



# STREAM

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## SUMMER/FALL 2023

### MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Please click on the picture below to watch the message from our CEO.



## PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT: BRINGING A COMMUNITY LENS INTO HEALTH CARE – DR. NOHA ABOELATA’S STORY

**Dr. Noha Aboelata, MD, favorably known as “Dr. Noha” by her patients, colleagues, and friends, is a true advocate for our community.** Dr. Noha dedicates her career to helping address and remove health disparities. Her passion is to help improve the health of underrepresented communities, and she is a pioneer in her field. Dr. Noha is a family physician and the founding CEO of Roots Community Health Center (Roots).

Born and raised in Oakland, California, Dr. Noha went to Oakland public schools and then went on to earn her medical doctorate from Howard University School of Medicine. After completing her residency in southern California, Dr. Noha came back home to Oakland to serve her community and founded Roots in East Oakland. Under the leadership of Dr. Noha, Roots started as a two-person volunteer effort that grew into a multi-campus, multi-county nonprofit with over 200 full-time staff serving over 10,000 patients.

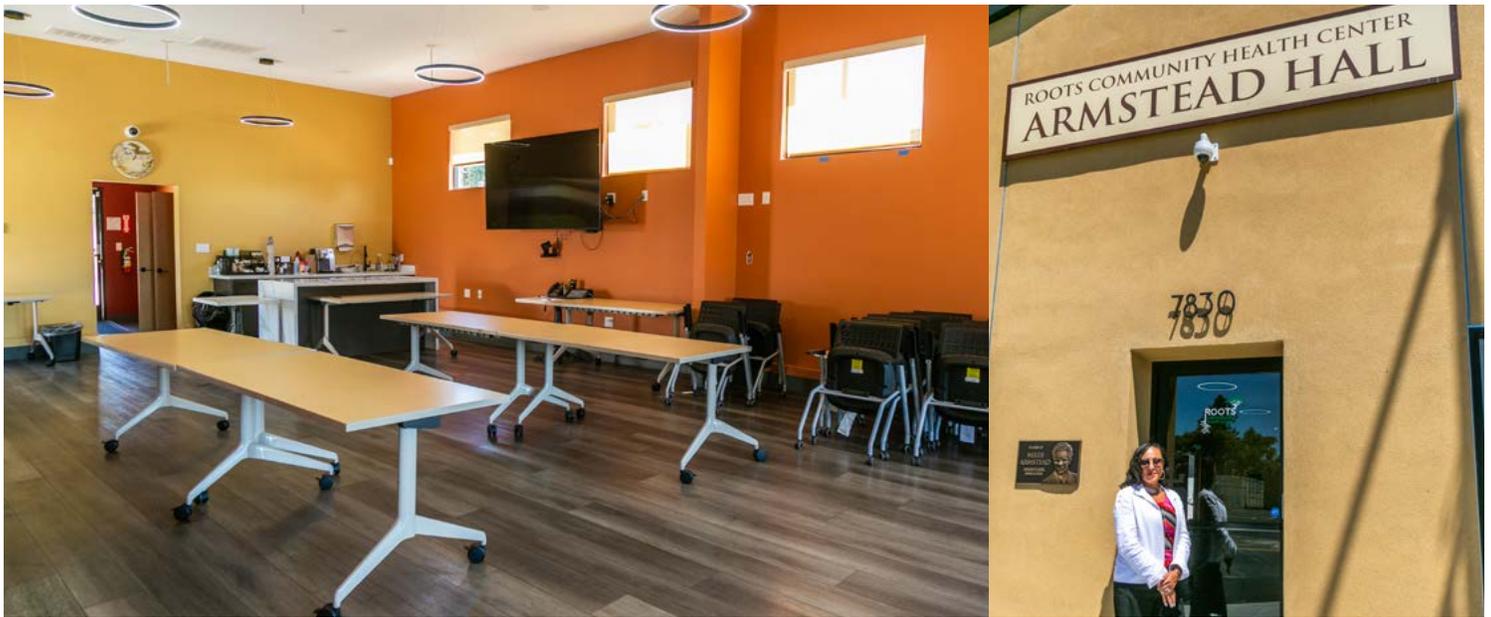
Roots was founded in 2008 and its mission is to uplift those impacted by systemic inequities and poverty. It accomplishes this through medical and behavioral health care, health navigation, workforce enterprises, housing, outreach, and advocacy.

Health is more than just the absence of disease. Care goes beyond the exam room and the doctor’s office. Roots believes in health for the whole person and aims to improve the wellness of the entire individual beyond medical services. Dr. Noha understood this and pioneered the provision of a model for improving wellness that Roots calls “Whole Health.” Whole Health is community-based, community-driven, and community-empowering. Whole Health includes culturally responsive, wrap-around medical, social, employment, nutritional, and educational services, and community-led public policy engagement. Whole Health aims to empower Roots members to address and change the conditions that impact the well-being of individuals, families, and the communities in which they live and work.

