



PROVIDER

PULSE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 25 YEARS STRONG
- PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT: DR. MISRA
- YOU CAN STOP FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE (FWA)
- MEDI-CAL RX: CALIFORNIA'S NEW PHARMACY BENEFIT SYSTEM POSTPONED
- CALIFORNIA ADVANCING AND INNOVATING MEDI-CAL (CalAIM)
- ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES
- PROVIDER TRAINING CORNER
- THE ALLIANCE, ALL IN ALAMEDA COUNTY, AND PARTNERS LAUNCH FOOD AS MEDICINE PROGRAM AT LIFELONG MEDICAL CENTER
- IMPORTANT REMINDER ABOUT PREVENTIVE CARE SERVICES
- WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

25 YEARS STRONG

...and more than two and a half decades of simply loving what we do!

Created by and for Alameda County residents, the Alliance was formed by our Alameda County Board of Supervisors. Today, we are the #1 choice for Medi-Cal and the only choice for Group Care in Alameda County. We serve more than 280,000 members and 2 out of every 10 people who live in our diverse county. For over 25 years, the Alliance has served Alameda County by providing much-needed services and access to health care that we all need to live our best life. As we reflect on our years of service, we are reminded of the collective work that we do every day to support and improve the health and well-being of our community. For three (3) generations and more to come, families, children, and all of the individuals who make up our dedicated provider partnerships, loyal members, and committed staff, all play a role in making this happen and have embraced the Alliance mission.

In our 25th year of serving our community, the Alliance membership has reached record highs, and our award-winning commitment to helping others and service excellence has received national recognition. We are focused on providing the highest level of service and supporting our members and providers each day.

25 YEARS STRONG

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



Over the last six (6) years, our patient quality scores have gone from being one (1) of the third lowest of all Medi-Cal managed care plans to performing as a top ten (10) plan in California. Our quality score increases show the outstanding care that our network of physicians provides to our members.

Our partnerships with our providers continue to strengthen. Over the last six (6) years, satisfaction among our physicians has increased significantly – from 58% to 85% satisfaction reported this past year. Year after year, 9 out of 10 Alliance providers would recommend us to their colleagues.

Our quality and satisfaction improvements would not be possible without the hard work of our dedicated Member Services team. Last year, they received national certification as a Center of Excellence through Benchmark Portal. Truly, an amazing accomplishment for the Alliance that benefits all of Alameda County.

In our 25th year, our dedication to serving an important mission to help people live better is stronger than ever before. It has not been easy as we all have faced the challenges of the ongoing pandemic and witnessed how the health care disparities and economic hardships have been exacerbated by COVID-19. The Alliance remains committed to breaking down health care barriers experienced by our members. We are confident that our ongoing service and collaboration with our community, county, and provider partners will help us continue to deliver high-quality health care services for years to come.

We are proud to serve Alameda County, today, tomorrow, and well into the future – and we look forward to helping to create a healthier community for all.

PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT: DR. MISRA



The Alliance is honored to partner with Dr. Sourjya Misra in our mission to create a healthy community for all.

Dr. Misra specializes in urology, and has a passion for helping others and taking care of patients who are really sick. As a leader in health care innovation, Dr. Misra has served our community for many years in some of these most vulnerable areas. He shares his expertise, experience, and leadership in conducting specialized urodynamic studies to help provide the best care. As a demonstration of his commitment to care and dedication to innovation, during the pandemic, Dr. Misra transitioned to telehealth visits to help ensure no patient goes unseen or without care.

Dr. Misra appreciates his partnership with the Alliance. He is grateful for the opportunity that he has to use his gifts and talents to make a difference in the lives of his patients and our community.

Alliance members can work with their primary care doctor to choose Dr. Misra as their urologist specialist.

To learn more, please visit **www.alamedaalliance.org** or call:

Alliance Member Services Department

Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

Phone Number: **1.510.747.4567**

Toll-Free: **1.877.932.2738**

People with hearing and speaking impairments (CRS/TTY): **711/1.800.735.2929**

Do you want to learn more about Dr. Misra?

Please visit our website to watch a short video at **www.alamedaalliance.org**. You can also connect with us on Facebook and Twitter to view the video.



YOU CAN STOP FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE (FWA)



Health care fraud, waste, and abuse cost taxpayers more than \$100 billion annually. You can help stop fraud by reporting it.

What is health care fraud?

Health care fraud includes intentionally making false statements, misrepresentations, or leaving out facts from any record, bill, claim, or any other form in order to obtain services, or any type of payment for health care services for which you are not entitled.

