're being asked to pay from the insurance  
 14 companies, not, not, based strictly on the change. So  
 15 there could be misestimation of trend in one year that  
 16 would cause a larger rate increase the following year.  
 17 And put, cause a rate increase to exceed the  
 18 10 percent threshold. And to limit the review to just  
 19 those that exceed the threshold, you're not really  
 20 being equitable to all consumers in the sense that the  
 21 real focus in my opinion at least should be what's the  
 22 ultimate rate you're asking them to pay, not so much

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1 what's the change in the rate from the --  
 2 MS. BENDER: And conversely like you gave,  
 3 where they underestimate, if the previous year they  
 4 over estimated trends, so now all of a sudden maybe  
 5 they're only going to get a 4 percent increase you may  
 6 still warrant maybe the 4 percent isn't reasonable.  
 7 If they used an unreasonable trend. And so that was  
 8 another reasoning for applying it to all filings, not  
 9 just the 10 percent threshold.  
 10 MS. TOMCZYK: Yeah. And again, well, the  
 11 regulations address the rate increase and the reason,  
 12 and they really focus on the reasonableness or  
 13 unreasonableness of a rate increase, and this is my  
 14 opinion, I think it really is, you know, are the rates  
 15 reasonable in relation to the benefit. So that's the  
 16 basis.  
 17 The other thing by having one standardized  
 18 process it will allow the actuaries reviewing the  
 19 filings to have more efficiencies. They won't get a  
 20 filing on their desk and say, okay, now I have to look  
 21 at this filing and I follow this process, or this  
 22 filing is under 10 percent so I follow this other

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1 process. It'll promote some efficiencies there.  
 2 With respect to the large group, we  
 3 recommend no changes. First of all we think the  
 4 reviews you're performing in the large group market  
 5 are more extensive than we typically see in many  
 6 states. Many states don't even have the authority to  
 7 review large group rates. And also the regulations  
 8 don't apply to large groups. So we kept that to  
 9 individual and small group.  
 10 The loss ratio test, our recommendation is  
 11 to require the test be met at the market segment level  
 12 and I guess there's not, the recommendation comes from  
 13 the fact that the -- the recommendation comes from the  
 14 fact that both your new law that was just passed in  
 15 the state, and the HHS regulations both require that  
 16 it be at the marketed level.  
 17 However, if the test can be met for a given  
 18 filing, theoretically, theoretically if the test can  
 19 be met for all filings or all products that a carrier  
 20 has that comprise the market segment individually,  
 21 then theoretically the market segment level test is  
 22 met. So we're recommending that if, for that

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1 particular filing, taking into consideration the  
 2 credibility of that filing, so if it's a filing that  
 3 only covers a small number of policyholders you may  
 4 not want to implement this, but taking credibility  
 5 into consideration, if they can meet it or demonstrate  
 6 that it will be met at the filing level then we don't  
 7 really think that there's the need to require the  
 8 market segment level test.  
 9 The next set in relation to timing, we  
 10 looked at the lead time that carriers are required to  
 11 file prior to the effective date as well as the deemer  
 12 periods or the time period that the administration has  
 13 to conduct the reviews. And we found both that they  
 14 were consistent with other states and in our opinion  
 15 seemed to allow sufficient time, so we aren't  
 16 recommending any changes to that, those issues.  
 17 But we did notice that, I want to get this  
 18 one right, insurance carriers and non profits in the  
 19 individual market have different requirements for  
 20 notifying consumers of their rate increases than HMOs  
 21 and in the small group market. So the requirement is  
 22 that they be, consumers be notified 40 days prior to

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1 the expiration of the grace period, which is 30 days,  
 2 which essentially means technically they only have to  
 3 notify consumers ten days before the effective date of  
 4 the rate increase, which doesn't really allow a lot of  
 5 time for consumers to shop if they're getting a large  
 6 rate increase for other coverage. So we're  
 7 recommending that you change it to be consistent with  
 8 HMOs and that required in the small group market which  
 9 is 45 days prior to the effective date of the rate  
 10 increase.

11 With regard to filing requirements, we  
 12 recommend you require all filings be submitted through  
 13 SERFF. It's our understanding that SERFF has been  
 14 reporting requirements that you're required to make to  
 15 HHS. So again for efficiency purposes if they all  
 16 come in through SERFF it's easier on your end to use  
 17 that availability.

18 The rate filing checklist I already talked a  
 19 little bit about, again, it's in Appendix D. And I  
 20 guess I didn't touch on the fact that it would promote  
 21 consistency in the data that's submitted, but again,  
 22 getting as much of the data upfront will certainly

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1 hopefully reduce the time required for the review and  
 2 make it more efficient and such.

3 And reduce followup.

4 And in that checklist we identify certain  
 5 items that we're recommending the carriers be required  
 6 to submit in Excel format. So premium membership  
 7 claims information to facilitate the actuaries perhaps  
 8 doing some of their own high level trend analysis or  
 9 looking at the experience, as well as the carrier's  
 10 trend analysis actually submitting that in Excel. So  
 11 the actuaries can actually look at the formulas and  
 12 form their own independent analysis on the  
 13 appropriate, the appropriateness of the trend  
 14 assumptions.

15 And we're also requiring, or recommending  
 16 that all small group and individual filings include  
 17 the Part I Preliminary, Part I Preliminary  
 18 Justification Rate Summary Worksheet. Boy, that's  
 19 difficult.

20 And really the driving force behind this  
 21 recommendation is tied in great deal to our  
 22 recommendations in the consumerism project that we'll

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1 talk about later. So to the extent that you decide to  
 2 implement our recommendations there, this would, by  
 3 having all carriers submit this information with all  
 4 filings would facilitate the implementation of those  
 5 recommendations. So we'll talk more about that when  
 6 we talk about the other report later.

7 Finally, these were kind of some other  
 8 recommendations that didn't really fit together in any  
 9 kind of grouping or classification. We talked  
 10 extensively, Karen did, about the data from HSCRC and  
 11 MHCC and our recommendation there is to continue to  
 12 work with them and investigate what information is  
 13 available, how you might be able to use that  
 14 information. Our focus was not really on taking a  
 15 very deep, deep dive into that data and looking at in  
 16 very detail the analytical tools, but more to make an  
 17 assessment as to what data is available and should, I  
 18 guess should further consideration be given to it.

19 Pricing margins and other relevant factors,  
 20 other relevant factors we're defining as I guess,  
 21 anything that's not part of the loss ratio component,  
 22 so with the 80 percent loss ratio it's that other

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1 20 percent, admin, risk profit, we're recommending  
 2 that you consider including those, those items in your  
 3 review. And again, some of them may require  
 4 legislative changes. And Karen talked about the  
 5 reporting that you're going to have to provide to HHS  
 6 for each filing that you review that falls under that  
 7 subject to review category. There will be many  
 8 aspects of it, to our knowledge today there isn't,  
 9 there hasn't been any kind of direction or  
 10 instructions or guidance provided in terms of what has  
 11 to be included, and certainly if anything comes out  
 12 that needs to be considered, but absent that, there  
 13 are probably some common aspects of every filing that,  
 14 and information that you're going to report to HHS.

15 And we've given some ideas or our thoughts on what  
 16 that information might be that HHS is looking for.

17 But to the extent that it can be standardized, again,  
 18 going back to standardization and making it efficient,  
 19 there's going to be a lot of additional work and that  
 20 kind of leads into the, I won't skip over the  
 21 pre-approved trends, but just touching on the next one  
 22 on staffing needs, there's just going to be an

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1 increase in the volume of the workload so anything  
 2 that can be done to make the process more efficient is  
 3 a plus.  
 4 The pre-approved trend factors, our  
 5 understanding is today that carriers are allowed to  
 6 file for a trend factor that they can use to increment  
 7 rates on a monthly basis for a period of 12 months.  
 8 At which point when the 12th month arrives the rates  
 9 are essentially locked in until additional rates are  
 10 filed, an additional rate filing is submitted to  
 11 support increasing rates further than that point. And  
 12 we're recommending you continue that process, one,  
 13 hopefully absent that you may see an increase in the  
 14 volume of rate increases. And with the consideration  
 15 that in coming up with that pre-approved trend factor  
 16 you may want to consider limiting it to that threshold  
 17 that's used to determine whether a rate increase is  
 18 deemed subject to review. So if that's 10 percent  
 19 again for 2011, you may not want to approve a rating  
 20 -- I'm sorry, a pre-approved trend factor that exceeds  
 21 that amount because I'm not really sure how that would  
 22 play in with causing a rate increase to exceed

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1 10 percent at that point isn't being reviewed. So if  
 2 a carrier thinks their trends are higher than  
 3 10 percent well then maybe you require them to file  
 4 more than once a year. But put a cap on the  
 5 pre-approved.  
 6 As far as staffing I mentioned that there is  
 7 probably, or there will be, if all of these, again, it  
 8 will be dependent on which of our recommendations  
 9 ultimately are implemented, but if they were to all be  
 10 implemented there would be a significant increase in  
 11 the filings that are reviewed, the reviews themselves  
 12 would become more detailed, someone would have to work  
 13 with HSCRC and MHCC to investigate how their data  
 14 could be used. The reporting that has to occur to  
 15 HHS. So all of that will increase the workload and  
 16 the need for staff.  
 17 And we went through and we kind of thought  
 18 that just what we have here, and this is independent  
 19 from the other report, because as we'll see later  
 20 there will be independent, or additional staffing  
 21 needs required there, but just for what falls under  
 22 the scope of the rate review, we thought that would be

