

Provider Bulletin

March 2008

Volume 12, Issue 1

Message from Alan McKay

First, the good news. The Alliance's governing board has approved \$5.3M in funding for the Alliance's 2007 Medi-Cal incentive programs that reward quality and efficiency in physician care. This result was made possible only after the Alliance battled with the State last year to obtain fair Medi-Cal revenue, which stabilized the plan's financial health. With proper State funding for the Alliance, local primary and specialty care physicians earn Medicare-level reimbursement or more for serving Alliance Medi-Cal members, after incentive payments are counted. Better payment, improved access, more prevention and case management, and lower overall cost. Our Medi-Cal program works. The Alliance has shared more than \$51M in incentive payments with local providers since its inception, while saving the taxpayer close to \$40M per year compared to the State Medi-Cal program. Incentive payment checks will be distributed in April. Thank you for your service to Alliance members, and for your support for local Medi-Cal reform.

Now the troubling news. With a \$14.5B State budget deficit looming, Governor Schwarzenegger has declared a fiscal emergency and proposed a 10% "across the board" cut to State programs including Medi-Cal, which would take a \$2.1B hit from reduced State and federal funding. Implementation would include a 10% deduction from State Medi-Cal payments to health care providers, with some exemptions, and a corresponding cut to Medi-Cal health plan revenue. Certain Medi-Cal benefits offered at States' option, such as adult chiropractic, dental, and optometric care, among others, would be eliminated. Also, Medi-Cal recipients would be required to reapply for coverage more frequently, up from twice to four times per year, which would

presumably reduce enrollment. State Health Department officials have clarified that all Medi-Cal health plans are expected to implement these cuts which were just approved by the legislature in emergency session (to begin July 1, 2008). However, these cuts will be debated further in upcoming 2008/2009 budget negotiations, and may be modified. More information is available on the Governor's January budget proposal at <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/>.

The Governor's current budget proposal is gruesome, with ironic effects, when contrasted with his proposal for statewide health care reform a year ago. Last year, the Governor proposed to cover all Californians, reduce the "hidden tax" caused by inadequate Medi-Cal payments and uncompensated care, and encourage prevention and healthy behavior. A year later, the Governor's proposed budget would increase the hidden tax, potentially diminish access to cost-effective care, and likely increase the number of uninsured. The Governor's "long game" of structural health care reform was stopped by the Senate's negative vote on AB1X1 on January 28th. Now we are left with deficit budget realities that will be debated in the legislature, and then dealt with locally in the months to come.

Statewide health care reform is over for now, and national reform remains in question. Meanwhile, together we have built, brick by brick, a local Medi-Cal program that works better for patients and providers. On behalf of the Alliance's 90,000 regional members, I ask for your continued support as we do our best to navigate through our State's budget crisis. There is much work left to be done to create local health care solutions.

**Have you registered your NPI
with the Alliance?**

New Alliance Providers

Please join us in welcoming the following new providers to the Alliance:

Monterey County

Referral Physicians / Specialists

Charles Bates, MD – Internal Medicine
Ricardo Cuadros, MD – OB/GYN
Valerie Curtis, MD – OB/GYN
David Feinstein, MD – Internal Medicine
Christian Garayochea, MD – Anesthesiology
Jeffrey Hodgson, MD – Anesthesiology
Shahida Khan, MD – Internal Medicine
Edwin Kingsley, MD – Orthopedics
Chang Li, MD – OB/GYN
Audrey Rychkov, MD – Anesthesiology
Jeremy Silk, MD – Plastic Surgery

Primary Care Providers

Luke Rawlings, MD – Family Practice
Sandar Win, MD – Family Practice

Santa Cruz County

Referral Physicians / Specialists

Gursharan Gill, MD – Endocrinology
Jill Giniecki, MD – Emergency Medicine
Lawrence Poree, MD – Pain Management
David Reyes, MD – Emergency Medicine
Karl J. Segnitz, MD – Urgent Care-Family Practice
Lisa Segnitz, MD – Urgent Care-Family Practice
Elisabeth Siegler, MD – Orthopedic Surgery
Larisa Taylor, MD – OB/GYN
Linda Wolbers, MD – Pain Mgt-Family Practice
Thomas Yen, MD – Plastic Surgery

Alliance Web-Based Services

Check eligibility, claims status, and re-submit claims on line!