Dr. Noha is also a medical and public health leader beyond her role at Roots. Dr. Noha serves as Vice Chair of the Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance) Board of Governors. She enjoys working with the Alliance because we offer personal service to members and providers. In this leadership role, Dr. Noha offers not only a provider lens but also a community lens into health care for the Alliance.

In her spare time, Dr. Noha enjoys cooking, being outdoors, and taking walks to get fresh air. She is a proud mother of three (3) sons and loves every second of it.





The Alliance is honored to have Dr. Noha care for our members and serve as a leader on the Alliance Board of Governors. Her passion for improving health care, empowering work, and community impact are invaluable to the Alliance, our members, provider partners, and the community.

We look forward to working with Dr. Aboelata and Roots to find the best ways to serve all.

Do you want to learn more about Dr. Aboelata? Please visit our website to watch an up-close and personal message from Dr. Aboelata at [www.alamedaalliance.org](http://www.alamedaalliance.org).

You can also connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, or X (formerly known as Twitter) to view the video.



[www.facebook.com/alamedaallianceforhealth](http://www.facebook.com/alamedaallianceforhealth)



[@alamedaalliance](https://twitter.com/alamedaalliance)



[@alamedaallianceforhealth](https://www.instagram.com/alamedaallianceforhealth)

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Alliance members can choose Roots Community Health Center as their clinic by calling:

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**

Roots Main Clinic

9925 International Blvd.

Oakland, CA 94603

Monday – Friday, 9 am – 5 pm

Phone Number: **1.510.777.1177**

Roots offer services throughout the Bay Area. For more information and locations, please visit [rootsclinic.org](http://rootsclinic.org).

## THE ALLIANCE NAMES MATTHEW WOODRUFF AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AS SCOTT COFFIN RETIRES

**Matthew Woodruff became the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Alliance on June 1, 2023.** Former Alliance CEO Scott Coffin served in this role for close to a decade and retired on May 31, 2023. Mr. Coffin began serving as CEO in early 2015, led the organization out of state control, transformed the operations into good standing, experienced many successes, and left the organization in good hands under the leadership of Mr. Woodruff.

Today, the Alliance employs more than 500 staff and reports more than \$1.3 billion in revenue annually, maintains national quality accreditations, meets regulatory compliance and has over \$200 million in financial reserves. Under Mr. Coffin's leadership, the Alliance's success was recognized by state and federal regulators for the efficiency of its operations and rapid improvement of quality scores. The Alliance moved from the third-lowest quality scores to the fourth-highest managed care organization statewide.

Over the last eight (8) years, the Alliance has created a series of primary care incentive programs and pilots for complex case management, providing more than \$84 million to local providers to improve the quality of care for adults and children enrolled in the Medi-Cal program. To support the needs of older adults, children, and families, Mr. Coffin forged new relationships with the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, Alameda County Agency leaders, and leaders of community-based organizations to expand access to health services. Mr. Coffin's commitment to addressing gaps in care and social factors that impact the health of underserved people to help have a positive impact on their lives has driven the organization to launch population health programs. In the last year of Mr. Coffin's leadership, the Alliance successfully implemented the first phase of the CalAIM program, including Enhanced Care Management (ECM), Community Supports (CS), and Major Organ Transplants (MOT).

Having more than 27 years of experience as a health care leader, Mr. Woodruff is recognized as a national expert and industry leader in operations for Medicare Advantage and Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans. Mr. Woodruff received the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service for his work in developing the current Medicare competitive bidding process.



“The Alliance Board of Governors appreciates Matt’s empathic, member-first approach to his work and his deep knowledge of how Medi-Cal operates. His decades of Medicare experience position him well to lead us as we move into that line of business,” said Rebecca Gebhart, Chair of the Alliance Board of Governors. “The Board is confident that Matt will succeed as the CEO and will continue the incredible track record of achievement that the Alliance had under Scott Coffin’s leadership.”

“Matt’s experience with the Alliance will be particularly valuable in helping us navigate the transformational changes in the state CalAIM program designed to provide a fair, coordinated, and person-centered approach to overall health for our Medi-Cal members,” added Dr. Noha Aboelata, Vice Chair of the Alliance Board of Governors.

