

Regular Meeting of the

## **Santa Clara County Health Authority Cal MediConnect Consumer Advisory Board**

Thursday, March 4, 2021 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Santa Clara Family Health Plan – via Zoom

6201 San Ignacio Ave., San Jose, CA 95119

## **MINUTES - Approved**

### **Members Present**

Laurie Nakahira, DO, Chief Medical Officer, Chair  
Luis Gova Gonzalez  
Tiffany Huyenh-Cho, Ombudsman, Staff Attorney,  
Bay Area Legal Aid  
Narendra Pathak

### **Members Absent**

Charles Hanks  
Verna Sarte  
Dennis Schneider

### **Staff Present**

Laura Watkins, Vice President, Marketing and  
Enrollment  
Chelsea Byom, Director, Marketing and  
Communications  
Dang Huynh, Director, Pharmacy and Utilization  
Management  
Johanna Liu, Director, Quality and Process  
Improvement  
Lucille Baxter, Manager, Quality and Health  
Education  
Mike Gonzalez, Manager, Community Resource  
Center  
Thien Ly, Manager, Medicare Outreach  
Theresa Zhang, Manager, Communications  
Byron Lu, Process Improvement Project Manager  
Lynette Topacio, Marketing Project Manager  
Zara Hernandez, Health Educator  
Amy O'Brien, Administrative Assistant

### **Others Present**

Padmaja Vasireddy, American Heart Association

### **1. Roll Call**

Dr. Laurie Nakahira, Chief Medical Officer and Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m., roll call was taken, and a quorum was established.

### **2. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

### **3. Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the December 3, 2020 Cal MediConnect Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) meeting were reviewed.

#### **4. Health Plan Update**

Dr. Laurie Nakahira, Chair and Chief Medical Officer, presented the enrollment update. The Plan's Cal MediConnect membership continues to grow. As of February 2021, the Plan has 9,893 Cal MediConnect members, an increase of approximately 90 members since January 2021. Compared to February 2020, Cal MediConnect membership has increased by approximately 400 members. This is attributable partially to the Medicare Outreach team's efforts to enroll member and to the pause on Medi-Cal disenrollment due to COVID-19. Dr. Nakahira advised the Advisory Board of the upcoming Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) audits March 8 through March 9, 2021. Dr. Nakahira stated that these are routine oversight audits.

#### **5. Discussion Items**

##### **a. COVID-19 Update**

Dr. Nakahira said that Santa Clara County has now progressed to the Red tier status. SCFHP encourages all members to get COVID vaccinations. Dr. Nakahira discussed the types of vaccines on the market. There are three vaccines available at this time, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines each require 2 shots, and the Johnson and Johnson vaccine which requires only 1 shot. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) have no preference among the three vaccines. The single shot Johnson and Johnson vaccine is recommended for individuals 18 years of age and older. The efficacy rate is approximately 66.3%, and studies have shown it decreases the severity of the illness in those who contract COVID.

Mr. Pathak asked if children and teens 18 years of age and under are eligible for vaccination. Dr. Nakahira responded that two of the vaccines are safe and effective for individuals 18 years of age and older. Pfizer is the only vaccine approved for individuals 16 years of age and older. Further studies are needed on the Moderna and Johnson and Johnson vaccines in order for the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to approve these vaccines for use on children and teens. Dr. Nakahira explained that the objective of "herd immunity" is to achieve a high enough level of vaccinated individuals within communities to decrease the risk of unvaccinated children and teens contracting COVID. Mr. Pathak inquired about the travel requirements for fully vaccinated individuals. Dr. Nakahira replied that travel recommendations have not been issued yet. Nevertheless, masking, social distancing, and regular hand washing are still recommended. The CDC is unclear as to whether or not fully vaccinated individuals can still be asymptomatic carriers who may transmit the virus to unvaccinated individuals. Mr. Gova Gonzalez advised that, even though he is eligible, he declines vaccination at this time. Dr. Nakahira asked him to discuss his concerns in regards to the safety of the vaccine. Mr. Gova Gonzalez advised that he is uncomfortable with the risk of death as a result of vaccination. Dr. Nakahira responded that these deaths are under investigation, and she believes that the death rate as a result of vaccination is very low. Dr. Nakahira asked if it would change his mind if, hypothetically, the death rate was found to be 1 person in 1 million, or it was determined that there is a high number of people with no adverse effects. Mr. Gova Gonzalez stated that, at this time, he chooses not to become vaccinated.

