

# Provider Bulletin

## Alliance Annual Report

### Alan McKay, CEO

There was good news at the Alliance in 2006, as well as significant challenges:



**2005 Risk Settlement.** In March 2006 the plan shared back over \$5.5M in FY 2005 incentive payments, making good on the plan's long-standing policy to reward primary care case management and specialists' referral acceptance. To support this result, the Alliance's board allocated reserve funds to offset Medi-Cal inflation that had not been funded by the State for more than four years. By investing in timely access, we reduce both medical cost and suffering. The plan will determine FY 2006 incentive payments by April 2007, including new quality based payments for primary care providers.

**Healthy Families Payments.** Surplus sharing in the Alliance's Healthy Families program was strong again for 2005, and the health plan continues to pay local, contracted physicians at 130% of Santa Clara County Medicare rates. The Alliance's Healthy Kids program in Santa Cruz County also uses these payment rates. Please encourage your Alliance HF/HK patients to stay enrolled, so their health care access and our payments will continue.

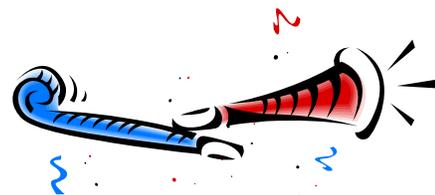
**Alliance Care IHSS Plan.** The Alliance's program covering qualified home care workers in the In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program in Monterey County pays physicians at 110% of Santa Clara County Medicare rates, and reduces

the number of local uninsured while strengthening community based care.

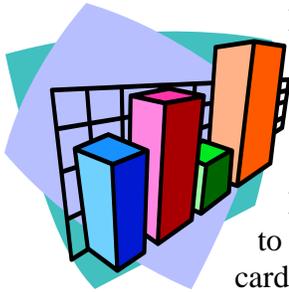
**State Medi-Cal Funding.** After more than four years of "frozen" State Medi-Cal revenue, the Alliance was allocated \$17M in State FY 06/07. While this is a positive step, medical inflation and State mandated costs are ongoing challenges. The plan is now in a critical State negotiation for sufficient revenue for our members' long term care needs. The Alliance can not subsidize inadequate State funding, so we are continuing our Medi-Cal revenue advocacy.

**Benchmarks in 2006.** The Alliance continues to operate as one of the most administratively efficient plans in the State, according to the CMA. The California Department of Health Services recognizes that the Alliance's HEDIS quality scores are among the highest of all State Medi-Cal plans. In e-commerce, the Alliance recently redesigned its website, and implemented a claims web search application for providers. The Alliance has partnered with both Monterey and Santa Cruz counties to outreach to residents who are eligible but not yet enrolled in Medi-Cal or Healthy Families, to get them signed up. The plan is also researching the option of providing Medicare benefits to its dually-eligible Medicare and Medi-Cal enrollees within a Medicare Advantage Special Needs Plan. With local successes and State-level challenges, the Alliance continues to move forward with its mission of local health care reform.

Best wishes for a prosperous and healthy 2007, from all of us at the Alliance!



## Measuring Health Care Quality



Last month, the California Department of Health Services released the 2006 (HEDIS) Quality Scores for Medi-Cal Health Plans. HEDIS scores can be likened to “health plan quality report cards.” The scores show how well the plan performs preventive care and care for individuals with chronic illness. The 35 California Medi-Cal Plans are required to report on 16 HEDIS measures, each assessing a different aspect of care. By comparing HEDIS scores, people can determine the strengths and weaknesses of care delivery between the plans.

### **What do the 2006 HEDIS scores show?**

Alliance HEDIS performance scores are among the strongest in the state.

Compared to Medicaid health plans nationally, the Alliance scores are:

- Above average in all 16 measures
- Above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile in 12 out of 16 measures
- Above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile in 6 out of 16 measures

### **Where is improvement needed?**



Though Alliance scores were strong overall, areas where improvements can be made include women’s health (cervical and breast cancer screening) and diabetes (HgA1C, LDL, and renal screening).

### **What do HEDIS results mean for your patients?**

Improved scores mean more patients are getting the care they need.