Beginning in 2015, Mr. Woodruff served on Mr. Coffin’s executive team as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) at the Alliance. In this role, Mr. Woodruff led the Alliance’s day-to-day operations and strengthened the organization’s internal and external partnerships. Under his leadership, the Alliance attained national recognition, achieving Center of Excellence status for superior employee satisfaction, member satisfaction, and an amazing level of service to its members. Mr. Woodruff’s work to develop strong relationships with the Alliance provider network led to better satisfaction rates with our community providers, reaching a record level in 2022 and increasing by 28% since 2015.

When Mr. Coffin announced his retirement in 2022, “the CEO recruitment had a large number of outstanding candidates but in the end, Matt stood out, and was the top recommendation of the Alliance CEO Search Committee,” said Dr. Evan Seevak, a member of the Alliance Board of Governors and Chairperson for the CEO Search Committee. “In the interview process, Matt demonstrated his deep knowledge of the Alliance, Medi-Cal Managed Care, and Medicare, and our members, providers, and our local community. We are excited to have Matt step into his new role.”

“The Alliance has completed a successful turnaround in the last eight (8) years and the organization will continue in good standing for many years into the future. The Alameda County Medi-Cal program will change into a County-Organized Model with several new Medi-Cal services addressing social determinants of health, including supportive services for older and fragile adults, and services that address a variety of food and housing insecurities. The Alliance has pioneered and invested in a series of pilot programs to overcome health disparities, including Recipe4Health, Whole Person Care, and Health Homes, and it will be launching a new pilot to help formerly incarcerated residents coordinate re-entry services. I have full confidence in Matt’s leadership and his commitment to fulfill the mission and vision of the Alliance, and to continue strengthening the local collaboration with our safety-net partners,” said former CEO of the Alliance, Scott Coffin.

As a third-generation Mexican American, Mr. Woodruff was raised in the Bay Area, is a graduate of St. Mary’s College of Moraga, and lives with his wife and two (2) kids in the East Bay.

## THE ALLIANCE NAMES NEW BOARD CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND WELCOMES TWO (2) NEW BOARD MEMBERS



The Alliance announced that Mrs. Rebecca Gebhart has been named Chair of the Alliance Board of Governors. The board is the governing body of the Alliance, which is the leading Medi-Cal managed care health plan serving more than 80% of the adults and children in the Medi-Cal program in Alameda County.

“The Alliance remains fully committed to administering the best health care services to all and has continually strived to improve the quality of living for Alameda County residents since 1996,” said Scott Coffin, former Alliance CEO. “As long-time health care and community leaders, the Board of Governors provide valuable perspectives to advise and better align to our mission and vision, to expand our services to reach more people, and to improve the local health care system through strategic integration.”

“I am honored to take on the role as Chair of the Alliance Board of Governors and work with my colleagues on the Board to help move the plan’s mission forward in improving the health and well-being of our members,” said Mrs. Gebhart.

Mrs. Gebhart, who has served as a Board member since May 2016, has over 20 years of health care finance experience and previously served as the Finance Director at Alameda County’s Health Care Services Agency (HCSA) before retiring. Mrs. Gebhart served as the HCSA Assistant Director, overseeing all financial operations for the \$1 billion agency consisting of Behavioral Health, Administration/Indigent Health, Public Health, and Environmental Health. Dr. Evan Seevak served as the Vice Chair from 2017 to 2019 and as the Chairperson from 2019 through 2022. Dr. Seevak remains a member of the Board of Governors and is recognized and appreciated for more than 11 years of service.

The Alliance was also happy to announce the appointment of Dr. Noha Aboelata as Vice Chair of the Board. Dr. Aboelata is the founder and CEO of Roots Community Health Center and is a dedicated health care leader and advocate committed to eliminating health disparities among low-income individuals in East Oakland and the broader community of Alameda County. Dr. Aboelata has served on the Alliance Board since 2018 and throughout her career has built a holistic approach that focuses on enhancing accessibility and consistent care by connecting patients to a range of resources that support their health and overall wellness.

**The Alliance also named two (2) new Board members:**

Supervisor Lena Tam, the recently elected member of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, joined the Alliance as a new Board member. Supervisor Tam is a longstanding community leader and public servant who previously served as Vice Mayor of the City of Alameda where she secured housing for low-income seniors and worked to enhance safety net services for Alameda residents. She also served as the President of the City of Alameda Health Care Board where she worked tirelessly to keep Alameda Hospital open and ensure it continues to provide emergency services to the community.

Ms. Jody Moore, an Alameda resident and mother of two (2) children, joined the Alliance Board, serving in the Consumer Member seat. As a parent to a child with special needs, Ms. Moore has dedicated many years to advocating for services that support people with disabilities. Ms. Moore previously sat on Alameda's Commission on Disability and served as Vice Chair for several years. In 2011, she founded the group The Alameda Autism Community Network and has dedicated much of her time to supporting events that bring awareness to issues impacting people with disabilities.