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1 equivalent to one additional actuary and one  
 2 additional actuarial student.  
 3 And finally our last recommendation was to  
 4 give consideration to developing a procedures manual.  
 5 Once you decide on what the new process will be, to  
 6 document it, it will promote consistency amongst  
 7 different reviewers, especially if the staff grows and  
 8 you have more people performing the reviews.  
 9 Efficiency and then training new staff, they'll have  
 10 something that they can at least refer to on a regular  
 11 basis until they get fully trained and implemented.  
 12 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Are you envisioning  
 13 the actuarial student performing the role of an  
 14 analyst? I thought I had seen an actuary and an  
 15 analyst somewhere in your report?  
 16 MS. TOMCZYK: I don't recall if we used  
 17 actuarial analyst, but I tend to think of an actuarial  
 18 student or an actuarial analyst as someone who perhaps  
 19 doesn't have their credentials so they haven't  
 20 obtained the associateship in the business light of  
 21 the actuaries. Not really being a person who is  
 22 making a final decision on a rate filing. But maybe

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1 doing some of the work, for example, in putting  
 2 together the reporting to, that gets submitted to HHS.  
 3 They can certainly do that under the guidance of the  
 4 chief actuary and with peer review. So taking some of  
 5 the, I don't know how to say it, the tasks that  
 6 require less experience. Because there will be a lot  
 7 of them, just in the reporting requirements and the  
 8 consumer disclosure, some of -- some of that student,  
 9 actuarial student or actuarial analyst position, I  
 10 don't know that this, implementing these  
 11 recommendations would fully require a person full-time  
 12 -- it may. But they could also work to fulfill some  
 13 of the additional tasks that are going to be required  
 14 under the other report.  
 15 MS. BENDER: And certainly an analyst can  
 16 support the actuary by doing certain portions of the  
 17 review, such as ensuring consistency in the data  
 18 between this particular filing and analogous data  
 19 points or time periods in previous filings. Those  
 20 kind of analysis to sort of identify certain issues  
 21 for the actuary that's going to be performing the  
 22 review. But we do not recommend that final decision

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1 be made by a non qualified actuary.  
 2 MS. TOMCZYK: Yeah.  
 3 And another example might be if the  
 4 checklist were recommending as implemented the  
 5 actuarial student with some training could perhaps go  
 6 through an initial high level review of the filing and  
 7 kind of go down the checklist and make the actuary  
 8 aware, the actuary who is actually going to perform,  
 9 be responsible for performing the review and forming  
 10 the opinion, make them aware of which items aren't  
 11 there and initially before, if there's a significant  
 12 amount of missing information, before the actuary even  
 13 starts reviewing it correspond with the company and  
 14 say, hey, you have eight things on this list that you  
 15 haven't provided, we're not even going to review it  
 16 until you provide this information.  
 17 MS. BENDER: Was it somehow lost in  
 18 transmission, or something, you know, I mean, stranger  
 19 things have happened?  
 20 MS. TOMCZYK: So there are probably skills  
 21 that are beyond what an administrative type person  
 22 could do. But there are a lot of functions that could

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1 be performed by a student or an analyst that's not yet  
 2 credentialed.  
 3 MS. BENDER: And part of the wild card too  
 4 is this, you know, the trend benchmarks and work with  
 5 HSCRC and MHCC, that's going to require someone with  
 6 some experience. You know, and depending upon the  
 7 resources that are going to be required to support  
 8 that effort, that has to be at what I would say an  
 9 actuarial -- not analyst level. They might be able to  
 10 do some of the preliminary analysis, pulling the data  
 11 or something like that but, you know, trying to get  
 12 correlations or something like that, probably would  
 13 have to be, somebody at a more senior level.  
 14 So again --  
 15 MS. TOMCZYK: I guess we'll open it up to  
 16 any additional questions that you have.  
 17 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Do you have much?  
 18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SAMMIS: No.  
 19 CHIEF ACTUARY YU: No.  
 20 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: I have just one,  
 21 I'm sensitive to wanting to give the court reporter a  
 22 break but I have just one I think additional question

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1 I haven't asked yet. And that relates to the  
 2 administration's review of trend analysis. You had  
 3 set out in your report on page 71 three options. And  
 4 in your recommendations you chose what appeared to me  
 5 anyway to be the least robust of the three options, in  
 6 terms of the review that occurs at the Maryland  
 7 Insurance Administration. And as I read the report it  
 8 appeared to me that at least part of the thinking  
 9 there was just based on the realities of staffing  
 10 levels at the Maryland Insurance Administration and I  
 11 wanted to confirm whether that was, whether that was  
 12 the case?  
 13 MS. TOMCZYK: That was. But I will add in  
 14 terms of robustness, if the, in the checklist one of  
 15 our recommendations is to require the analysis be  
 16 provided in Excel format. So the analysis or the  
 17 review in that third option could be a little more  
 18 robust as opposed to having paper copies or a PDF that  
 19 shows the calculations, but you can't really dig into  
 20 the formulas and calculations. So, but you're  
 21 correct, the primary reason for that recommendation  
 22 was staffing. If staffing were not an issue we would

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1 have selected item 1.  
 2 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: All right. Thank  
 3 you. If no one else has any questions, I want to  
 4 thank you for what I think was a very thorough and  
 5 helpful report. And presentation here today.  
 6 For those of you who are here today, the  
 7 slide deck is, if it's not already available it will  
 8 be sometime today on our website there will be a link  
 9 to it so if you're interested in having a hard copy of  
 10 the slide deck, both this one and the consumer  
 11 information slide deck.  
 12 CHIEF ACTUARY YU: It's already posted.  
 13 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Okay. So it is now  
 14 available on our website.  
 15 Why don't we take about ten minutes and then  
 16 we will come back and hear first from these folks who  
 17 have signed up in advance to provide comments here  
 18 today. If there are additional people who are present  
 19 who have not signed up, we're happy to hear from you  
 20 as well if you'd like to provide some testimony at  
 21 today's hearing. And once we've done that we'll see  
 22 where we are and either break for lunch or move on to

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1 the consumer information report.  
 2 (Whereupon, there was a recess in the  
 3 proceedings.)  
 4 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: My break turned  
 5 into 20 minutes. I understand there's been some  
 6 confusion in terms of access to the restroom but I'm  
 7 told there is no card swiping necessary, so the doors  
 8 are open and you need not worry about getting some  
 9 kind of pass to get in. If that hasn't become  
 10 apparent already.  
 11 In terms of public comment, we have three  
 12 people who have signed up in advance to provide public  
 13 comment and we're taking those as I understand it on a  
 14 first come first served basis. And the first of those  
 15 was Michael Robbins on behalf of the Maryland Hospital  
 16 Association.  
 17 MR. ROBBINS: Good morning. I'm Mike  
 18 Robbins, I'm senior vice president with the Maryland  
 19 Hospital Association. I thank you for the opportunity  
 20 to briefly comment since you have received my written  
 21 comments already and they are part of the record.  
 22 We obviously spent a lot of time working

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1 with the HSCRC and believe there is a wealth of  
 2 information that is publicly available, available to  
 3 the commission, to the insurance administration for  
 4 reviewing at least the hospital trend portion or at  
 5 least the Maryland hospital trend portion of the  
 6 premium rate requests that are before the insurance  
 7 administration.  
 8 We would just support the consultants  
 9 recommendations that you continue to look for ways to  
 10 work with that information, both with the MHCC as well  
 11 as the HSCRC. We believe that there is some  
 12 inconsistency between some of the premium trends we've  
 13 been seeing over the last few years and at least the  
 14 hospital portion of the medical trend where we've been  
 15 seeing very significantly single, low digit, single  
 16 declines in single digit trends in at least the  
 17 hospital trend for the Maryland hospitals. And again,  
 18 that's the total trend, there's a lot of information  
 19 that you need beyond that. But we would just  
 20 encourage and support those recommendations to  
 21 continue to work with the HSCRC, and the MHCC on  
 22 getting additional information to help your process.

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1 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Thank you,  
 2 Mr. Robbins.  
 3 Are there any questions for Mr. Robbins?  
 4 Thank you very much for being here. We  
 5 appreciate it.  
 6 MR. ROBBINS: Thank you.  
 7 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Next we have  
 8 Mr. Gene Ransom of MedChi.  
 9 MR. RANSOM: Good morning.  
 10 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Good morning.  
 11 MR. RANSOM: My comments are brief and for  
 12 economy if it's okay I'll just make my comments for  
 13 both reports right now unless there is any objection  
 14 to that.  
 15 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: I think that would  
 16 be fine.  
 17 MR. RANSOM: Okay.  
 18 First and foremost I want to commend the  
 19 insurance commission administration for using the  
 20 opportunity to use these federal grants to provide  
 21 these two reports which I think are very helpful for  
 22 the citizens of Maryland. And I also want to commend

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1 you and applaud you for encouraging public  
 2 participation and public comment throughout this  
 3 regulatory process.  
 4 Our comments are mostly strongly supportive  
 5 of the second report which you're about to hear,  
 6 specifically we think the idea of the website adding  
 7 the health insurance rate under the consumer tabs, the  
 8 consumer friendly summary of the rate filings,  
 9 creating the brochures and somehow figuring out a way  
 10 possibly to do the automated e-mails would be very  
 11 positive for our membership and for the patients they  
 12 serve in Maryland so they have a better understanding  
 13 of the process. I'm not going to read my entire  
 14 written testimony but I'm going to ask it be  
 15 submitted, and I've turned in copies to staff as part  
 16 of this hearing.  
 17 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Do you have a copy  
 18 for the court reporter, sir?  
 19 MR. RANSOM: Yeah. Sure.  
 20 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: If we could mark  
 21 that as, that would be 8.  
 22