- Compared 1999, in 2005:
  - ✓ 1605 more diabetics had their annual eye exam
  - ✓ 1198 more infants had all 6 well baby visits
  - ✓ 1100 more toddlers are up to date on immunizations
  - ✓ 1091 more teens had an annual well visit
  - ✓ 405 more women had timely prenatal/postpartum care
- Compared to 2001, in 2005:
  - ✓ 850 more women were screened for cervical cancer
  - ✓ 460 more people with asthma are on controller meds
  - ✓ 160 more women screened for Chlamydia

### **What do HEDIS scores say about you?**

Strong HEDIS scores reflect the high quality of care provided by local physicians. An improved level of health care strengthens our community, and in this way benefits us all.

**The Alliance extends our ongoing appreciation to you and your staff for your commitment to excellence.**

*Thank You*

**Congratulations to the following  
physicians and clinics that scored  
above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for one  
or more HEDIS measures**

Vilma Aguas, MD  
James Brennan, MD  
Joe Gallagher, MD  
Rodolfo Garcia, MD  
Dominator Gines Jr., MD  
Stephen Halpern, MD  
Steven Harrison, MD  
Daniel Jardini, MD  
Elias Rodriguez, MD  
Josefa Simkin, MD  
Steven Smith, MD  
David Stark, MD  
Michael Suval, DO  
Roberto Tongson, MD  
Robert Weber, MD  
Acacia Family Medical Group  
Capitola Pediatrics  
Clinical De Salud Del Valle De Salinas  
Clinical Del Valle Del Pajaro  
Dominican Pediatric Clinic  
George Mee Memorial Clinic-Greenfield  
Gonzalez Medical Group  
Laurel Family Practice Health Clinic  
Laurel Internal Medicine Health Clinic  
Laurel Pediatric Health Clinic  
Mee Memorial Outpatient Clinic-King City  
Planned Parenthood-Westside  
Planned Parenthood-Watsonville  
Pediatric & Adolescent Medical Associates of the  
Pacific Coast  
Pediatric Medical Group of Watsonville  
Plazita Medical Clinic  
Romie Lane Pediatric Group  
Salinas Pediatric Medical Group  
Salud Para La Gente  
Santa Cruz County Health Clinic-Santa Cruz  
Santa Cruz County Health Clinic-Watsonville  
Santa Cruz Medical Foundation  
Santa Cruz Women's Health Center  
Seaside-Marina Health Clinics  
Soledad Medical Clinic  
Valle Verde Medical Group  
Western Medical Associates

**Acupuncture/Chiropractor  
Benefit Change**

Over the past 10 years, the Alliance has expanded benefits for our members over and above the benefits covered by the State Medi-Cal program. As a cost-saving measure, the Alliance will adhere to State regulations and discontinue allowing Chiropractic and Acupuncture services to be extended beyond two visits per month effective January 1, 2007. **For dates of service on or after January 1, 2007, Treatment Authorization Requests for additional chiropractic or acupuncture services will be denied as non-covered benefits.** PCPs will no longer need to submit RAFs to Acupuncture or Chiropractic providers. Members have been notified of the change and are being advised to contact their primary care providers to coordinate care or adjust their treatment plan if necessary. If you have any questions about this policy change, please contact your Provider Services Representative.

**National Provider Identifier  
(NPI) Update:**

**Registering your NPI with Medi-Cal**

All Medi-Cal and Child Health & Disability Prevention Program providers can register their NPI with the California Department of Health Services (CDHS). On the Medi-Cal website ([www.medi-cal.ca.gov](http://www.medi-cal.ca.gov)) click the **NPI button** under "Provider Resources." Instructions are available for first time registrants under "NPI Overview." Providers may register their NPI with CDHS by clicking the **NPI Hard Copy Registration** button under "What's New." Early registration with the CDHS, as well as the Alliance, will ensure uninterrupted payment after the May 23, 2007 effective date.



*NPI Continued on Page 4*

## (NPI) Update – Continued

If you have already received your NPI number, please fax the **official notice** confirming your NPI number and your Taxonomy Code(s) to 831-430-5857. If you have not applied for your NPI number through the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services website at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/>, we recommend you do so at your earliest convenience. The following are ways to apply for your NPI:

- Submit an online application – please visit [www.nppes.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.nppes.cms.hhs.gov),
- Request a paper application on the above website; or
- Call (800) 465 – 3203 (TTY 800-692-2326).