Examples of fraud:

Members:

- Lend or give an Alliance member ID card to someone else.
- Pretend to be someone else to obtain services.
- Alter or forge a prescription.
- Conceal assets or income in order to gain coverage.
- Falsify information in order to obtain narcotic medication.

Providers:

- Bill for services, procedures, and supplies not rendered, or different from what was rendered to the patient.
- Provide services to patients that are not medically necessary.
- Balance bill a Medi-Cal member for Medi-Cal covered services.

Pharmacies:

- Bill for a brand-name prescription when dispensing a generic.
- Dispense a different medication than what was prescribed.
- Alter the quantity of the prescription without proper documentation.
- Buy back prescription medication for resale.

If you suspect fraud by our health plan, doctors, pharmacies, or members, please report it by calling:

Medi-Cal Fraud Hotline (Toll-Free):

1.800.822.6222

Alliance Compliance Hotline (Toll-Free):

1.855.747.2234

Alliance FWA Email:

compliance@alamedaalliance.org

Alliance Compliance Officer:

Richard Golfin III

Thank you for helping us fight fraud, waste, and abuse.

To report a potential compliance issue, please fill out the Compliance Incident Report Form on the Alliance website at

www.alamedaalliance.org/fraud-prevention.

MEDI-CAL RX: CALIFORNIA'S NEW PHARMACY BENEFIT SYSTEM POSTPONED



In January 2019, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-01-19, now known as “Medi-Cal Rx,” which tasked the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to transition all pharmacy services from Medi-Cal managed care into a fee-for-service (FFS) benefit, administered by the State of California. The transition has been postponed indefinitely. The transition will apply to all managed care plans, including the Alliance. The objective of this transition is to standardize the Medi-Cal pharmacy benefit under one (1) delivery system, improve access to pharmacy services, apply statewide utilization management protocols to all outpatient drugs, and strengthen California’s ability to negotiate state supplemental drug rebates with drug manufacturers.

Once the transition is in place, Medi-Cal Pharmacy Benefits will be administered through the FFS delivery system and services such as covered outpatient drugs, medical supplies, and enteral nutritional products will be carved out from the managed care system. Instead, the statewide Medi-Cal Rx will oversee the pharmacy benefit for Medi-Cal beneficiaries and will be responsible for claims management, prior authorizations (PA),

and utilization management services. The Alliance will support the physician-administered drug (PAD) treatments for Medi-Cal members, and will continue to fully maintain administrative responsibilities for members enrolled in Alliance Group Care. This transition will impact over 11 million people enrolled in Medi-Cal managed care, a majority of the close to 14 million Medi-Cal beneficiaries throughout the state.

Over the last year, DHCS has been working with stakeholders to implement a transition plan that will ensure that Medi-Cal beneficiaries who have existing prescriptions covered by their managed care plan will have continued coverage during a 180-day transition period. For the first 180 days after the transition, DHCS will not require physicians to submit a PA request to continue patients who are on existing medications. After the 180-day transition period, Medi-Cal Rx will require all prescriptions to be on their Contracted Drug List (CDL). Any drug not on the CDL or within the quantity limit will need a PA from Medi-Cal Rx. Additionally, they will “grandfather” previously approved PAs up to one (1) full year from the date of the prescription approval start date. While

MEDI-CAL RX:

CALIFORNIA'S NEW PHARMACY BENEFIT SYSTEM POSTPONED (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)



Medi-Cal Rx will be responsible for most administrative and support services, the Alliance will continue to be responsible for authorizations, denials, and appeals specific to PADs.

Throughout the DHCS-led stakeholder engagement process, the Alliance has attended and participated in various forums and workgroup meetings to understand how the implementation of these various strategies will impact our Medi-Cal members and provider partners. In addition to the information that DHCS has shared, the Alliance will continue to keep our physicians informed and assist them with understanding how the pharmacy benefit changes will impact their practice by providing educational materials as well as making ourselves available to clarify any questions that may come up as we near the beginning of the transition and throughout the transition period. Recently, we have included information about the transition in the provider materials that go out to our physician partners every quarter and will be including information in the

Alliance provider manual. The Alliance will reach out to each of our Medi-Cal members with additional information on the transition 30 days before the transition, and will continue to post up-to-date information on the Alliance website.

As we get closer to the implementation date, we encourage our provider partners to contact us with questions or concerns they have. For the latest updates on Medi-Cal Rx, please visit our website at **www.alamedaalliance.org**.

As members of the local safety-net system, we remain committed to working closely with our provider partners to ensure that they have access to the information and resources they need to care for our members.

To read the latest information on Medi-Cal Rx, please visit the DHCS dedicated website at **www.dhcs.ca.gov/provgovpart/pharmacy/Pages/Medi-CalRX.aspx**.