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1 (MIA HEARING Exhibit 8 was marked for  
 2 identification and attached to the transcript.)  
 3 MR. RANSOM: Thank you very much.  
 4 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Thank you, sir.  
 5 And then Ms. Kimberly Robinson of the League  
 6 of Life and Health Insurers of Maryland.  
 7 MS. ROBINSON: Good morning, Commissioner  
 8 Goldsmith, and MIA staff.  
 9 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Good morning.  
 10 MS. ROBINSON: I'm Kimberly Robinson,  
 11 Executive Director, of the League of Life and Health  
 12 Insurers of Maryland, and thank you for the  
 13 opportunity to comment today on the Oliver Wyman  
 14 reports.  
 15 We appreciate the work that the MIA has done  
 16 in this area, a very thorough review that you've  
 17 commissioned in order to understand where Maryland  
 18 stands for the rate review process. As we've heard in  
 19 the presentation it's clear by the report Maryland  
 20 currently has a very rigorous rate review process in  
 21 place and it's to Maryland's credit that in order to  
 22 meet the HHS guidelines there's very little that

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1 actually has to be added in. I'm going to make my  
 2 comments a little bit brief today, we're probably  
 3 going to submit these to you in writing before the  
 4 June 30th closing deadline but there are a couple of  
 5 things I'd just like to highlight for you today in  
 6 terms of our response to the recommendations contained  
 7 in the Wyman report.  
 8 As an over arching principle, the members of  
 9 the Legal Life and Health Insurers of Maryland who  
 10 represent a good chunk of Maryland's health market,  
 11 both individual, small group and large group with very  
 12 levels of market share believe that it's important  
 13 that rate review remain a very technical and objective  
 14 financial and actuarial process conducted by qualified  
 15 actuaries because we feel that taking into account  
 16 projected claims, expenses, and risk changes will  
 17 allow that review to be the greatest consumer  
 18 protection that you're going to be able to provide to  
 19 Marylanders in our marketplace. And any  
 20 recommendation that the MIA accepts we believe should  
 21 be aimed at this consumer protection goal and you  
 22 should keep an eye on making sure it does not have the

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1 unintended consequence of reducing the efficiency or  
 2 increasing the administrative burden upon carriers and  
 3 therefore the cost of the process of filing here in  
 4 the State of Maryland.  
 5 Most importantly we think that this first  
 6 step for Maryland should be to be consistent with and  
 7 not go beyond the requirements of HHS' final rule as  
 8 it was published May 23rd, 2011. And therefore focus  
 9 specifically on those changes necessary to meet those  
 10 requirements put forth by HHS. To that end there are  
 11 some recommendations contained in the report that do  
 12 in fact exceed the final rule as published by HHS.  
 13 And just to very briefly highlight what some of those  
 14 recommendations are and why they do cause us some  
 15 concern, they would include the recommendation that  
 16 the preliminary justification summary Part 1 be filed  
 17 for all rate filings, not just those that meet the  
 18 10 percent threshold. As well as the recommendation  
 19 that the enhanced review be performed for both  
 20 grandfathered and non grandfathered policies in the  
 21 individual and small group market.  
 22 While I know it was described as being

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1 recommended to achieve some type of equity amongst  
 2 Marylanders I look at it this way. The reason why we  
 3 think Maryland should start at the point of what is  
 4 required by the final rule is simply this. This is a  
 5 new process for both the state and for carriers who  
 6 are doing business across the country. HHS has set  
 7 the 10 percent threshold and limited the review with  
 8 regard to grandfathered versus non grandfathered plans  
 9 after their own very thorough process and  
 10 consideration of comments from interested parties. To  
 11 go beyond that right now might just be a little  
 12 premature in terms of our experience both for the  
 13 administration and your actuarial staff who is getting  
 14 their hands around what these new requirements are  
 15 going to be and what the enhanced review is going to  
 16 require, but also for the companies who are trying to  
 17 accommodate new requirements on a 50 state basis. To  
 18 give ourselves this first year as HHS is determining  
 19 whether first of all, their threshold is even  
 20 appropriate, might be a good time for us all to learn  
 21 what it is we're doing and how it is we're going to do  
 22 it before Maryland decides to go beyond what the

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 82</p> <p>1 federal government has also prescribed. And so it is                  2 our recommendation that Maryland follow certainly what                  3 is in the HHS rule but be very thoughtful about                  4 whether or not to go beyond that point.                  5 A couple of other points just very quickly,                  6 while we understand the recommendation to collaborate                  7 with HSCRC and MHCC, of course we heard also what the                  8 limitations of that data may be so we understand and                  9 would encourage that to be a thoughtful process as                  10 well and one that you take your time with to                  11 understand the utility of the information in front of                  12 you.                  13 Another point was the suggestion that you                  14 alter your authority to allow the law to follow more                  15 closely the law for non profit health service plans                  16 when it comes to the consideration of any other                  17 relevant factor within and outside of the state.                  18 Looking from a national carrier perspective                  19 as opposed to companies who are currently subject to                  20 that portion of Maryland rate review law, many of                  21 those companies are not writing on a national basis.                  22 So I think for this segment of the industry trying to</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 84</p> <p>1 actually means to a rate review process. So they do                  2 not go on in the final rule to explain what they mean                  3 by over, underestimation of medical trend in previous                  4 years and how that should be considered in an                  5 actuarial review. We would also ask that the MIA,                  6 particularly to the over and under estimation of                  7 medical trend to the reserve needs, and to the other                  8 administrative cost bullets under that list to be very                  9 thoughtful about how those things would be applied.                  10 For instance, over under estimation of medical trend                  11 while may having some impact as a company needs to                  12 adjust their rates as they're going forward based on                  13 the fact that actual versus expected experience did                  14 not previously match up, we're also still, need to be                  15 sensitive to what the anticipated trend is going                  16 forward. So that historical look has some relevance                  17 but to be careful not to overweight the need to                  18 correct what is believed to be an over estimation from                  19 the past as we're also trying to deal with projected                  20 trends going forward.                  21 So that it does not have the unintended                  22 consequence of harming a rate that's being approved</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 83</p> <p>1 understand what that within and without, outside of                  2 the state would actually translate into is a slightly                  3 different consideration, is that our experience                  4 outside of the state what you'd be looking at how a                  5 plan is performing on a nationwide basis, are we                  6 looking at national trends and thresholds, for                  7 instance, medical CPI, that are tied to regional or                  8 national experience, particularly where some of those                  9 national trends are concerned, it is something that's                  10 discussed in the preamble to the HHS final rule. It                  11 was something that they cautioned taking into                  12 consideration and so trying to better understand how                  13 that type of a provision would be applied to plans who                  14 are operating on a national basis and what the                  15 consequence of that is is something that is certainly                  16 of concern to my members as well.                  17 Lastly, there are the 12 factors that are                  18 enumerated within the HHS rule and in the Oliver Wyman                  19 report, the consultants did their best to try to                  20 explain what they believe HHS means by each of those                  21 12 factors. The reality is HHS has not provided any                  22 guidance about what any one of those 12 factors</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 85</p> <p>1 going forward.                  2 And so, the need to review what each of                  3 those bullets is going to mean for Maryland is                  4 something that we would be interested in further                  5 development and better understanding of how Maryland                  6 would look at each of those things as you are                  7 reviewing a rate.                  8 And actually my very last comment is to the                  9 MLR issues, we appreciate in the Wyman report that                  10 they do acknowledge that the federal guidance for MLR                  11 is tied to market level and not product or individual                  12 filing. We support the MIA's change in the law most                  13 recently to follow that federal rule. And to focus on                  14 the MLR at market segment. We think that that is                  15 appropriate and important and was well considered by                  16 HHS as they developed their rule and believe that that                  17 is the appropriate way to deal with the MLR issues as                  18 they're discussed in the report.                  19 With that I will submit the rest of the                  20 comments in writing and answer any questions that you                  21 may have.                  22 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Any questions for</p>

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1 Ms. Robinson?  
 2 Thank you very much for being here. We  
 3 appreciate your comments.  
 4 MS. ROBINSON: Thank you.  
 5 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Is there anyone  
 6 else who is here who wanted to provide comments  
 7 regarding the rate review process report?  
 8 Okay.  
 9 I'm good to go since we just took a break,  
 10 if others agree I think we ought to move on to the  
 11 consumer information report.  
 12 Why don't we go off the record for a few  
 13 minutes.  
 14 (Whereupon, there was a discussion off the  
 15 record.)  
 16 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: We're back on the  
 17 record. And we're looking at a document now that I  
 18 believe we should mark as Exhibit 9, Recommendations  
 19 to the Commissioner on Information Provided to  
 20 Consumers, that's slide deck.  
 21 (MIA HEARING Exhibit 9 was marked for  
 22 identification and attached to the transcript.)