## Language Labels for Patient Charts

Are your patient medical charts in compliance with Assembly Bill (AB) 800? AB 800 became effective January 1, 2006, and requires all health facilities and primary care clinics, except long-term care facilities meeting certain criteria, to include a patient's principal spoken language on the patient's health records. Last March the Alliance Provider Services Department began offering free patient chart labels for documenting each patient's preferred language to assist providers in complying with this new law. Call the Provider Services Department at 831-430-5540 to order your free language labels. PCPs receive a packet of labels to match the number of currently linked Alliance members. All other providers must indicate the number of labels needed for their Alliance patient charts. A template is also available upon request for making your own labels for non-Alliance patient charts.



## Reminders

- Please do not use the new HCFA 1500 form for submitting claims to the Alliance until further notice.
- Flu vaccine guidelines for Alliance members are available by going to [www.ccah-alliance.org](http://www.ccah-alliance.org) and clicking on "Providers."
- Provider Directories and Manuals are available on the Alliance website.
- Be sure to stay updated with State Medi-Cal changes by going monthly to [www.medi-cal.ca.gov](http://www.medi-cal.ca.gov) and clicking on "Provider Bulletins."

### Alliance Web Based Services

To access the Alliance web based services go to [www.ccah-alliance.org/webaccount](http://www.ccah-alliance.org/webaccount) and request a web account.

Web account services include access to eligibility verification, prescription history, medication contracts, and the ability to search the status of claims. Member information is available only for the assigned PCP and Emergency Departments who have web accounts.

## Holiday Closure

The Alliance will be closed on:

*Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>*



The Central Coast Alliance for Health  
Provider Services Department

*Wishes you  
A Joyous Holiday Season  
and a  
Happy New Year*



Front Row: Angelique Milhouse, PS Manager; Theresa Garcia, PS Representative; Mary Bahni, PS Coordinator; Laurie Hester, Senior PS Representative.

Center Row: Karina Smith, PS Department Clerk; Steveyann Hendricks, PS Representative; Lynn Wenzel, Contract and Credentialing Specialist; Leticia Arano, PS Analyst; Gabriella Calderon, PS Representative; Lorraine Grunberger, Credentialing Assistant.

Back Row: Kathy Flournoy, PS Report Specialist; Anna Berens, PS Director.

## New Chronic Disease Case Manager

Meet Courtney Ross, our new Alliance Chronic Disease Case Manager!



Our Board created this position in 2005 to assist providers with case management of members with asthma and diabetes. The objective is to improve long-term outcomes through better disease management.

Members are identified through claims, referrals, and emergency room visits and then contacted by mail or phone with self-management suggestions and tools.

Courtney encourages members to:

- Visit their primary care provider
- Become more active in self-management of their condition
- Attend asthma or diabetes management education

Courtney also calls provider offices to assist members in getting follow-up appointments for asthma or diabetes. Courtney works closely with community agencies such as the Breathe California Central Coast (formerly the American Lung Association) to make sure that members access appropriate resources. Your office may be hearing from Courtney soon!

For more information, contact Courtney Ross at 831-430-5575.

## Diabetes Self- Management Toolkit

The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) Medi-Cal Managed Care Division has released a provider toolkit for Diabetes Self-Management. The complete kit is now posted on our website at:

[www.ccah-alliance.org/diabetestoolkit.html](http://www.ccah-alliance.org/diabetestoolkit.html)

The kit includes tools such as a “Shoes and Socks – Take ‘Em Off” poster in English and Spanish for your exam room and cultural tips for working with specific patient populations.

There is also a series of easy-to-read patient handouts available in both English and Spanish. Topics covered include blood sugar, know your numbers, medicines, insulin, healthy eating, getting past denial, foot care, stress, depression, and managing anger.

To request a hard copy of the toolkit, call 831-430-5570.

## Free BMI Calculators

The California Medical Association is promoting the use of Body Mass Index (BMI)



as a “vital sign” that should be measured at every office visit for every patient.