Using the Alliance's Web-Based Services is as simple as going to our website and logging on with an assigned User ID and password; from there you can choose to verify member eligibility, search the status of your claims, or re-submit your claims online!

Our Web-Based Service is quick and efficient. Our eligibility verification feature has the capacity to search the eligibility status of up to ten members at once, and includes PCP linkage information, CCS status, and identifies other health coverage. Another web feature allows primary care physicians access to their linked members' prescription history, and medication contracts.

To obtain an Alliance Web account, go to www.ccah-alliance.org, click on the Web Account Services link, and follow the instructions to sign up as a new user. If you have questions about our Web-Based Services, call Steveyann Hendricks in the Provider Services Department at (831) 430-5538.

Coming soon to Alliance Web-Based Services...

▪ **Monthly Member Linkage Lists**

The Alliance is going electronic! In the near future, Alliance Monthly Member Linkage Lists will be available online for quick, convenient access to member information and reports.

▪ **Searchable Provider Directory**

Looking for a Cardiologist or a Dermatologist in the area? This feature will make it easy for you to search by name, specialty, and location to quickly and easily find what you are looking for.

Other website features include...

- Updated Provider Manual
- Most recent Provider Directories for Medi-Cal, HF, HK, and IHSS
- Clinical Resources
- Recent Provider Memos and Bulletins
- Authorization Policies and Procedures
- Health Program and Health Education Information
- Alliance Forms Library
- And a wealth of additional, helpful resources...

Log on to www.ccah-alliance.org now!

Tamper Resistant Rx Pads

A new federal law, intended to make it more difficult for patients to obtain controlled substances through forged prescriptions, is scheduled to go into effect April 1, 2008. This provision was included in a federal spending bill (Federal Statute 7002(b) of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act of 2007).

Despite initial interpretations exempting managed care entities from this provision, the California State Department of Health Care Services has notified us that the Alliance and its providers must comply.

To be considered tamper resistant, a prescription pad must contain at least one of the following three characteristics:

- 1) One or more industry-recognized features designed to prevent unauthorized copying of a completed or blank prescription form;
- 2) One or more industry-recognized features designed to prevent the erasure or modification of information written on the prescription by the prescriber;
- 3) One or more industry-recognized features designed to prevent the use of counterfeit prescription forms.

Pads currently used for Schedule C2-C5 medications meet the CMS requirement.

While you may elect any of the above suggestions to meet compliance, we offer some possible alternatives which include transmitting prescriptions by one of the following methods which are exempt from the payment limitation:

1. Phoned prescriptions
2. Faxed prescriptions
3. E-prescriptions

Prescribers are encouraged to use the California-required tamper resistant prescription pads for controlled drugs which fully meet federal requirements. The directory of companies approved to supply the tamper resistant

prescription pads by the Department of Justice and Board of Pharmacy can be found at:

www.ag.ca.gov/bne/security_printer_list.php.

For in-depth details about this new federal law, please visit:

http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/newsroom/newsroom_8840.asp.

For additional information, please contact Angelique Milhouse, Provider Services Manager at (831) 430-5531 or your Provider Services Representative at (831) 430-5500.

Updates! New Coming Attractions!

The Alliance is always looking for ways to improve and be more efficient.

This year the Alliance's Health Services Department created a new form that replaces the existing Treatment Authorization Request forms, known as TARs or better yet the 50-1's, 18-1's and 20-1's, and combines all three existing forms into one form. The new form, known as the Authorization Form (AF), is currently being tested. Once all the bugs have been worked out, we will inform you of its effective date, provide training for your staff and give you your own personal supply. We hope this new form will make life easier. Thank you for the personal and quality care you provide to our members. Feel free to contact your Provider Services Representative if you have any comments or questions.

Stay tuned for more information to come...

Formulary Change

Chantix (VARENICLINE) tablets for the treatment of smoking cessation have been added to the formulary.

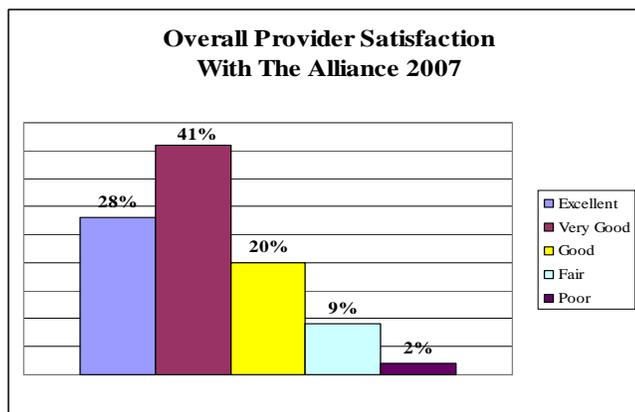
If you have any questions about this change, please contact Richard Johnson, Pharmacy Director, at (831) 430-5553.