## THE ALLIANCE ANNOUNCES NEW CHIEF OF HEALTH EQUITY

The Alliance announced that Mr. Lao Paul Vang has assumed a new role as the health plan's Chief of Health Equity. In this critical role that reports to the CEO, Mr. Vang is charged with implementing policies to ensure that health equity is prioritized and addressed throughout the organization and each of the communities served by the Alliance. He is responsible for implementing an overarching vision of diversity, equity, and inclusion that centers Alliance staff, members, community, and provider partners. As Chief of Health Equity, Mr. Vang works closely with community leaders to refine the Alliance's population health strategy by identifying ways to mitigate social determinants of health.

Mr. Vang has extensive experience in public administration and humanitarian affairs. He has created and implemented large-scale human rights and health care equity, global diversity, racial-gender equity, and social inclusion programs throughout his career. Before joining the Alliance, Mr. Vang oversaw public safety operations for a large school district in Washington State where he designed proactive approaches to preventing crime and school violence and developed comprehensive racial equity policies and strategies to dismantle institutional racism and system inequity. Mr. Vang also previously served as the World Health Organization's Chief Human Rights and Healthcare Equity Officer in West Africa as well as the Chief Human Rights and Diversity Officer for the United Nations Mission in Liberia, West Africa.



"Attaining our health equity goals requires change in our organization and change in the way we serve the valued residents of Alameda County. The addition of a dedicated humanitarian executive leader into the Alliance family is essential to reach more people," said Scott Coffin, former Alliance CEO. "Mr. Vang has spent much of his career dedicated to addressing health care inequities for marginalized communities on a global scale, and we're looking forward to having him work to expand our mission and reinforce the work that we do each day to serve our safety net community."

"I am excited to take on this important role at the Alliance and partner with our dedicated staff and leaders to address member health inequities, and to help deliver meaningful and lasting change, both within our organization and throughout the broader Alameda County community," said Mr. Vang.

## IS HOOKAH SMOKING SAFE?



You may have heard of a hookah or seen it before. Hookahs are water pipes that usually have a head, a metal body, a water bowl, and a hose with a mouthpiece. There are also electronic versions like hookah pens. There are many names for it like shisha, narghile, argileh, hubble-bubble, and goza. Hookah bars are popular, and there are fruity flavors of tobacco that even appeal to youth. In 2018, about one (1) in 13 high school students and one (1) in eight (8) young adults in the United States used hookahs to smoke tobacco.

Hookah smoking is not safe. The truth is hookah smoking, like cigarette smoking, has many health dangers. Hookah smoke has harmful chemicals such as nicotine, tar, and heavy metals. Hookah use can cause serious health problems to the person smoking and the people around them.

- Hookah smoke can increase your risk for cancer, heart disease, and other health problems.
- Hookah smoke can affect a baby's weight and their lungs.

**For help to quit smoking, you can talk to your doctor about a quit plan. You can also call the Kick It California Helpline toll-free at **1.800.300.8086**.**

For more resources about quitting smoking, visit [www.alamedaalliance.org/live-healthy-library](http://www.alamedaalliance.org/live-healthy-library) and click "Quit Smoking."

Source:

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/tobacco\\_industry/hookahs/index.htm#hookah-use](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/hookahs/index.htm#hookah-use)

## BABIES NEED TIME TO GROW



A baby grows throughout the entire pregnancy. For example, the brain, lungs, and liver fully develop during the final weeks of pregnancy. Preterm birth is when a baby is born too early, before 37 weeks of pregnancy. From 2017-2019, about 9% of infants born in Alameda County were born too early. Babies born too early (especially before 32 weeks) may have more health concerns or need to stay in the hospital longer.

Preventing preterm birth is a challenge because many causes may be complex or not well understood.

However, these steps can help reduce the risk of preterm birth:

- Quit smoking. For help quitting, please call the Kick It California Helpline toll-free at **1.800.300.8086**. Find more resources on the “Quit Smoking” page at **[www.alamedaalliance.org/live-healthy-library](http://www.alamedaalliance.org/live-healthy-library)**.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Get prenatal care as soon as pregnant and throughout the pregnancy.
- Talk with a doctor or other health care provider about the use of progesterone treatment, if there was a previous preterm birth.
- Practice ways to manage your stress. For help, Alliance members can find a behavioral health care provider in the Alliance network by calling toll-free at **1.855.856.0577**, and anyone can also talk to a counselor at the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline toll-free at **1.833.943.5746**.
- Know the warning signs of labor. If someone thinks they are experiencing preterm labor, they should see a health care provider right away.
- Wait at least 18 months between pregnancies.