##### **b. Vaccine Outreach**

Chelsea Byom, Director, Marketing & Communications, presented the Advisory Board with an update on the Plan's key messages on COVID-19. Ms. Byom reminded the Advisory Board that SCFHP offers transportation services to and from vaccine appointments at no cost to members. Ms. Byom highlighted all the strategies the Plan has in place for COVID vaccine member outreach. The Plan continues to adapt and align their strategies with the Santa Clara County Public Health Department and the vaccine supply available in Santa Clara County. Mr. Gova Gonzalez asked if the Plan has any flyers available as handouts he can pass out within his community. Ms. Byom confirmed that Marketing will mail him a supply of flyers, and she thanked him in advance for his efforts.

## 6. Standing Items

### a. Community Resource Center (CRC)

Mike Gonzalez, Manager, Community Resource Center, presented the Advisory Board with an update on the CRC. Mr. Gonzalez highlighted the work in progress over the next few months to ensure the CRC is operational and will meet the needs of our members' and community residents. Mr. Gonzalez defined the Plan's key populations, and he discussed the mission of the CRC. Mr. Gonzalez outlined the goals of the CRC Strategic Planning process. During this strategic planning process, the CRC will have a phased opening following strict COVID guidelines. In-person services will be limited; however, virtual programming services via Zoom and social media will be available. Health and wellness classes will be offered in English and Spanish, and classes in other threshold languages will be offered in the future.

Mr. Gova Gonzalez advised that there appears to be no signage at the CRC location. Mr. Gonzalez responded that the CRC is in the same building as the old Hometown Buffet. Proper signage is in the works and should be visible within the next several weeks. The CRC is located in the courtyard between Target and Ross. Ms. Watkins clarified that the doors to the CRC are currently locked as the center is not yet open to the public during COVID.

Mr. Pathak asked if services will be offered in languages other than English and Spanish. Mr. Gonzalez affirmed that multiple cultures and languages will be represented at the CRC. The three most commonly spoken languages in the center's location are English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Mr. Pathak also inquired about the target opening date, and whether or not transportation services will be offered. Mr. Gonzalez responded that the opening date is largely dependent upon our progress with COVID and the lifting of COVID restrictions. Mr. Gonzalez advised the Plan is building a communication plan to engage members via virtual tools. As more and more people become vaccinated and we progress through less restrictive tiers, more in-person services will become available. Mr. Gonzalez welcomes the committee's input.

### b. Member Communications

Theresa Zhang, Manager, Communications, gave an overview of the member communications completed since the December 2020 CAB meeting. Mailings included the winter newsletter, which was mailed out at the end of January, with a reminder to begin 2021 with a wellness check. The newsletter included instructional infographics with topics such as when to begin key screenings, the importance of the flu shot, when to seek urgent care versus emergency care, and a reminder that the Plan's 24/7 nurse advice line is available for members. The newsletter contained articles on anti-depressants, asthma medications, sleep, taking care of your heart, and how to sign up for the American Heart Association's Healthy Hearts program. Additional articles provided information on Alzheimer's disease, fall prevention, appointing a representative, and setting up an Advance Directive. The Plan sent two postcards requesting member participation in a quality survey. The Plan continues to mail out COVID vaccination information. Outreach to our vulnerable, high risk members to check in on their welfare and to help with vaccine appointments is still in progress. Ms. Zhang highlighted the SCFHP website which is updated with meeting materials, member materials such as the Formulary, Provider Directory, and newsletters, Coronavirus information, and a dedicated flu webpage to find flu shots near you. Ms. Zhang continued with a list of the events to which the Plan sent outreach materials since our December 2020 meeting. The Plan has not attended any events in person during the COVID restrictions.