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1 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Whenever you're  
 2 ready.  
 3 MS. TOMCZYK: All right. This first slide  
 4 just provides an overview again of our presentation.  
 5 We've segmented the presentation into three areas,  
 6 first the background research we conducted, some  
 7 consumer focus groups that were conducted and then  
 8 finally our recommendations.  
 9 So I'm going to start out with the  
 10 background research. And as we all know, a little  
 11 over a year ago the Affordable Care Act was past and  
 12 when we hear about it we hear about accessibility and  
 13 affordability but there is this component to it that  
 14 deals with consumerism and transparent making the rate  
 15 making process and rate review process more  
 16 transparent to consumers. So there are a few aspects  
 17 that I put up there, we put up there that specifically  
 18 deal with this. The first that carriers have to  
 19 submit justification, consumer friendly justification  
 20 for the rate increases that exceed the threshold. And  
 21 again, I'll keep referring to that as the 10 percent,  
 22 or I forget the term Karen was using for it, trigger

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1 level.  
 2 And the second is that the information has  
 3 to be posted on HHS' website as well as the carrier's  
 4 website. If the state has an effective rate review  
 5 program in place, the state is also required to post  
 6 the information on there, or make the information  
 7 accessible on their website.  
 8 And then as part of the final regulations  
 9 that weren't included in the draft regulations is the  
 10 requirement that an effective rate review program  
 11 allow or provide a mechanism to allow for public  
 12 comment on the rate review program.  
 13 So given the objective that we were tasked  
 14 with providing recommendations to the commissioner on  
 15 information to be provided to consumers and the most  
 16 efficient and effective manner in which that  
 17 information should be provided, our first step was to  
 18 look at what information is out there today. And we  
 19 looked at both the Maryland Insurance Administration's  
 20 website as well as brochures and other print  
 21 information that was made available to us. And our  
 22 understanding is that these brochures are provided at

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1 a vast number of outreach events that occur, as well  
 2 as placed in various public places such as the library  
 3 or the Motor Vehicle Administration.  
 4 In reviewing this there were a couple of  
 5 themes that we found in terms of the information that  
 6 is available and the information that's not typically  
 7 available today. The information that's available are  
 8 general tips on purchasing insurance, how to file a  
 9 complaint, how to appeal if you've had a denied claim.  
 10 A listing of carriers that are licensed in the state  
 11 to help consumers avoid purchasing a policy from what  
 12 might potentially be a fraudulent insurer. Complaints  
 13 that have been filed.  
 14 The information that we really didn't find  
 15 much available today is information on the rate filing  
 16 process, and review process as well as just general  
 17 information on the rate development at a consumer  
 18 friendly level, and actually I should say even at a  
 19 more technical level I don't think we really found any  
 20 of that information available today.  
 21 So for example, Maryland does not provide  
 22 online access to rate filings as several other states

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1 do. They don't have a process to notify consumers  
 2 when a carrier has filed a rate increase with the  
 3 administration. They don't provide any information on  
 4 the process that's used to review those rates or how  
 5 the rates are developed.  
 6 This is probably hard to see up there, but  
 7 as the commissioner mentioned, the presentation is  
 8 available online, this chart is also included in our  
 9 report. So we compared this information that's  
 10 available and not available in Maryland today to some  
 11 other states. And the other states were somewhat  
 12 random, but we did select Oregon and Connecticut and  
 13 Rhode Island specifically because to our knowledge  
 14 those are states that in our experience have been  
 15 historically more active and engaged in the consumer  
 16 transparency aspect.  
 17 So if you look at the first column for  
 18 Maryland, all those, all those first six or eight rows  
 19 that don't have Xs in them are legally the items from  
 20 the bottom half of this previous report, so the  
 21 information on rate making and rate filing process,  
 22 the items on the bottom are the ones that are

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1 available today. So you can see while some other  
 2 states have Xs in those top areas, there are a fair  
 3 number of states that aren't providing this type of  
 4 information.  
 5 However, we expect that with the passage of  
 6 the Affordable Care Act and the increased focus on  
 7 transparency that the top half of that chart will  
 8 begin to be filled out a little bit more over the next  
 9 year or two. And we know that other states are  
 10 starting to look at this.  
 11 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Are you aware of  
 12 any information regarding, for example, in Oregon,  
 13 Oregon allows consumers to post comments on rate  
 14 filings and allows consumers to subscribe to e-mails  
 15 updates on rate filings. Do you have any information  
 16 about the uptake, the extent to which consumers in  
 17 Oregon have taken advantage of those opportunities?  
 18 MS. BENDER: I don't think there's any  
 19 statistics in the public domain right now regarding  
 20 these kind of uptakes. I'm not even sure if there is  
 21 any information in the public domain regarding,  
 22 frequency, what we should call frequency of hits to

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1 the, to a website regarding a rate filing. Now, I'm  
 2 just not aware of any. I suspect that these things  
 3 may become more available as more states are  
 4 introducing this as to find out maybe which are the  
 5 most efficient ways and the best ways of  
 6 communicating. But I personally am not aware.  
 7 Are you Tammy?  
 8 MS. TOMCZYK: No, and just to clarify our  
 9 research was really limited to going out to these  
 10 sites and looking at them. That said I will say that  
 11 Oregon for example, I personally did pull up many rate  
 12 filings and for the most part everyone had at least  
 13 one or two comments that were posted. So, and again,  
 14 this is just in my small sample set, I didn't see a  
 15 lot where there wasn't any comment being posted. But  
 16 that may not be, that may not hold overall.  
 17 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Okay.  
 18 Thank you.  
 19 MS. TOMCZYK: So then we looked at either  
 20 recent, recent regulatory action, either laws that  
 21 have been passed or those that were currently being  
 22 debated in several states and I'm not going to go

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1 through each one, California, Connecticut, Nevada and  
 2 there's a couple more on this next slide. What I will  
 3 say is there were really two underlying themes again  
 4 to those, there was a move towards posting rate  
 5 filings or the desire to post rate filings online and  
 6 to accept comment from the public, whether it be  
 7 through a rate hearing or just a bulletin board, there  
 8 is a little variety in that there. But those are  
 9 really the two themes that we were seeing in this  
 10 pending or recently passed legislation.  
 11 So after we performed our background  
 12 research to get an idea of what kind of information is  
 13 made available to consumers today, both in the State  
 14 of Maryland and in other states, we developed some  
 15 preliminary recommendations. But we wanted to  
 16 validate them. So we engaged a firm to help, assist  
 17 us with conducting some consumer focus groups and  
 18 Karen, I'll turn it over to her, she's going to talk a  
 19 little bit about the content of those.  
 20 Oh, I'm sorry, that's still me, isn't it?  
 21 SPEAKER 2: You're not going to get off so  
 22 easy.

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1 MS. TOMCZYK: So the purpose of them was  
 2 really to initially just understand or gather a  
 3 general awareness of Maryland consumers, or  
 4 information on the general awareness of whether  
 5 consumers were aware of the administration, if they  
 6 were what was their idea of the administration's role.  
 7 What type of information they felt should be made  
 8 available to consumers and in what format.  
 9 So as I mentioned before I tried to hand it  
 10 over to Karen quickly, we conducted the focus groups,  
 11 we conducted five and there's no magic number to five  
 12 other than probably the primary driver was the budget  
 13 we had available to us.  
 14 We separated them between consumers and  
 15 small employers, again, those were the, those are the  
 16 subject of the new rate review regulations. In  
 17 conjunction with the administration staff we developed  
 18 a screener, a call screener that the research used to  
 19 recruit individuals and small employers. And they're  
 20 in the appendix but I'll just highlight some of the  
 21 key aspects. For example, we asked them to screen out  
 22 individuals over 65, they tend to primarily for the

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1 most part be on Medicare and we really wanted to focus  
 2 on individuals and small employers that are purchasing  
 3 comprehensive coverage.  
 4 We excluded individuals on Medicaid. We did  
 5 require that it be limited to Maryland residents. And  
 6 we also excluded state and federal employees.  
 7 Within the three consumer groups we, one of  
 8 the three we included or targeted individuals where  
 9 English is not their primary language. The primary  
 10 reason being most if not all of this communication is  
 11 going to be in print form so we wanted to be cognizant  
 12 if there were any special needs that that particular  
 13 demographic needed to address or needed to be taken  
 14 into consideration when developing these materials.  
 15 And then for the two small employer groups  
 16 we limited them to employers with 2 to 50 employees,  
 17 again, to mirror the regulations.  
 18 And both the individual and the consumer,  
 19 individual consumers and the small group employers, we  
 20 didn't require that they had insurance coverage today,  
 21 but we did ask that they had insurance coverage at  
 22 some point in the last five years. So with the recent

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1 economic conditions, there were perhaps a fair number  
 2 of people and we saw this in our results that had  
 3 insurance coverage but no longer could afford it and  
 4 had recently lost or just dropped their individual  
 5 policy because they couldn't afford it. So we wanted  
 6 to make sure we included those folks in to get their  
 7 perspective.  
 8 So this next grouping of slides I'm going to  
 9 go through relatively quickly not dwell on each one  
 10 too much but if you have questions please ask.  
 11 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Maybe before I  
 12 could, excuse me for interrupting you.  
 13 MS. TOMCZYK: Sure.  
 14 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Before we get to  
 15 the composition of the focus groups, how did you go  
 16 about identifying potential focus group participants  
 17 to begin with?  
 18 MS. TOMCZYK: Meaning to contact them?  
 19 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Yes.  
 20 MS. TOMCZYK: As opposed to did we take a  
 21 phone book and start calling them?  
 22 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Exactly.

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1 MS. TOMCZYK: We didn't do that ourselves,  
 2 as I mentioned, we hired a research firm in Bethesda,  
 3 Maryland.  
 4 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Do you know how  
 5 they went about doing it?  
 6 MS. TOMCZYK: They have a database that they  
 7 use that they contacted. The information that was  
 8 shared with us is that many of these are people who  
 9 have actively participated in focus groups before. We  
 10 did have in one of our focus groups not to get too  
 11 much into the details of participant, one participant  
 12 who didn't really participate a lot and we asked them  
 13 afterwards how they handled that and they do go back  
 14 after the fact is my understanding and if they have  
 15 participants that aren't actively participating they  
 16 will remove them from their database.  
 17 So --  
 18 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: What's the name of  
 19 the consultant?  
 20 MS. TOMCZYK: Schugoll, S-C-H, I believe  
 21 it's, S-C-H-U-G-O-L-L [sic] Research.  
 22 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: So they have a

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1 database of people who have in the past participated  
 2 in focus groups so they began with their database?  
 3 MS. TOMCZYK: Yes. And I don't know but I  
 4 could call them and followup with you in terms of how  
 5 people get added to that database, whether they've  
 6 contacted them saying that I'm interesting in it. But  
 7 many of them, they did indicate that many of the  
 8 people who participated participate on a regular  
 9 basis.  
 10 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Are they paid for  
 11 their participation?  
 12 MS. TOMCZYK: They are.  
 13 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: In your report on  
 14 page 20 there's a statement that the call screen had  
 15 specifically asked potential participants whether they  
 16 were interested in knowing more about how insurance  
 17 rates are developed. And if the participant said, no,  
 18 I'm really not interested in knowing more about that,  
 19 then they were not included in the focus group;  
 20 correct.  
 21 MS. TOMCZYK: That's correct.  
 22 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: So this is a, this