2007 Provider Survey Results

Alliance Viewed as “Local Healthcare Solution”

The 2007 Provider Satisfaction and Marketing Survey was mailed in September to 1,129 providers that care for Alliance members. We offered the option of completing the survey on-line at SurveyMonkey.com, and distributed 119 Starbucks cards to those who did so. 149 providers, or 13.2% of the network, responded to our survey. We extend our thanks to all providers who participated. Your valuable input guides the continuous development of programs and services at the Alliance. *Congratulations to Dr. Dannaker of Monterey, on winning our Tarpys gift certificate raffle for online survey participants!*

Your overwhelming appreciation of the Alliance staff as competent, helpful, and efficient came through in your responses (92% rated good to excellent compared to 2004 rating 75% agree to strongly agree they were satisfied).



Claims Turnaround Time Improvement: 76% said that claims turnaround time is good to excellent, an improvement from 2004 when 43% said they agree and strongly agree claims turnaround was less than 30 days. If a claim is submitted incorrectly, it can take longer than 23 days to process. Please call your Provider Services Representative to set up an in-service appointment to be sure that claims are being submitted correctly and that you are getting the most from claims outsourcing services.

Here is how the Alliance is further lessening your administrative burden:

- E-commerce services were added in 2005 (89% rated good to excellent).

- RAF is a good tool for communication between PCP and specialist (2007 83% said ‘yes’; 2004 52% agree or strongly agree).
- Timely TAR response (2007 88% said ‘yes’; 2004 82% agree or strongly agree).
- Alliance RAs are still easy to understand (86% said ‘yes’).
- You are increasingly satisfied with the Alliance compared to other health plans (2007 72% said ‘yes’; 2004 57% agree or strongly agree).
- Cultural and linguistic resources are found useful (2007 90% ‘yes’; 2004 83% ‘yes’).

Regarding Medi-Cal, you said that it’s a necessary program for the low income segment of our community. Many of you went on to say that Medi-Cal is *good here*, where it’s administered by the Alliance; that the Alliance is the health plan that makes Medi-Cal easier. Our Medi-Cal program works and the payment may also be higher than you think. Have you heard that we pay approximately 100% of local Medicare, or an average of 150% of Medi-Cal, inclusive of incentive payments?

Those who participated in the survey want everyone to know that:

- The Alliance has the highest ratings of preventative care of any Medi-Cal plan in state.
- The Alliance has the 2nd lowest administrative costs of similarly sized plans in state.
- The Alliance pays providers 130% of Santa Clara Medicare rates for its Healthy Families Program.

Provider Recruiting: The Alliance is continuing to recruit providers in both Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties to further expand our provider base with more PCPs and specialists. An increased provider network will better serve our members and enable contracted providers to carry the patient load in a more evenly distributed fashion. If you or a fellow physician are not currently contracted with the Alliance and would like to know more about the process, please contact the Provider Services department at (831) 430-5500.

Introducing Your Provider Services Representative

In order to assist our providers in the most efficient and effective manner, the Provider Services Department has reorganized some of the Representative's service areas. Please see below for an outline of the four regions and a brief profile of the Provider Services Representatives serving Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties.

Michelle Teachout



Michelle serves providers in South Santa Cruz, Watsonville and Freedom. She is located in the Scotts Valley office and can be reached at **(831) 430-5534** or mteachout@ccah-alliance.org. Michelle brings a lot of sales and project management experience to this

position. She's spent the last several years working as a realtor at Century 21. Prior to that, she worked as a manufacturer's rep and project administrator/designer in the interior architecture field for ten years. In her spare time Michelle enjoys traveling, reading, yoga, spending time with family and friends.

Steveynn Hendricks

Steveynn is responsible for providers in Aptos, Soquel, Capitola, Santa Cruz, and all areas between Scotts Valley and Boulder Creek. She is located in the Scotts Valley office and can be reached at **(831) 430-5538** or shendricks@ccah-alliance.org. Steveynn began working for the Alliance in the Provider Services Department in October of 2006. After moving back to her home town of Santa Cruz from San Diego in 2005, she worked as the Recruitment Specialist at Watsonville Community Hospital. In her spare time, Steveynn enjoys traveling, hiking, camping, cooking, painting, and reading.