CALIFORNIA ADVANCING AND INNOVATING MEDI-CAL (CaAIM)



To improve the quality of life and health outcomes of the Medi-Cal population, CaAIM seeks to build on various promising whole person care approaches that were introduced through previous federal waivers. Along with other managed care health plans throughout the state, the Alliance will establish a population health management program that will provide wrap-around flexible services with the goal of keeping our most vulnerable Medi-Cal members healthy, helping them navigate complex health care and other delivery systems, addressing social determinants of health, and reducing health disparities.

Due to the public health emergency and the need for resources to be focused on addressing the pandemic, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) made the decision to postpone the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CaAIM) implementation, originally scheduled for January 2021. While the state continues to focus on battling COVID-19, DHCS recently announced that CaAIM will resume and is now scheduled to begin January 2022.

Starting in 2022, the Alliance will implement the new Enhanced Care Management (ECM) benefit and In-Lieu-of Services (ILOS) options that will build on our work through the Health Homes and Whole Person Care programs that the Alliance and Alameda County have piloted over the last few years. Some of the Populations of Focus for ECM include individuals experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness, individuals who frequently utilize emergency or inpatient services, people transitioning from skilled nursing facilities, individuals transitioning from incarceration, and children or youth with complex care needs. Along with this important benefit, the Alliance will also begin to offer ILOS, which are flexible wrap-around services that will help us address medical or social determinants of health that our members experience. Some potential ILOS services include housing-related services, home-based services, day habilitation programs, respite for caregivers, and medically tailored meals.

To learn more about ECM and ILOS, please visit the California DHCS website at www.dhcs.ca.gov/provgovpart/Pages/CalAIM.aspx.

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

The Office of the California Surgeon General recently released its first report that addresses Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress. According to the report, 62% of California adults have experienced at least one (1) ACE, and 16.3% have experienced four (4) or more ACEs. The report also states that ACEs are strongly associated with some of the most serious health conditions, including 9 out of 10 leading causes of death. It provides tools to address ACEs through evidence-based and cross-sector approaches, and is part of a larger effort to treat the impacts of toxic stress with trauma-informed care. In December of 2019, the ACEs Aware Initiative was launched by the Surgeon General and the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to screen Californians for ACEs. Since January 1, 2020, eligible Medi-Cal providers began receiving a \$29 payment for conducting qualifying ACEs screenings for children and adults up to 65 years old who have full-scope Medi-Cal. This initiative aims to reduce adverse childhood experiences among our diverse communities and to cut toxic stress by half in one (1) generation. The Office of the Surgeon General and DHCS have committed to partnering with community organizations across the state to ensure that providers have the tools and resources they need to incorporate ACE screenings with their



patients, and to provide appropriate response and care. Additionally, a Trauma-Informed Network of Care road map has been developed and provides practical steps that health providers and social service and community organizations can take to expand networks of care that support children and adults who have been impacted by adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress.

To learn more about the ACEs Aware Initiative and the recently released report, please visit www.acesaware.org.



PROVIDER TRAINING CORNER

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR PROVIDER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

To learn more about upcoming training opportunities in our community, please visit the new Provider Resources for Training and Technical Assistance Opportunities section of our website [here](#).

THE ALLIANCE, ALL IN ALAMEDA COUNTY, AND PARTNERS LAUNCH FOOD AS MEDICINE PROGRAM AT LIFELONG MEDICAL CENTER



In January 2021, the Alliance, ALL IN Alameda County (ALL IN), and other community partners launched a Food as Medicine program at LifeLong Ashby Health Center, a community clinic that serves neighborhoods in Berkeley and North Oakland. Earlier this year, the Alliance invested \$275,000 to support strategies at local clinics, including the newest site at LifeLong Ashby Health Center. The Food as Medicine program aims to address the social determinants of health among Alameda County residents by prescribing patients with nutrient-dense produce and connecting them to local support groups through weekly visits provided by Open Source Wellness.

“Today, more than 130 million Americans are affected by chronic diseases that are often preventable, treatable, and reversible. COVID-19 has highlighted the connection between chronic diseases and other crises we were facing prior to the pandemic – food insecurity, social isolation, and racism. COVID-19 is requiring us to work differently across silos to advance health equity,” said Dr. Steven Chen, Chief Medical Officer of ALL IN.