If anyone is pregnant or recently gave birth and needs more support, the **Alameda County Starting Out Strong** programs may be able to help. They offer groups, classes, and one-on-one visits. To learn more, please call the Alameda County Public Health Department – Maternal, Paternal, Child and Adolescent Health Unit **1.510.667.4333**.

Find out about classes, programs, and materials on the “Pregnancy & Baby” page at **[www.alamedaalliance.org/live-healthy-library](http://www.alamedaalliance.org/live-healthy-library)**.

Article adapted from:

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/pretermbirth.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/pretermbirth.htm)*

## BLOOD PRESSURE MATTERS

Blood pressure is the force put on the walls of the blood vessels with each heartbeat. These vessels carry blood from your heart to other parts of your body. When your blood pressure stays high, your risk increases for problems like heart disease and stroke. The good news is that you can work on managing your blood pressure.

To help keep your blood pressure in a healthy range, follow these **healthy habits**:



**Know your numbers.** Ask your doctor what your blood pressure numbers are and what that means for you. If your blood pressure is too high, follow your doctor's treatment plan.



**Get moving.** Try walking, dancing, or your favorite activity. All you need is 30 minutes a day, five (5) days a week. Remember, you do not have to do it all at once.



**Eat healthy.** Add more fruits and vegetables to your meals. Limit foods with salt, fat, and sugar.



**Limit alcohol.** For men, no more than two (2) drinks per day are recommended. For women, no more than one (1) drink per day is recommended.



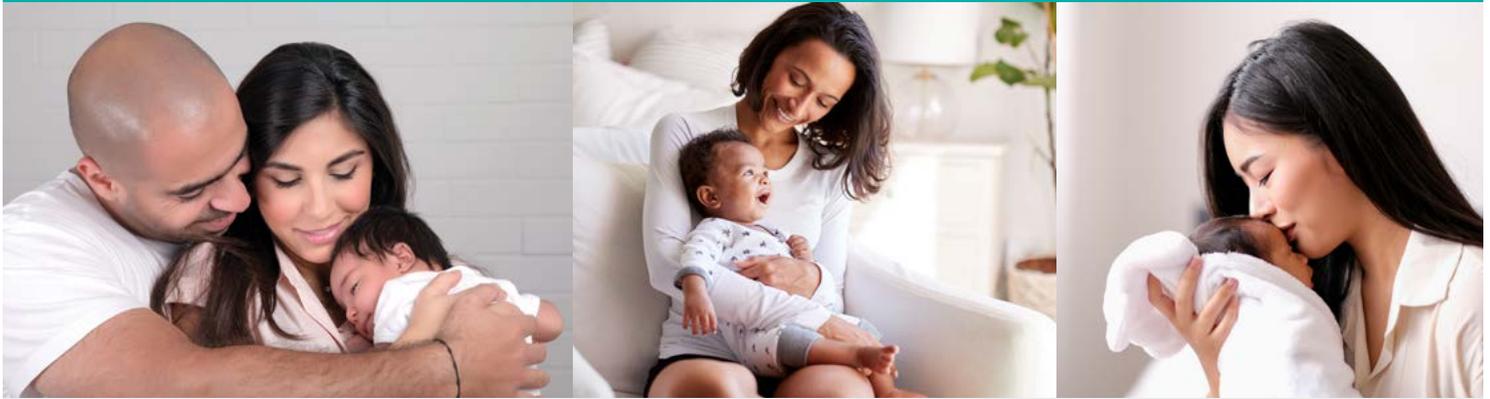
**Don't smoke.** If you smoke, work with your doctor to make a quit plan or call the **Kick It California Helpline** toll-free at **1.800.300.8086**.



**Manage stress.** Find healthy ways to help you relax. You can try deep breathing, stretching, or meditation.

You can help Alliance members find out about classes, programs, and materials on the "Heart Health" page at [www.alamedaalliance.org/live-healthy-library](http://www.alamedaalliance.org/live-healthy-library).

## WELL-VISITS FOR NEWBORN MEMBERS (BIRTH – 30 MONTHS)



Young children grow quickly, so they need to visit their doctor often for checkups (also called well-child visits). During these visits, the doctor will check how the child is growing and may provide preventive screenings and vaccines. Parents and caretakers can also share any questions or concerns they have about the child's health and development.

It can be challenging to keep track of so many appointments. The chart below shows the recommended timing for these visits. The child's doctor will be able to help members schedule all the visits the child needs.