The Alliance is currently offering BMI calculators provided free to us by Pfizer. The sturdy plastic wheel features a magnetic back for easy mounting. While supplies last, providers may order one for each exam room or clinician. Other resources to help manage obesity in a primary care setting are also available. Call the Senior Health Educator at 831-430-5570.

# Cultural Crossroads

*Tips and resources to help you communicate better with Alliance members*

## Alliance Member Needs Assessment Reports Available

The Alliance has completed a comprehensive assessment of the cultural, linguistic, and health education needs of our Medi-Cal members. Our goal is to improve the health status of plan

members and reduce health disparities among different member populations.

Each subpopulation studied expressed specific cultural values and needs, as reported in previous Cultural Crossroads issues. However, several key themes emerged across all ethnic groups and every disability population interviewed for this assessment:

- Navigating the complex health care system is challenging and often a barrier.
- Many patients feel that there is not enough time with the doctor in visits.
- There is a shortage of primary care providers and specialists who can meet specific needs.
- A good personal relationship with the doctor is crucial.
- Distrust of the medical system is common in many minority groups due to personal and historic experiences of discrimination.

The complete needs assessment report and several focus group reports are now available online. On the Providers page of the Alliance website, go to Cultural Competence and Health Literacy Tools ([www.ccah-alliance.org/otherresources.html](http://www.ccah-alliance.org/otherresources.html)).

Links to the reports are at the bottom of the page.

## Identifying Cultural Beliefs

The **DIVERSE** mnemonic is an assessment tool for exploring cultural health beliefs. Developing a care plan that is culturally acceptable to your patient will increase compliance. Contact Isleen Glatt, Senior Health Educator, at 831-430-5570 to request a DIVERSE chart that includes sample questions for each area.

- D Demographics** – Explore regional background, level of acculturation, age and sex as they influence health behavior.
- I Ideas** – Ask patient to explain his/her concepts of health and illness.
- V Views** – Ask about treatment preferences/avoidance and use of home remedies.
- E Expectations** – Ask what your patient expects from a doctor.
- R Religion** – Ask about religious and spiritual traditions.
- S Speech** – Identify patient's language needs, including reading skills.
- E Environment** – Assess patient's home environment, including cultural/diversity aspects, family, support system, independence, daily schedule, etc.

*Adapted from: Better Communication, Better Care: Provider Tools to Care for Diverse Populations, ICE Cultural and Linguistics Workgroup, 2004. The complete toolkit is available at: [www.ccah-alliance.org/icetoolkit.html](http://www.ccah-alliance.org/icetoolkit.html)*

*"In order for us to be healthier, I think that we need to be listened to. I want [my providers] to sit down and understand where I'm coming from. They need to know a little bit about me in order to know how to treat me—more communication."*

African American focus group

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Meeting agenda packets for Santa Cruz-Monterey Managed Medical Care Commission are available on the Alliance website at [www.ccah-alliance.org/boardmeeting](http://www.ccah-alliance.org/boardmeeting).

**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 Meeting**  
January 24, 2007                      March 28, 2007  
February 28, 2007

All Managed Medical Care Commission meetings are open to the public and are held at the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust from 4-6 pm. Contact Gabriela Carvalho at (831) 430-5602 for meeting information

**Physician's Advisory Group**  
February 28, 2007, TBA, 6:30-8:30 pm

**Quality Management Group**  
January 17, 2007, Green Valley Grill, 6:30-8:30 pm  
April 17, 2007 (Possibly Virtual), 6-30-8:30 pm

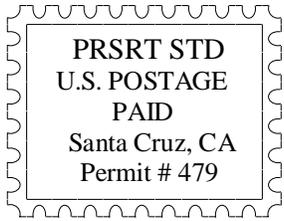
**Santa Cruz County Member Services Advisory Group**  
February 26, 2007, Alliance office – Scotts Valley, 10 am-2 pm

**Monterey County Member Services Advisory Group**  
TBA, Alliance Salinas Office; TBA

**Alliance Holiday Office Hours**  
Central Coast Alliance for Health will be closed to observe the following Holidays:  
New Year's Day - January 1, 2007  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day - January 15, 2007  
President's Day - February 19



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