Gabriella Calderon

Gabriella is the Representative for providers in South Salinas, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, and King City. She can be reached at the Salinas office at **(831) 755-8220 x 6763** or at

the Scotts Valley office at **(831) 430-5536** or gcalderon@ccah-alliance.org. Gabriella started out with the Alliance in 1999, when she began as a Member Services Representative. She was then promoted to Provider Services Representative, a position that she has held for the last five years. Gabriella enjoys working for Central Coast Alliance for Health because the organization truly cares for its community of Providers and Members. Her favorite pastime is shopping, which she finds very therapeutic. She also enjoys running, decorating, baking, sewing, reading, and gardening.

Theresa Garcia

Theresa covers providers in North Salinas, Big Sur, Carmel, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Seaside, and Marina. She can be reached at the Salinas office at **(831) 755-8220 x 6770** or at the Scotts Valley office at **(831) 430-5535** or tgarcia@ccah-alliance.org.



Theresa has been a Provider Services Representative for eight years. She initially began with the Alliance in Member Services as the Department Secretary, and then worked as a Member Services Representative before being promoted to Provider Services Representative. Prior to that, Theresa worked for AT&T as a Sales Manager and Trainer. When she's not busy looking for properties to purchase in other states, Theresa enjoys long bike rides, gardening, and home improvement projects.

Health Programs Update

Weight Watchers Scholarships Available

Since June 2003, the Alliance has been conducting a program to provide vouchers for selected members to attend Weight Watchers. This limited program will test the efficacy of Weight Watchers for members needing more ongoing support for medically necessary weight loss.

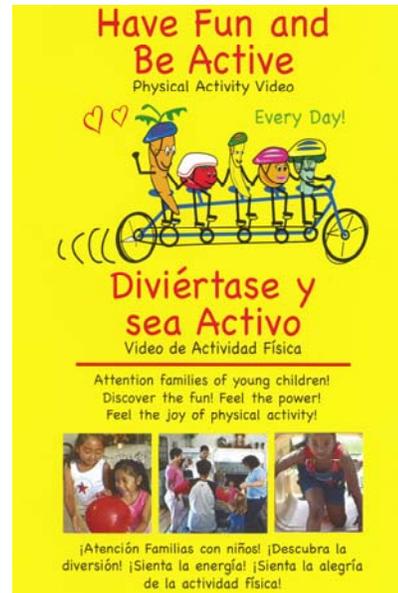
Eligibility

- The Alliance has a very limited number of scholarships available. Please note that weight management is not an Alliance benefit or Medi-Cal benefit guaranteed to all members.
- The Health Programs Coordinator will select members on a case-by-case basis.
- Members with significant obesity-related morbidity and a commitment to sustained lifestyle change will be highest priority.
- Members preparing for bariatric surgery are not eligible
- Members must demonstrate motivation to participate fully in this self-directed program.
- Weight Watchers does not accept patients with anorexia/bulimia, pregnant women, or children under ten years old. Adolescents must have a doctor's letter stating their weight goal and ability to participate in the program.

Referral Process

- Primary care physician may call Bernadette Hernandez, Health Programs Coordinator at 831-430-5558 for the Weight Watchers referral form.
- Referring physician agrees to follow patient for medical supervision of weight loss.

For more information, please call Bernadette Hernandez, Health Programs Coordinator, at 831-430-5558.



Free Resources & Training: Healthy Lifestyles for Kids

The Healthy Lifestyles for Kids project is designed to combat the rising epidemic of pediatric obesity by training local providers and their staff in standardized practices to identify, treat and appropriately refer children who are at 85% BMI. Based on successful models developed in other communities, this project aims to institutionalize a more coordinated, effective standard of care for overweight children.

The trainings are open to providers and their entire staff. We will be providing each office with various materials, including **community resources, DVDs, jump ropes, educational material, BMI wheels, and more** to share with their patients. Two large group trainings will be scheduled; however, we can also hold individual trainings at provider offices or clinics if this makes it more convenient for the majority of staff to attend. If you are interested in participating in an upcoming group training or if you would like to schedule an in-office training, please call Bernadette Hernandez, Health Programs Coordinator, at 831-430-5558.