This innovative model provides patients with food prescriptions, which includes 16 weeks of vegetables that are delivered to the patients’ doorsteps during the ongoing stay-at-home orders. The prescriptions are filled by Dig Deep Farms, an urban farm that creates green economy jobs for people on probation, administered by the Alameda County Deputy Sheriffs Activities League (DSAL). DSAL is a nonprofit organization created to unite

Alameda County Sheriff’s Office personnel and the citizens of Alameda County. As part of the program, participants will also have access to group medical visits that bring patients together virtually and include physical activity, healthy food demonstrations, stress reduction, and social connection over the course of four (4) months.

“[The] added stress and economic insecurity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic – particularly for communities of color – the ALL IN Alameda County Food as Medicine initiative located at the Lifelong Ashby Health Center has arrived at a critical moment,” reflected Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson. “This program not only acknowledges how food and nutrition impact our overall health – but it also uses strategies like the Food Farmacy and the Open Source Wellness program to reduce rates of anxiety, depression, and stress.”

THE ALLIANCE, ALL IN ALAMEDA COUNTY, AND PARTNERS LAUNCH FOOD AS MEDICINE PROGRAM AT LIFELONG MEDICAL CENTER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

“With this innovative and holistic approach, it is my hope that we continue to break down barriers to food access and that more people in Alameda County will achieve greater health and well-being.” – *Alameda County Supervisor, Keith Carson*

Limited access to nutritious food has been linked to serious health complications, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and other chronic diseases. In Alameda County, it is estimated that nearly 10% of residents are facing food insecurity, particularly those from low-income communities of color, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only intensified the issue. The lack of nutritious food options for people of color can be linked to their higher rates of obesity and diabetes – conditions that lead to poor health outcomes and hospitalizations. Through the Food as Medicine program, primary care providers and staff will screen patients for food insecurity and offer healthy food interventions in combination with group behavioral support to improve health, emotional well-being, and food security for Alameda County residents.

“This innovative program has become one of Alameda County’s primary strategies for addressing health disparities, which have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, in our most vulnerable families and communities,” said Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan. “As we expand Food as Medicine countywide, I am grateful for the invaluable partnership with the Alameda Alliance for Health and our other partners that clearly demonstrates our collective commitment to addressing the root causes of health disparities.”

The Alliance’s investment will help expand the Food as Medicine program at LifeLong Ashby Health Center in addition to supporting strategies that further expand future Food as Medicine efforts. Currently, the Food as Medicine initiative has sites at Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center, Native American Health Center, and Hayward Wellness Center, and smaller Food Farmacies operate at La Clínica de La Raza, Roots Community Health Center, and West Oakland Health Center. Additional sites have been identified to open later this year, and into the 2022 calendar year in Alameda County, offering more opportunities to serve people in our community.

“The impacts of food insecurity and social isolation in our community are creating high rates of health disparities including depression, diabetes, obesity, and hypertension,” said Alliance Chief Executive Officer Scott Coffin. “The Food as Medicine program is urgently needed as we continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and the disproportionate impact it is having on our Medi-Cal members and communities of color.”

To learn more about Food as Medicine efforts, please visit [**www.acgov.org/allin**](http://www.acgov.org/allin).

To learn more about the Alliance, please visit us at [**www.alamedaalliance.org**](http://www.alamedaalliance.org).

IMPORTANT REMINDER ABOUT PREVENTIVE CARE SERVICES

At Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance), we value our dedicated provider partner community. We are committed to continuously improving our provider and member customer service satisfaction. We would like to share an important update about preventive care services.

As a committed partner in health, we recently mailed a reminder to the Alliance Medi-Cal membership to schedule a Bright Futures preventive care services appointment with their child's primary care doctor.

Bright Futures preventive care services are for children under 21 years old and include physicals, developmental and behavioral screenings, blood tests for illnesses such as tuberculosis and lead, vaccines, vision, hearing, and oral health screenings. These services can be provided during annual well-child visits, and they are available at no cost to members through the Alliance. We also recommended the COVID-19 vaccine for children 12 years of age and older at least 14 days before or after other immunizations, per the CDC recommendations.



If you have a patient who you have not seen in the last year, please work with them to schedule an appointment for these services.

If you have any questions about Bright Futures preventive care services, please contact the Alliance Provider Services Department at **1.510.747.4510** or visit **www.alamedaalliance.org/providers/provider-resources/clinical-practice-guidelines**.

Thank you for your partnership and the quality care that you provide to our members. Together, we are creating a healthier community for all.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to be featured in the Alliance newsletters, have a story idea or a topic that you would like to see covered in the Alliance Provider Pulse newsletter, please contact us.

Email: **providerpulse@alamedaalliance.org**

Call Provider Services: **1.510.747.4510**

ALL FEEDBACK IS WELCOME!

ALAMEDA
Alliance
FOR HEALTH