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1 is a group that has, A, is inclined to participate in  
 2 focus groups. And, B, is kind of self selected in  
 3 terms of their interest in learning more about the  
 4 insurance rate making process?  
 5 MS. TOMCZYK: That's correct.  
 6 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Okay.  
 7 MS. TOMCZYK: I mean, from our perspective  
 8 it didn't make sense to have a room of people who  
 9 weren't interested and then there was no discussion  
 10 and the cost associated with the research probably  
 11 not, would not be very beneficial.  
 12 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Understood.  
 13 And then just one other question about the  
 14 group composition, there had been a statement in the  
 15 report about avoiding involving anyone involved in the  
 16 medical community or healthcare related industry out  
 17 of a concern that input from people who had a  
 18 relationship with the healthcare industry might skew  
 19 the results. But in Appendix C to this report it  
 20 appeared to me that one individual was employed --  
 21 well, here, let me say exactly what it is -- we have  
 22 one individual participant employed by a medical

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1 association. And then on the small employer's side of  
 2 the 14 participants, one physician management  
 3 practice, one physician's office and one physical  
 4 therapy practice.  
 5 So my question is, is there a concern about  
 6 any skewing of the input provided by focus group  
 7 participants as a result of their relationship with  
 8 the medical committee?  
 9 MS. TOMCZYK: On the individual side, just  
 10 to separate the two, our call screener did ask that  
 11 question, the questions you were just referencing. I  
 12 think the one that slipped through is perhaps one that  
 13 we didn't do the call screening, we relied on the  
 14 firm. I think that one just in retrospect probably we  
 15 would have liked to have screened out. But one out  
 16 of, I believe there were roughly 30, somewhere between  
 17 25 and 30, on the individual side, we didn't think  
 18 that was a terrible concern.  
 19 On the small group side that question was  
 20 not included in the call screen. So there was not a  
 21 question around that.  
 22 I think the --

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1 MS. BENDER: There was a question for the  
 2 insurance industry, we did have them, is your company  
 3 currently affiliated with the insurance industry on  
 4 the small group side?  
 5 MS. TOMCZYK: Yeah. The small group that  
 6 was focused on the insurance industry, the individuals  
 7 we asked both about the healthcare and the insurance  
 8 industry, so the three that you mentioned on small  
 9 group fell into healthcare I think. So they probably  
 10 answered no to are you associated with the insurance  
 11 industry. But they did --  
 12 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: And was there a  
 13 reason for that inconsistency in the screening as  
 14 between individual and small group?  
 15 MS. TOMCZYK: I don't think. I think  
 16 honestly it was perhaps just oversight in the  
 17 question.  
 18 But to answer your question about concern  
 19 about the bias, in sitting through all of the focus  
 20 groups and observing, I didn't, I didn't observe  
 21 anything in my opinion that I thought said, we need to  
 22 throw these results out.

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1 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Okay.  
 2 MS. BENDER: There's considerable  
 3 consistency in the small employers as we'll get to  
 4 later. So I would, I wouldn't be as worried about  
 5 that. Like I said, we had the one that must have  
 6 slipped through on the individual side. So that  
 7 wouldn't be enough to skew any results.  
 8 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: And on the small  
 9 group you didn't see any trends towards people  
 10 affiliated with the healthcare industry responding one  
 11 way and others responding another way?  
 12 MS. BENDER: No, we did not.  
 13 MS. TOMCZYK: And I at least tried to pay  
 14 particular attention. The research firm that  
 15 recruited the individuals did not track that on, they  
 16 provided us a spreadsheet daily with the recruiting  
 17 efforts and they tracked some of the other  
 18 information, like the employer group size, but some of  
 19 those characteristics that are shown in that chart in  
 20 the exhibit were actually gathered through the focus  
 21 group itself. That's why you'll see when we start  
 22 getting through some of the questions about what, who

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1 the insurance carrier is and there's a fair number in  
 2 the unknown column, sometimes in the spirit of keeping  
 3 the conversation and the dialogue going the moderator  
 4 used judgment and keeping people engaged and they  
 5 didn't always answer that question. And some people  
 6 just truly didn't know. Primarily I would presume the  
 7 individuals who had coverage through their employer  
 8 they just, that was kind of interesting.  
 9 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Thank you.  
 10 MS. BENDER: We probably should submit that  
 11 Shugoll is a professional market research firm that  
 12 specializes in doing focus groups for a broad range of  
 13 industries. The individual that, or individuals that  
 14 helped us did focus in the insurance field  
 15 specifically. And then we --  
 16 MS. TOMCZYK: And healthcare.  
 17 MS. BENDER: And healthcare, you're right.  
 18 And we also, the facilitator was a  
 19 professional facilitator to ensure that there was no  
 20 domination of a particular person and to try to make  
 21 sure that everyone was engaged.  
 22 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Okay. Thank you.

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1 MS. TOMCZYK: So just quickly through these  
 2 next slides, we, once we gathered or recruited our  
 3 target population we wanted to make sure that we  
 4 didn't have any significant concerns about skewness  
 5 and one of the items you just alluded to. So we tried  
 6 to compare for different demographic breakdowns or  
 7 cross sections how the demographics and the make up of  
 8 our focus group sample compared with the Maryland  
 9 population in general to ensure it was at least  
 10 somewhat representative in that respect. So this  
 11 first one is gender, I don't think we could get a  
 12 better match on gender.  
 13 The next one is by age. You will notice  
 14 that our focus groups had a slightly younger  
 15 population. We suspect that was due at least in part  
 16 to the exclusion of the federal and state employees,  
 17 in our experience they tend to have an older average  
 18 age than the population in general. And by taking out  
 19 the population that has an older average age you're by  
 20 default left with a somewhat younger population. But  
 21 there was a mix and it lined up reasonably well so we  
 22 weren't terribly concerned about that.

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1 The next one is by ethnicity. Again, you'll  
 2 see there's a little bit of a skewing towards the  
 3 Hispanic population. And we show it separately for  
 4 the consumers and the English second language  
 5 consumers and that's what's driving that over  
 6 representation by the Hispanic population was out  
 7 desire to have one focus group combined entirely of  
 8 individuals where English was their second language.  
 9 We did not give specific benchmarks or targets in  
 10 terms of different ethnicities within that group. We  
 11 asked to have a broad cross section, but it wasn't  
 12 like we said, we want 20 percent African-American,  
 13 20 percent Asian. So it just fell out.  
 14 I think within the English second language  
 15 consumers and between the English second language  
 16 consumers and the other consumer groups we didn't  
 17 observe anything that was significantly different that  
 18 I thought was really worth warranting significant  
 19 comment.  
 20 The next one is the distribution by where  
 21 consumers, how consumers obtain their insurance,  
 22 either privately meaning an individual policy that

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1 that they purchase themselves, through their employer  
 2 or whether they're uninsured. The Maryland population  
 3 in general many more people who have insurance get it  
 4 through their insurer than purchase it directly. But  
 5 we did target a 50/50 mix. We wanted to get a little  
 6 more perspective from the people who are actually  
 7 paying the entire cost out of their own pocket.  
 8 They're the ones who, well I guess I'll just say that  
 9 we tried to focus a little bit more on them.

10 They may be more sensitive to rate increases  
 11 than those who are receiving it, the coverage through  
 12 their employer where perhaps their employer is paying  
 13 80 percent of it. They're still going to absorb the  
 14 rate increase but not to the same level. So that  
 15 skewness I guess was intended.

16 The next one is by the carrier for those who  
 17 did have insurance. Our source, it's showing up in  
 18 yellow so you can't read it there, unfortunately. But  
 19 the source that we had broke the current Maryland  
 20 insurance market between Aetna, CareFirst, Kaiser,  
 21 United and then all other. So that's why there is  
 22 nothing in that last row for guardian because they

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1 fell in the all other so we didn't have a true apples  
 2 to apples comparison. But in general CareFirst is the  
 3 dominant carrier, it was the most prevalent carrier in  
 4 our sample. And likewise for the unknown we didn't  
 5 have any information because it was unknown.

6 So in general the distribution is relatively  
 7 consistent with the population in general.

8 These last two slides we couldn't locate any  
 9 comparable Maryland specific information to compare  
 10 to. This one is by group size amongst the small  
 11 employers. It does show that there is a reasonable  
 12 distribution. We didn't get all two to ten employers  
 13 or all employer groups that were closer to 50. So  
 14 there was a broad cross section.

15 And then the last one is by, again, amongst  
 16 the small employers we asked each of the  
 17 representatives from the small employers to indicate  
 18 what percentage of the premium they contribute toward  
 19 their employees' health care.

20 A And again a broad range, ranging from  
 21 50 percent of the premium to the entire premium, to a  
 22 flat defined contribution dollar so again a nice broad

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1 cross section. But again, we didn't have any  
 2 comparable benchmarks to compare them to. So for  
 3 these last two we're really just trying to ensure we  
 4 had a cross section.

5 So now I'm going to turn it over to Karen to  
 6 talk a little bit more about the topics that we  
 7 discussed with the focus groups.

8 MS. BENDER: Again, one of the goals of  
 9 having focus groups was essentially to establish what  
 10 I would call a baseline of understanding of what the  
 11 understanding is in the general public of the  
 12 administration, the administration's role, the  
 13 knowledge of rate making in general. What are the  
 14 sources that consumers are currently using to get  
 15 their information. And what are the sources that the  
 16 consumers believe would be the most effective way and  
 17 efficient way of getting information pertaining to  
 18 rates and pertaining to rate increases. And  
 19 information regarding rate making in general.