Cultural Crossroads

Tips and Resources to Help You Communicate Better with Alliance Members

Have You Had a Similar Conversation with Your Patient?



(Adapted with permission from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Minority Health.)

“Good morning, Mrs. Williams. How are you feeling?” The patient responded with a shoulder shrug and a forced smile. “Have you thought any more about what we talked about last time you were here? I really think that we need to admit you to the hospital and make sure we know what’s going on with your diabetes. We can get your insulin regulated and work on the right meal plan and medications for your weight and heart disease.” Mrs. Williams shrugged and winced, while Dr. Brown turned and flipped through her chart. “Again, I’ll tell you the gravity of this situation, Mrs. Williams. Your diabetes is very serious business. The fact that you’ve had so many symptoms—dizziness, possible vision impairment, a bladder infection, and pain and burning in your other foot, not to mention your heart disease—is bad news. The sooner we find out what is going on, the faster we can get you the treatment you need.”

“But Doctor,” Mrs. Williams said, “when I was in Arizona, every day the people said that I seemed better, and I do feel better...” Dr. Brown interrupted. “I’m sure that you feel better, but that still does not change the fact that we need to act. Your condition can’t be cured with herb teas. Those things might make you feel a bit more

relaxed, but they’re not going to manage your diabetes or obesity. The people at the hospital know how to treat these types of things. They can do the necessary tests and then we’ll know.”

Dr. Brown looked up from the chart to see Mrs. Williams’s eyes welling with tears. Then she blurted out while choking back sobs, “I don’t want the hospital. I’m not going there. They act like you are not even a person and make you sit and sit and only talk to each other. When my husband went in to the hospital, they talked and talked of illness, then he got sick and never came back out. The only time I ever went to the hospital, they took my leg! They don’t like us there. I’m not going to die in a closed room that smells like sickness. The people in the desert, they taught me how to take care of myself—how to make myself well—and you just want me to go to the hospital to die! I don’t want the hospital. I gathered my herbs, and I made my own tea; I ate traditional food. My family was with me, we prayed, and I wasn’t afraid. I was at peace. And now, again, you talk about the hospital. I don’t want to die there.”

Dr. Brown closed the chart and sat down. Mrs. Williams really believed that her traditional medicine would cure her and that the hospital would kill her. How could that be? But she had kept her appointment to see him. He was at a loss about what to do next.

Free Online CME

For useful information to help you turn these types of challenging conversations into successful interactions with your patients, take the free online CME course titled “**A Physician’s Practical Guide to Culturally Competent Care.**” The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Minority Health, is currently offering this course and **9 hours of free Category I CME.** Get started at <https://cccm.thinkculturalhealth.org> or call Lynn Meier, Senior Health Educator at (831) 430-5570 for more information.

Page	In This Issue
1	Message from Alan McKay
1	Have you registered your NPI with the Alliance?
2	New Alliance Providers
2	Alliance Web Based Services
3	Tamper Resistant Rx Pads
3	Updates! New Coming Attractions!
3	Formulary Change
4	2007 Provider Survey Results
5	Introducing Your Provider Services Representative
6	Health Programs Update Weight Watchers Scholarships Available Healthy Lifestyles for Kids
7	Cultural Crossroads Have You Had a Similar Conversation with Your Patient?

Changing your address, Medi-Cal # or Tax ID #?
Please let us know as soon as possible to prevent a delay in payment. If your Tax ID changes, please submit a completed W-9 to the Provider Services Department.

Upcoming Meetings

Managed Medical Care Commission Meetings
 March 26, 2008 April 23, 2008
 May 28, 2008

All Managed Medical Care Commission meetings are open to the public. Contact Adrienne Goldsworth at (831) 430-5602 for meeting location or cancellation information.

Physicians Advisory Group
 June 4, 2008, Green Valley Grill, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Santa Cruz County Member Services Advisory Group
 May 19, 2008, Watsonville Community Hospital, 10 am-12 pm

Monterey County Member Services Advisory Group
 June 11, 2008, Alliance Salinas Office; 12 pm-1:30 pm

Alliance Holiday Office Hours – Central Coast Alliance for Health will be closed to observe the following holiday:
 Memorial Day - May 26, 2008

Mail! ing Address Li ne 1
 Mail! ing Address Li ne 2
 Mail! ing Address Li ne 3
 Mail! ing Address Li ne 4
 Mail! ing Address Li ne 5