### AGE 0 TO 12 MONTHS

	3-5 days	1 month	2 months	4 months	6 months	9 months	12 months
DATE							

### AGE 15 TO 30 MONTHS

	15 months	18 months	24 months	30 months
DATE				

If members have any questions, they can call:

Alliance Member Services Department

Monday through Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

Phone Number: **1.510.747.4567**

Toll-Free: **1.877.932.2738**

People with hearing and speaking impairments: **711/1.800.735.2929**

## HELPING MEMBERS GET THEIR INITIAL HEALTH APPOINTMENT (IHA) AND HEALTH ASSESSMENT

One of the first things new Alliance members should do is meet their primary care provider (PCP), a doctor or nurse who takes care of their health. This first visit is called an Initial Health Appointment (IHA) Health Assessment. It is best to schedule the IHA within four (4) months of joining the Alliance.

During an IHA, Alliance members:

- Share current health concerns and past health history.
- Have a physical exam.
- Learn about any vaccines or screenings they may need.
- Get other resources from their PCP.

IHA visits are the first step in ensuring long-lasting good health and starting a good relationship with the PCP. Members can call their PCP to schedule an appointment.

If members have questions about the IHA or PCPs, they can call:

Alliance Member Services Department

Monday through Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

Phone Number: **1.510.747.4567**

Toll-Free: **1.877.932.2738**

People with hearing and speaking impairments: **711/1.800.735.2929**



## TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT FOR ALLIANCE MEMBERS



Alliance Medi-Cal members can get transportation at no cost to medical appointments and covered services.

Two (2) types of transportation services are covered by the Alliance:

1. Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT)
2. Non-medical transportation (NMT)

### WHAT IS NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION (NEMT)?

Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) uses an ambulance, litter van, wheelchair van, or air transport. NEMT does not use a car, bus, or taxi.

Alliance members are entitled to use NEMT when physically or medically unable to get to their medical, dental, mental health, or substance use disorder appointment by car, bus, train, or taxi, and the Alliance pays for the treatment of their medical or physical condition.

Before getting NEMT, members need to request the service through their doctor. Their doctor will prescribe the correct type of transportation to meet their medical condition. Their doctor must also fill out a Physician Certification Statement (PCS) form to request the type of transportation they need.

To access this form, Alliance members and doctors can:

- Visit the Alliance website at [www.alamedaalliance.org/members/medi-cal/benefits-and-covered-services](http://www.alamedaalliance.org/members/medi-cal/benefits-and-covered-services)
- Call the Alliance Provider Services Department at **1.510.747.4510**

Requests for NEMT must be pre-approved by the Alliance before a scheduled appointment. Once approved, the approval is good for up to **12 months** depending on the medical need. Additionally, there are no limits to how many rides a member can get. Their doctor will need to reassess their medical need for non-emergency medical transportation and re-approve at least every **12 months**.



## WHAT IS NON-MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION (NMT)?

Non-medical transportation (NMT) uses a car, taxi, bus, or other public or private way of getting to a medical appointment.

Alliance members can use NMT when:

- Traveling to and from a medical appointment
- Picking up prescriptions and medical supplies

## USING THE TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT

Members should be ready for their ride. To help their ride get to the appointment on time members should make sure they are ready and waiting at the prearranged location at the scheduled time.

## HOW TO GET NEMT OR NMT

Members can call at least three (3) business days in advance to schedule a trip.

Members should have the trip information ready, including:

- Pick up location
- Drop off location
- Time of appointment
- Reason for appointment

To request NMT, please tell members to call the Alliance Transportation Line toll-free at **1.866.791.4158**.

If they need help scheduling a trip, members can call:

Alliance Member Services Department

Monday through Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

Phone Number: **1.510.747.4567**

Toll-Free: **1.877.932.2738**

People with hearing and speaking impairments: **711/1.800.735.2929**

### FALL FESTIVAL

During the third week of October 2023, Team Alliance celebrated the first-ever Fall Festival with a week of festivities to celebrate:

- Case and Disease Management Week
- Customer Service Week
- Compliance Week
- Cybersecurity Awareness Month
- Health Care Quality Week
- IT Professionals Day
- Pharmacy Week and National Pharmacist Month
- Project Management Day

**We also observed:**

- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Filipino American History Month
- German-American Heritage Month
- Italian-American Heritage Month
- Polish-American Heritage Month
- Indigenous Peoples' Day

— and the lists keep growing!

The IPD team kicked off the week by giving Team Alliance “A No Project Meeting Monday” and a crossword puzzle. On Tuesday through Thursday, the Quality Improvement team, Compliance team, and Operations team hosted games and team-building activities, and on Friday, the week ended with a food truck lunch and more games and prizes. A great time was had by all, and we all look forward to more to come.

Thank you to our CEO, Values In Action (VIA) Committee, HE Division, Vendor Management, and all Alliance team members who helped with the Fall Fest.