20 Actually it was a very interesting process.  
 21 I will say. Getting feedback from the consumers was  
 22 very enlightening.

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1 One of the things that we learned is that  
 2 the administration is not well-known to consumers in  
 3 spite of what I would call tremendous outreach  
 4 efforts. If we asked -- we put MIA up on the board  
 5 and no one got the right acronym, let's just put it  
 6 that way, you know.

7 A couple of -- step back.

8 The small employers were more cognizant that  
 9 there was either, they might call it a commission, or  
 10 the commissioner of insurance as opposed to  
 11 definitely, you know, the administration, but they  
 12 were more cognizant that the entity existed and that  
 13 the entity had a role in the rate making process. But  
 14 on the individual, what we refer to as the consumer  
 15 groups there really was not a lot of awareness of the  
 16 resources that are currently made available to the  
 17 consumers through the administration.

18 The other thing that we discovered is small  
 19 employers rely tremendously on their brokers. And as  
 20 we go through some of the succeeding slides, they  
 21 would often say, well, yeah, I think this information  
 22 should be made available, I'm not going to look at it,

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1 but I want my broker to look at it. Because I have a  
 2 business to run and anything to do with insurance I  
 3 hand over to my broker, that's what I'm paying him to  
 4 do. So that was rather enlightening as well.  
 5 And for individuals almost everyone agreed  
 6 that the internet is the best way and most efficient  
 7 way to post information. And that, that the most  
 8 effective way for the administration to communicate  
 9 pertaining to issues regarding rate filings,  
 10 especially time sensitive information. And that the  
 11 internet should be the primary source.  
 12 Quite frankly we had some mixed reactions on  
 13 how the information would be used. We asked them,  
 14 would you really look at it? It was less heartening  
 15 shall we say. We had probably, most of the  
 16 individuals said they probably wouldn't look at it.  
 17 And that they were not sure if they would really  
 18 access this information or not. But again, the  
 19 employers wanted their brokers to have access to the  
 20 information.  
 21 But generally we discovered that employers  
 22 and consumers both, that they were not aware of how

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1 rates are developed, how rates are reviewed, or the  
 2 administration's role in the review process currently  
 3 or obviously then any enhanced reforms.  
 4 Now we're going to go to our  
 5 recommendations. And one of the first things that we  
 6 would recommend is that the administration develop a  
 7 separate area dedicated to health insurance rates.  
 8 And I should probably say health insurance rate  
 9 filings would probably be a better technical term  
 10 there.  
 11 So that consumers have access to this  
 12 information.  
 13 And now I think that the final regs require  
 14 that at least for those rate filings that are over  
 15 10 percent or more that somewhere on the  
 16 administration's website at least there has to be a  
 17 link or something to HHS website so that consumers can  
 18 get that information.  
 19 We also recommend that the non confidential  
 20 portions of the rate filings be included on this  
 21 administration website. We are not making any  
 22 recommendation as to what should or should not be

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1 considered non confidential, that's really what I  
 2 would consider a legal issue. And not an actuarial  
 3 issue.  
 4 We would recommend posting the consumer,  
 5 what we call the consumer friendly summary of rate  
 6 filings, and obviously, again, you have to post the  
 7 Part I one for the rate increases that trigger the  
 8 threshold. In our other report we're recommending  
 9 that all carriers file this particular form for all  
 10 rate filings, we would then suggest that that form be  
 11 made available on the website.  
 12 Notification of an approved premium rate  
 13 increase, the first point is consistent with the  
 14 recommendations that we made in the previous report  
 15 regarding just getting consistency across all types of  
 16 carriers regarding the advanced notice. And then also  
 17 that we post a consumer, what we call consumer  
 18 friendly summary of the administration's decisions on  
 19 its website for each filing review. Again, for the  
 20 filings that are 10 percent or more right now, the  
 21 administration is going to have to post their, or  
 22 report to HHS the results of their analysis. We just

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1 extended this to say, post the results of your  
 2 analysis for all rate filings.  
 3 And then we would say that we would, we  
 4 would urge the administration to research the IT costs  
 5 associated with enabling consumers to subscribe to  
 6 receive automated e-mails, now consistent with what  
 7 Tammy was referring to in the previous slides that  
 8 that is available in some states. We have no idea as  
 9 to the cost associated with that. And that might be,  
 10 you're really going to have to do a cost benefit  
 11 analysis of that. Especially in light of at least the  
 12 consumer feedback that we got, maybe something else  
 13 would be to maybe broaden that consumer research to  
 14 see if this is something that consumers would use.  
 15 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Broaden in terms of  
 16 additional focus groups, increase the number of  
 17 people --  
 18 MS. BENDER: Either additional focus groups,  
 19 other surveys. This is not exactly my area of  
 20 expertise, how to do that kind, but, yes -- especially  
 21 if the IT costs are great. Now if the IT costs, I  
 22 don't know anything about IT, if it's just flipping a

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1 switch or something so, you know, it's not very  
 2 expensive, well, then it might not, the cost of doing  
 3 the additional research might not warrant. But if the  
 4 cost to do it are significant then before I would  
 5 commit those kind of resources you definitely want to  
 6 see something consumers are going to use. You know,  
 7 if they're not going to use it then put those  
 8 resources somewhere else where that would better serve  
 9 the consumers.

10 MS. TOMCZYK: I'll just say we did receive  
 11 comments from the consumers, they were very, many  
 12 times they would preface their responses to questions  
 13 with, well, if it's cost benefit, they were cognizant  
 14 of adding all these resources would mean potentially  
 15 more tax dollars that they're paying, so they wanted  
 16 to make sure if people are going to be asked to pay,  
 17 or if tax dollars are going to be used to provide this  
 18 information that it's actually going to be beneficial.

19 MS. BENDER: Yeah, we were very pleased,  
 20 shall I say, with the financial acumen, would that be  
 21 the right word, of the consumers regarding the stuff  
 22 is going to cost money so they really want to have a

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1 cost benefit. And they would even make some comments  
 2 about the whole transparency process that if it's  
 3 going to add to my premiums I don't really want it  
 4 unless it's going to somehow save on my premiums.  
 5 Which I was excited, I was pleasantly surprised on  
 6 that.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SAMMIS: But it's also  
 8 possible that, that individual consumers may not be  
 9 interested but groups representing consumers might  
 10 find it of interest and obviously in a focus group you  
 11 are not making an assessment of that, correct?

12 MS. BENDER: Absolutely. And the brokers,  
 13 and again, it was also universal for the small  
 14 employers, they are relying on their brokers and they  
 15 want their brokers to have access to this information.  
 16 That was universal. I can't remember a single one  
 17 that said that they would not --

18 MS. TOMCZYK: But that begs the point that  
 19 maybe perhaps with some, you know, the next cycle of  
 20 funding from the grants if the state applies for it,  
 21 there are other stakeholder groups that we didn't  
 22 include, we included individuals and small groups, but

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1 there are brokers, there are consumer advocacy groups,  
 2 there may be other stakeholders that you might  
 3 consider gaining their opinions.

4 MS. BENDER: The next recommendations are  
 5 regarding consumer input into the rate review process.

6 Again, the final regulations may provide  
 7 that there has to be the ability for consumers to  
 8 respond or comment on the rate increase. They don't  
 9 say how. You know, they can be what, an address or  
 10 something, or a telephone -- or a call center or  
 11 something, but there is going to have to be some sort  
 12 of mechanism for receiving public comments. Again, we  
 13 would maybe urge the state to investigate the cost of  
 14 developing an electronic bulletin board which some  
 15 states have, or allows people to comment on specific  
 16 rate filings. Or to post comments on electronic  
 17 bulletin boards. Obviously there's some cost with  
 18 that, you have to be, someone has to screen some of  
 19 these comments to make sure that there aren't obscene  
 20 words or something like that, you know, so there is a  
 21 cost to doing that. Someone is going to have to  
 22 maintain it.

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1 Like I said, this probably had a mixed  
 2 reaction with the consumer groups and as Tammy said  
 3 they were very cognizant of the costs of maintaining  
 4 this. So like something that has to be taken into  
 5 consideration.

6 There's, we identified a need for general  
 7 information on rate making and rate review. We  
 8 developed some general educational materials of what  
 9 we call frequently asked questions related to the rate  
 10 making process. These are included in Appendix F  
 11 through I of the report as examples.

12 Appendices F and G were actually tested on  
 13 the focus groups and were revised based upon input  
 14 from those focus groups trying to enable to make these  
 15 what we would call consumer friendly, these are  
 16 difficult subjects to try to make, to translate some  
 17 of these concepts into what we would call consumer  
 18 friendly papers.

19 So these would be things that could be  
 20 posted to the administration's website. These are  
 21 types of materials that are not time sensitive. They  
 22 are sort of what I call the background information,

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1 how a rate is developed, you know, what is the  
 2 process. So they would need to -- they wouldn't have  
 3 to be updated often, they might have to be updated  
 4 periodically for changes.  
 5 MS. TOMCZYK: I was just going to say  
 6 they're not specific to a rate filing.  
 7 MS. BENDER: Right.  
 8 MS. TOMCZYK: They're more general.  
 9 MS. BENDER: Very, very, very general.  
 10 MS. TOMCZYK: Rate making, rate review type.  
 11 MS. BENDER: As opposed to a specific rate  
 12 filing which obviously is very time sensitive.  
 13 We would say to continue to include the  
 14 brochures in places at the locations frequented by  
 15 consumers and distributed at outreach appearances.  
 16 But we would also urge maybe the administration to  
 17 reassess some of the current outreach programs.  
 18 We were provided all the outreach programs  
 19 that are being done right now, I mean, the  
 20 administration is devoting a tremendous amount of  
 21 resources in outreach programs. And it must be rather  
 22 discouraging that at least based upon our focus groups

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1 they have not been as effective as one would hope to  
 2 be.  
 3 Also, again, to assess the available IT  
 4 resources to determine if increased needs can be met  
 5 with the current staff, and what we're talking about  
 6 is current staff in both places. What I would call  
 7 the consumer support division as well as the actuarial  
 8 division. Because there's positives and negatives  
 9 about increasing consumer transparency. When you  
 10 increase consumer transparency you can also expect to  
 11 increase consumer questions. And so there's probably  
 12 going to be more questions regarding maybe rate making  
 13 in general, but probably specifically related, or more  
 14 specifically related to a particular rate filing as  
 15 that process works its way through. Or why is my  
 16 rate, I got a rate increase, why is my rate different  
 17 from what the rate increase that was put out on the  
 18 website, and there's lots, that's one of the papers,  
 19 it's in one of these exhibits that we did is why is my  
 20 rate increase different than what was published. But,  
 21 you know, I would suspect that there are going to be  
 22 lots more questions.