### PROMOTIONS, WORKIVERSARIES, AND BIRTHDAYS

Please visit the NEW section of the **Alliance Connect Intranet VIA page** and join us as we celebrate and say congratulations, happy work anniversary, and/or happy birthday to all team members who received a promotion, had a work anniversary (workiversary), and/or had a birthday through November 2023.



### **Greetings from Richard Golfin III, Chief Compliance Officer (CCO) and Chief Privacy Officer (CPO), and Grace St. Clair, Director of Compliance & Special Investigations Unit!**

Greetings from the Alliance Compliance Department! Over the past year, the Compliance Department has been very busy; not only have we brought on new staff to better serve the Alliance, but we have also streamlined the department. With the streamlined approach, the Compliance Department now has a dedicated unit that focuses on audits and investigations and a dedicated unit that focuses on regulatory affairs.

The Audits & Investigations (A&I) team is staffed with dedicated team members who focus on fraud, waste, and abuse (FWA); internal audits; state audits; and delegation oversight audits. The A&I team works closely with Alliance staff, state auditors, and our delegates, members, and providers.

The Regulatory Affairs team is staffed with devoted employees who focus on the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) All Plan Letters. The team is also responsible for submitting all monthly, quarterly, bi-annual, and annual ad hoc reports. The Regulatory Affairs team works closely with all the departments within the Alliance daily to ensure we are compliant with all regulatory due dates.

The Privacy Office investigates all privacy and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) incidents.

The Legal Services Department is responsible for ensuring that the Alliance's operations are compliant with laws and regulations. It is made up of lawyers and legal experts responsible for ensuring the Alliance's actions are legal and compliant. At its heart, the Legal team exists to ensure that accountable decisions are taken at the right level and function in the Alliance and that the individuals making those decisions are suitably informed about the level of legal risk inherent in them. Legal monitoring makes up most of the day-to-day workload, which includes contract review, legal assistance to firm executives, litigation and dispute management, ensuring compliance with laws and regulations, advising on risk and how to mitigate risk, and resolving arising legal issues. Our Legal Services Department reports directly to our CEO.

### **WHAT'S HAPPENING IN COMPLIANCE?**

#### **FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE (FWA)**

Due to the restructuring of how we process FWA cases, including a concerted effort to establish whether cases are credible before the 10-day reporting deadline, we are pleased that we are reporting fewer cases to DHCS. Half of our cases have been filed by a delegate, and we are monitoring their investigations. The main trend we are observing is identity theft, which may be due to the renewal of Medi-Cal members. We are also very excited to be completing the onboarding of a powerful and comprehensive fraud analytics and data monitoring application; we will provide more information when we have gone live.

#### **DELEGATION OVERSIGHT**

We are focused on ensuring that our delegates comply with all applicable federal and state regulatory requirements and contractual obligations. Delegation audits are conducted annually at a minimum for all existing delegates. Pre-delegation audits are also conducted for potential new delegates during/prior to the contracting process. In 2022, six (6) delegated entities and one (1) downstream partner entity had an annual audit. Policies and procedures, including case files, were reviewed and audited. Delegates who did not meet the regulatory and contractual requirements were issued a corrective action plan to remediate all deficiencies.



## **STATE AUDITS**

The Alliance underwent two (2) concurrent audits conducted by DHCS for 2023: the Routine Survey; and the Focused Audit. The Focused Audit reviewed the Plan's Behavioral Health Therapy and Transportation services and was conducted concurrently with the Routine Survey. The Plan's exit conference was expected in Q3 of 2023.

DMHC canceled their Follow-Up Survey of the Plan on Thursday, October 26, 2023. The Follow-Up Survey was related to the 2021 DMHC Routine Survey of the Plan and focused on the deficient areas identified during that audit. The areas being evaluated include Grievance and Appeals, and Pharmacy.

## **REGULATORY AFFAIRS**

Regulatory Affairs and Compliance is a 365-day-a-year nonstop rollercoaster ride. So, there is no time to bask in the glow of past successful projects in which we participated, such as timely DMHC and DHCS network submissions and long-term care (LTC) and behavioral health insourcing. The Regulatory Affairs team is currently working on solidifying its partnership with the Integrated Planning Division (IPD) to implement the steady stream of regulatory guidance coming from DHCS, DMHC, and others, and to manage the influx of regulatory reporting and submissions. In addition to being the liaison between regulators and Alliance internal stakeholders, some of the major tasks the Regulatory Affairs team is working on include DMHC Licensing filings related to Telehealth and Teladoc, updating the Group Care Evidence of Coverage (EOC), and an abundance of administrative services agreements and onboarding our newest team members. If you have any questions for the Alliance Regulatory Affairs team, please email [deptregaffairs@alamedaalliance.org](mailto:deptregaffairs@alamedaalliance.org).