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1 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: What was published  
 2 meaning the average rate increase? Why is an  
 3 individual insured's rate increase greater than the --  
 4 MS. BENDER: Absolutely, yeah, the average  
 5 rate increase, absolutely.  
 6 And then just assess the additional staffing  
 7 needs to support consumer transparency as well.  
 8 And that was the conclusions for, or that  
 9 concludes our presentation for the consumer  
 10 transparencies portion of our paper. Of the papers.  
 11 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Any questions?  
 12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HATCHETTE: Question  
 13 for you. On your Appendix I you sort of developed the  
 14 format of FAQs to basically put static information.  
 15 Oregon sort of has three different approaches, it has  
 16 FAQs sort of a list that goes into a lot of detail and  
 17 then something that's very visual for the consumer.  
 18 Based on your information that you received from the  
 19 focus group, do you think one is better than the  
 20 other? Or do you need some type, maybe all three to  
 21 reach different types of consumers?  
 22 MS. BENDER: That's a good question.

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1 MS. TOMCZYK: It's interesting. I'll bring  
 2 up another observation that we had that might provide  
 3 some information, it's not going to directly answer  
 4 your question.  
 5 We had three different pieces of  
 6 information, print information that we presented, or  
 7 had the moderator present to the focus groups to  
 8 comment on. And one of them was a sample of this rate  
 9 filing decision summary, the summary that the actuary,  
 10 the actuaries would develop which would be posted out  
 11 explaining the process they went through and how they  
 12 came to their decision.  
 13 We had one that was more narrative. And one  
 14 that was more numerical with tables and charts. And  
 15 we presented both of them to the focus groups. And we  
 16 mixed it up, some saw the narrative first, and then  
 17 the one that had table data and table format second.  
 18 And other groups saw them in the reverse order and  
 19 every single time the one that was shown second was  
 20 the one that they stated was more, more efficient and  
 21 understandable. Our suspicion is part of that was due  
 22 to the fact that they were shown the first one, there

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1 was some discussion and when they were looking at the  
 2 second one they already had some idea of the content  
 3 in it. So somewhat biased perhaps.  
 4 But I guess I just share that with you and I  
 5 know, Joy, you were at some of these and observed  
 6 this, but there probably is to some extent a different  
 7 desire in how to communicate to different individuals.  
 8 But again, I don't know that we can directly answer  
 9 your question specifically.  
 10 MS. BENDER: I know that some people don't  
 11 really want to read a lot on any website. So to the  
 12 extent that some of this can be converted into a more  
 13 visual, quite frankly, actuaries probably are not the  
 14 best profession to do that. You know, I'll admit  
 15 my own failing -- I'm really good at numbers, but this  
 16 probably is stretching. So I would definitely say  
 17 that might be something that you would want to  
 18 consider, that is something that we did see, and I  
 19 think that's, you know, some people like the pie  
 20 graphs better than the other things.  
 21 The problem is this particular one that you  
 22 refer to, how the administration reviews requests for

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1 rate increases, boy, this is just not the most  
 2 interesting, I don't think it's going to make the top  
 3 ten no matter what we do here, it's pretty dry. It's  
 4 important, but -- so anything you can do to make it  
 5 lively God bless you. I think it will, you know, it's  
 6 three pages, it's probably at the limit, absolutely at  
 7 the limit. And this is not based upon my experience  
 8 as an actuary outside because I do not proclaim to be,  
 9 the actuarial profession is just not really our, you  
 10 know, maybe our expertise as far as the limitations  
 11 and things. I'm just speaking for myself a lot of  
 12 times. And the input though that we got back from the  
 13 focus groups. We could tell that there really was  
 14 sort of a, a limit as to concentration shall we say  
 15 for these topics. And, you know, for people who  
 16 aren't in the business, they have real lives and they  
 17 have real jobs, and this is, this jargon is very  
 18 specific to, you know, rate reviews, it's almost like  
 19 a foreign language. And so it's not easy stuff. To  
 20 do. So I think that that might be something you want,  
 21 like I said, anything, different colors, I don't know,  
 22 get a graphic artist or something, I don't know,

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1 anything that you can do to make it more palatable.  
 2 MS. TOMCZYK: And we did in Appendix E which  
 3 is that rate filing decision, this again was the one  
 4 where they saw the two versions, one first and one  
 5 second, and I neglected to say that at the very end  
 6 they did comment that there were positive features to  
 7 both. So our revised recommendation is really a  
 8 merger of the two. And on page 71, and unfortunately  
 9 we don't have it on that computer, we show in  
 10 numerical format a table of a breakdown of the rate  
 11 increase between, or the rate between claim, cost,  
 12 profit and administration, administrative expenses and  
 13 then a pie chart too. So this was designed such that  
 14 if that Part I preliminary justification worksheet is  
 15 obtained for all filings, feasibly with -- you could  
 16 design a tool such that that could be the input and it  
 17 could develop this, a majority of this. There's still  
 18 going to be the portion that's unique to the filing in  
 19 terms of the actuary's decision on the outcome.  
 20 But it would populate both that table and  
 21 this pie chart. So if you're a visual person you can  
 22 see the pie chart that shows that roughly

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1 three-quarters of the pie chart is blue and that's the  
 2 claim costs. Or if you're a numbers person you can  
 3 look at the table. So we're trying to, without making  
 4 it too long and too complex accommodate both types of  
 5 people.  
 6 MS. BENDER: Also, that HHS Form I feeds  
 7 into, they have a, call it software, Excel sheets.  
 8 MS. TOMCZYK: I don't know too much about  
 9 it. We've seen an example what the output was.  
 10 MS. BENDER: It's as exciting as you can  
 11 probably make this stuff be. You know. I don't know  
 12 if there's going to be, if you could use it for the  
 13 non, or if it -- I don't know exactly how that's going  
 14 to feed in. But that might be something too to  
 15 consider, maybe we could ask the HHS brethren if  
 16 they'd be willing to share that for the under  
 17 10 percent as well. But, yeah, this is -- this is  
 18 tough stuff. And anything you can do to make it, like  
 19 you say, more consumer friendly visually, anything  
 20 else would certainly facilitate I think getting  
 21 consumers more engaged.  
 22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SAMMIS: Maybe just this

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1 one last question because since Joy brought up Oregon,  
 2 when you looked at the websites of the different  
 3 states, not ours, did you think that Oregon had the  
 4 best website? You know, the best feature on their  
 5 website dedicated to rates? Or did you think  
 6 Connecticut's was -- I mean, where would you -- look  
 7 for inspiration.  
 8 MS. TOMCZYK: In my opinion, because -- I  
 9 was the one who kind of went out trying to see what I  
 10 could find. There are different aspects. Some sites  
 11 were better in the sense that I could find the  
 12 information very easily. Others I dug and dug and I  
 13 was just about to the point where I was about to give  
 14 up and I found a link and it's like oh, here's a  
 15 description of the rate review process buried deep in.  
 16 So some were better than others in terms of how easy  
 17 it was to find the information. Some were better than  
 18 others in terms of the type of information and the  
 19 amount of information. But Oregon I guess if I had to  
 20 pick one and only one, that probably would be one of  
 21 the ones that I would pick. But I guess, again, I  
 22 don't mean to say that there weren't aspects of their

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1 website that I thought another state might have done  
 2 different so there are pros and cons to all of them.  
 3 MS. BENDER: I'm just going to make a  
 4 general statement for all states and I think it's  
 5 going to be a real challenge for them to maybe make  
 6 the website for this particular rate filings more  
 7 consumer friendly or easier to find. It's just not,  
 8 you know, the information on the website -- it's not  
 9 any one particular state. Up until this point in time  
 10 as that one graphic showed, states weren't putting  
 11 them out there. So they didn't have to worry about  
 12 how consumers found them because they weren't being  
 13 posted. Now that they're going to be posted, you  
 14 know, maybe all states are going to have to look and  
 15 see how friendly are their websites. How easy is it  
 16 to navigate the websites. And they may have to assess  
 17 those needs as well. I'm not saying yours is good,  
 18 bad or indifferent. I'm just saying, and it's not  
 19 Maryland versus anyone else's. I think Allstate's are  
 20 sort of similar to that. Just when you think you  
 21 finally, like you say, you think you found something,  
 22 nope, that's not it, or, yeah, it is but I can't get

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1 to it again type thing.  
 2 MS. TOMCZYK: One thing I might recommend is  
 3 that when, when you design, if you do implement the  
 4 recommendation, maybe test it with some individuals.  
 5 I know for myself when I'm looking for something on  
 6 the internet there's kind of this limited amount of  
 7 time and if I can't find it in a certain amount of  
 8 time I give up. So maybe some testing to make sure  
 9 that, I don't know who you would do on this test,  
 10 friends, family, say, you know, go out here and see if  
 11 you can find the rate increase filings and see how  
 12 easy it is for people to find them. Because I think  
 13 that's key.  
 14 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HATCHETTE: Before we  
 15 leave this, because I know that some of the consumers  
 16 also believe that we needed written material. Do you  
 17 believe that the rate increase written material should  
 18 be a stand alone brochure, or could it be a part of an  
 19 existing health brochure?  
 20 MS. BENDER: The background information I  
 21 think either way. Anything to do with a specific rate  
 22 filing I just, this is my own opinion, I just don't