## **PRIVACY**

### **Communicating with Family Members**

- The Alliance can share member information with a family member or authorized representative to let them know where the member is or their condition.
- A member has the right to deny sharing of their information unless they are unconscious or unable to do so.
- Sensitive services will always require member consent before the Alliance can share information with a family member or authorized representative.

For more information, please read the HIPAA Privacy Rule and Minors.

### **What Should You Do?**

**Example:** You receive a call from a 14-year-old's mother asking for records about their child's birth control. Can you share this information?

**Answer:** No; birth control falls under "sensitive services" and cannot be shared without explicit consent.

If you have any questions or concerns about privacy, please email the Alliance Privacy Office at [privacy@alamedaalliance.org](mailto:privacy@alamedaalliance.org).

## **COMPLIANCE TRAINING UPDATE**

The annual Corporate Compliance Training is mandatory for all permanent and temporary employees. The 2023 Annual Corporate Compliance Training was assigned in September 2023 with a completion date of December 2023.

This year's Annual Corporate Compliance Training will include the following courses:

- Fraud, Waste, and Abuse (FWA) Training
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Cultural Competence and Sensitivity Webinar
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

## **HOW TO REPORT A COMPLIANCE ISSUE**

Below are ways to report a compliance issue:

- Email the Compliance issue to: **compliance@alamedaalliance.org**
- Email HIPAA & Privacy incidents to: **privacy@alamedaalliance.org**
- Contact the Chief Compliance Officer, Richard Golfin III: **rgolfin@alamedaalliance.org**
- Report the incident to your supervisor or manager
- Contact the Alliance Human Resources Department: **HR@alamedaalliance.org**
- Contact any Alliance Compliance team member

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

- Call the Alliance Compliance Department Hotline (NEW): **1.844.587.0810**
- Call the Medi-Cal Fraud and Abuse Hotline: **1.800.822.6222**
- Email the Alliance Compliance Department: **compliance@alamedaalliance.org**
- Visit the Alliance designated reporting website: **www.alamedaalliance.ethicspoint.com**

## **UNDERSTANDING THE INTERNAL AUDIT PROCESS**

In this compliance update, we turn our attention to a critical aspect of our operations — the Internal Audit Process within the Alliance. This process is integral to maintaining the highest standards for compliance, quality, and efficiency in our services.

The Internal Audit Process is a systematic evaluation of our organization's operations and controls. Its primary objective is that we are adhering to regulatory requirements, industry standards, and our own established policies. By conducting regular audits, we not only identify areas of improvement but also validate the effectiveness of our risk management strategies.

### **KEY COMPONENTS OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT PROCESS**

**Risk Assessment:** Identifying potential risks and vulnerabilities in our operations is the starting point. This step helps us prioritize our audit efforts and allocate resources effectively.

**Planning and Scoping:** Once risks are identified, we carefully plan and scope the audit to determine the specific areas and processes that will be assessed.

**Data Collection:** This stage involves gathering evidence, examining processes, and conducting interviews, when necessary, with relevant stakeholders.

**Analysis and Evaluation:** The data collected is analyzed against established criteria. This step allows us to identify areas of noncompliance or inefficiency and recommend corrective actions.

**Reporting and Recommendations:** A detailed report is prepared, highlighting the findings and recommendations including the issuance of a corrective action plan (CAP) as applicable. This report is shared with relevant stakeholders, including management.

**Follow-up and Monitoring:** After recommendations are implemented, progress is monitored to ensure that corrective actions are effective and sustainable.

By conducting internal audits, we reaffirm our commitment to providing the highest quality of care and services. It's through this process that we continuously enhance our operations, aligning them with industry best practices and regulatory requirements. The policy CMP-029 Internal Audit goes over the specific details of the process.

## SEASON'S GREETINGS AND 2024 HOLIDAY CALENDAR



The Alliance office will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

### 2024

**New Year's Day:** Monday, January 1st

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day:** Monday, January 15th

**Presidents' Day:** Monday, February 19th

**Cesar Chavez Day:** Monday, April 1st

**Memorial Day:** Monday, May 27th

**Juneteenth Holiday:** Wednesday, June 19th

**Independence Day:** Thursday, July 4th

**Labor Day:** Monday, September 2nd

**Veterans Day:** Monday, November 11th

**Thanksgiving Day:** Thursday, November 28th

**Day After Thanksgiving:** Friday, November 29th

**Floating Holiday (Christmas Eve):** Tuesday, December 24th

**Christmas Day:** Wednesday, December 25th