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1 think it's a cost benefit to put it anywhere except on  
 2 the website. It's too time sensitive, it's going --  
 3 you know, if you put a bunch of that out there, the  
 4 only thing you know is they're going to pick up the  
 5 one from the previous rate filing, or something like  
 6 that. So I think anything that's time sensitive  
 7 really the best place, and that's what the focus group  
 8 said as well. The best place is the website. Some of  
 9 this other information I think you have more  
 10 flexibility, website and a combination of handouts,  
 11 brochures.  
 12 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Any other  
 13 questions? Then I thank you very much for your report  
 14 and your presentation.  
 15 MS. TOMCZYK: Thank you.  
 16 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Again, very  
 17 helpful.  
 18 Mr. Robbins, do you wish to comment  
 19 separately on the consumer disclosures?  
 20 MR. ROBBINS: Sure.  
 21 Thank you again, Mike Robbins with the  
 22 Maryland Hospital Association. And I again want to

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 130</p> <p>1 support the comments and recommendations being made by                  2 Wyman in this report as well. But one thing I would                  3 point out as valuable the website, the use of the                  4 internet can be, I think we always need to be reminded                  5 that not all consumers have ready access to the                  6 internet. Not just for accessing the information but                  7 also providing the insurance administration with input                  8 regarding decisions they're about to make on rate                  9 requests. So we would suggest at least for maybe some                  10 of the larger insurers, consideration of some kind of                  11 more formal public process where in advance the public                  12 would receive notification of those rate requests, and                  13 be given the opportunity both through the internet as                  14 well as through some kind of formal public hearing                  15 process similar to this where they could provide the                  16 insurance administration with the information they                  17 need to understand the impact of those potential                  18 decisions on the public. So I think we just need to                  19 be reminded that not all the information can be                  20 derived both from, or provided through the internet                  21 for these important decisions.                  22 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: I think it's always</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 132</p> <p>1 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Was there anything                  2 magic about the 3 to 5 percent?                  3 MR. ROBBINS: No, I just know from my                  4 experience from many years in West Virginia that was                  5 the process that they used there. Generally it was                  6 over 5 percent. That they did have those public                  7 hearings that were held there. Not always well                  8 attended, but still available to the public when                  9 available.                  10 Thank you.                  11 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Thank you very                  12 much.                  13 Any questions?                  14 Thank you.                  15 Mr. Ransom, I know has already provided his                  16 comments.                  17 Ms. Robinson, did you have anything on this                  18 report?                  19 MS. ROBINSON: Again, Kimberly Robinson on                  20 behalf of the League of Life and Health Insurers of                  21 Maryland.                  22 And again, my one comment is actually this.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 131</p> <p>1 dangerous to make generalizations, but I do note that                  2 the average age of the focus group participant was                  3 younger than the average age of the Maryland                  4 residents. And certainly some older individuals are                  5 very computer savvy and can use the internet as well                  6 as the next person. But there may be, again, this                  7 isn't based on scientific research, but anecdotally                  8 that there may be certain members of the older                  9 population who might not as readily turn to the                  10 internet as some of the younger folks might as an                  11 example of, at least in my own mind, the importance of                  12 a multi modality approach to getting the word out and                  13 providing an opportunity to give input.                  14 MR. ROBBINS: And we've suggested in our                  15 written testimony that rather than require this kind                  16 of public hearing process for all insurers, we look at                  17 maybe those that just have a larger share of the                  18 market based on some percentage of the marketplace,                  19 similar to the list I think that was shown on the                  20 screen earlier, so it would not necessarily be overly                  21 burdensome for the insurance administration to hold                  22 that kind of form of public hearing process.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 133</p> <p>1 To the extent that the recommendations you just heard                  2 regarding the public hearing, Maryland does get a                  3 number of rate filings and I think even setting some                  4 threshold we would spend a tremendous amount of time,                  5 both your staff and the prominent carriers in our                  6 state in this room having public hearings on these                  7 rate filings and we do believe that may not be the                  8 most efficient manner of obtaining public comment or                  9 the most efficient use of your staff's time or the                  10 carrier's staff's time. And that would end up having                  11 an unintended economic impact for both the insurance                  12 administration as well as the insurance community.                  13 However, to the point of all consumers main                  14 not necessarily have internet based access I do think                  15 there's ways that you can address that ability to                  16 comment through a means other than the internet short                  17 of in fact having a public hearing. For instance,                  18 we've had many instances in our state where an agency                  19 will make documents available for review in paper, if                  20 someone comes to the agency, they can obtain a copy,                  21 they can certainly submit their comments in writing                  22 and not exclusively by e-mail. That would still be</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 134</p> <p>1 able to engage any part of our population who was not                  2 able to do so through internet portal without                  3 necessarily needing to do it through a public hearing                  4 and the time and resource commitment that a public                  5 hearing itself would take. So we would just suggest                  6 that while you're being thoughtful how to engage the                  7 public you're also balancing those efficiency and                  8 accessibility needs for both your staff and for the                  9 insurance community. That's it.</p> <p>10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SAMMIS: And how would                  11 the consumer know?</p> <p>12 MS. ROBINSON: Well, I think that's going to                  13 be the question even if you do a public hearing.                  14 There's still going to have to be some way to                  15 communicate that broadly. So whatever mechanism that                  16 you would envision to announce a public hearing would                  17 be perhaps the same method that you would use to                  18 announce that there was a filing available for review.                  19 The federal government does it when they do the review                  20 of regulations, they often do that process by paper,                  21 they also do it now electronically. But there are                  22 places in our state where we routinely announce things</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 136</p> <p>1 or not the carriers see it as being, you know, to what                  2 extent they would see it as being a reasonable                  3 approach for them to post something on their internet                  4 site, or to give a notice to their, to the broker                  5 community, for example, that they have filed a rate                  6 increase with the Maryland Insurance Administration                  7 and have obtained information.</p> <p>8 MS. ROBINSON: I'd be more than happy to                  9 inquire with our membership and include a response in                  10 our comments by the end of next week. I do think part                  11 of that answer will be driven again by whether that                  12 communication could happen electronically as opposed                  13 to whether or not it's happening in paper. For                  14 instance, if you're doing in a group marketing to a                  15 broker who can then access electronically, it's                  16 different than mailing a copy to every insured on your                  17 books so those are the kind of things we'll take into                  18 consideration.</p> <p>19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SAMMIS: But I do think                  20 the companies even on the individual side are                  21 beginning to collect e-mail addresses.</p> <p>22 MS. ROBINSON: And again, because you can do</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 135</p> <p>1 in print. The balance has to be between the                  2 timeliness of the comments which I do believe is part                  3 of why the consultants had even recommended the                  4 internet as the appropriate place because it does                  5 allow things to move a little bit more quickly to let                  6 the filings get through their process efficiently so                  7 things are not delayed. Anytime you're taking it                  8 offline you're going to slow that down some. But the                  9 Maryland Register, Hearing Scheduler, there are plenty                  10 of other places where things can be announced without                  11 necessarily the need for a hearing.</p> <p>12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SAMMIS: If I remember,                  13 I can't remember if it was in the focus groups that                  14 Oliver Wyman did, or something that some of the other                  15 consumer groups or focus groups that I looked at for                  16 different projects, maybe even HHS, I can't remember,                  17 but there was some discussion about the carriers being                  18 required to provide a notice to consumers that they                  19 have filed a rate increase. So I don't think it's                  20 fair to ask you today because you haven't had time to                  21 talk to your companies, but maybe it's a thing to get                  22 back to us about at some point in time about whether</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 137</p> <p>1 it electronically.</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Right.</p> <p>3 MS. ROBINSON: Rather than by paper and                  4 mailing, you know, postage has come into the costs                  5 these days.</p> <p>6 COMMISSIONER GOLDSMITH: Anything else?                  7 Thank you very much, Ms. Robinson, for your                  8 comments.</p> <p>9 Anyone else who is here who hasn't signed up                  10 but would like to comment on the consumer information                  11 aspect of the reports?                  12 Well then I believe that concludes our                  13 proceeding. I want to thank everyone for your input,                  14 both here today and in writing.</p> <p>15 And we will consider it all as a part of the                  16 record in this proceeding in coming to our conclusions                  17 about moving forward.</p> <p>18 Thank you. Thank you for coming.                  19 (Whereupon, the hearing concluded at 1:00                  20 o'clock p.m.)                  21                  22</p>

1 CERTIFICATE OF SHORTHAND REPORTER - NOTARY PUBLIC

2 I, DARLENE S. TRAFICANTE, Registered  
3 Professional Reporter, Certified Shorthand Reporter  
4 and Notary Public, the officer before whom the  
5 foregoing public hearing was taken, do hereby certify  
6 that the foregoing transcript is a true and correct  
7 record of the testimony given; that said testimony was  
8 taken by me stenographically and thereafter reduced to  
9 typewriting under my supervision; and that I am  
10 neither counsel for or related to, nor employed by any  
11 of the parties to this case and have no interest,  
12 financial or otherwise, in its outcome.

13 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my  
14 hand and affixed my notarial seal this 23rd day of  
15 June 2011.

16 My commission expires:  
17 July 25, 2011

18 \_\_\_\_\_  
19 \_\_\_\_\_

20 NOTARY PUBLIC IN AND FOR THE  
21 STATE OF MARYLAND

22

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