### c. Health Education and Cultural Linguistics – Presentation by American Heart Association (AHA)

Dr. Nakahira introduced Padmaja Vasireddy from the AHA. Ms. Vasireddy gave a presentation to the Advisory Board on the mission of the AHA, with an overview of the Healthy Hearts initiative. The Healthy Hearts program is in its 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, and the program was expanded to include East San Jose. Ms. Vasireddy shared the strategies and goals of the Healthy Hearts initiative as well as the target audience. Ms. Vasireddy explained the elements and objectives of the Check.Change.Control program and how to register

for the program. All instructors are certified and licensed within their respective specialties. Currently, the programs are offered virtually, but will return to in person workshops post-COVID. Last year, the AHA also began free A1c screenings at various locations. Ms. Vasireddy shared the testimonials of former participants in the Healthy Hearts program.

Mr. Pathak asked how SCFHP members register for this program. Ms. Vasireddy directed Mr. Pathak to Zara Hernandez, SCFHP Health Educator, for registration assistance, or he can email Ms. Vasireddy for the registration link. Ms. Vasireddy reiterated this is a 4 month series of workshops and all 8 webinars must be attended. Mr. Pathak asked if this program is funded by El Camino Hospital, and Ms. Vasireddy affirmed this is the case. Mr. Gova Gonzalez also requested the registration link.

Dr. Nakahira advised members of the CAB that in January 2021, SCFHP called all Cal MediConnect and Medi-Cal members with high blood pressure to enroll them in the Healthy Hearts program. No Cal MediConnect members chose to enroll at that time. Ms. Baxter added that she and Mike Gonzalez are in discussion with Ms. Vasireddy as to potential sponsorship of this program by SCFHP.

Mr. Pathak inquired about stroke recovery programs, and Ms. Vasireddy replied that she will connect him with resources; however, stroke recovery is not a focus of the program. Stress management and cardiovascular health is addressed in one of their webinars. Dr. Nakahira shared that maintaining healthy blood pressure is the number one stroke prevention method.

#### **d. Cal MediConnect Ombudsman Program Updates**

Tiffany Huyenh-Cho, Ombudsman, Staff Attorney with Bay Area Legal Aid, introduced herself and gave an overview of the services offered by Bay Area Legal Aid. Their services are free and offered in the various threshold languages. Services are offered to dual eligible Cal MediConnect members, as well as Medi-Cal members. The pause on Medi-Cal redeterminations continues during COVID. Medi-Cal coverage will not be terminated during the pandemic, even if an individual no longer qualifies for Medi-Cal. At this time, Bay Area Legal Aid is focusing on educating callers and service providers as to the redetermination process and assisting individuals with completing their Medi-Cal renewal packets. Lately, Bay Area Legal Aid is receiving several calls from individuals whose surgeries are being delayed. It appears this is mostly due to a backlog in surgery appointments due to the pause on non-emergency surgeries. Bay Area Legal Aid continues to provide concerned individuals with assistance to help expedite and schedule these surgeries.

Mr. Gova Gonzalez asked how he can make an appointment to speak to an attorney. Ms. Huyenh-Cho responded that, due to the pandemic, walk-in service is not available; however, individuals are welcome to call the hotline to connect with an attorney. Ms. Huyenh-Cho provided the hotline number to the committee. Ms. Huyenh-Cho advised their services are focused on equitable access to health services and health insurance. Services do not include issues of medical malpractice, as they do not have that expertise.

#### **e. Future Agenda Items**

Dr. Nakahira solicited ideas from committee members for future agenda items. Mr. Pathak suggested additional information about the COVID vaccines as a valuable topic. Of particular interest is feedback from members who experienced complications of the COVID vaccine. Mr. Pathak also suggested recognition for Mr. Subramanian for his years of service as a CAB member.

Mr. Gova Gonzalez expressed concern with his experience with a procedure at Stanford. Dr. Nakahira responded that SCFHP is currently working to resolve this issue through our Grievances and Appeals department. Dr. Nakahira attempted to contact Mr. Gova Gonzalez to discuss the Plan's mitigation efforts; however, she was unable to reach him. Dr. Nakahira reminded committee members that this meeting is a matter of public record, so it is inadvisable to discuss personal health details. Ms. Watkins recommended that, in the future, members should call SCFHP immediately to discuss their concerns, and not wait for the quarterly CAB meeting, so SCFHP can best assist. Dr. Nakahira advised she will contact Mr. Gova Gonzalez after the meeting and connect him with our Grievances and Appeals department. Dr. Nakahira advised she believes the matter in question is in the resolution stage. Mr. Pathak agrees that privacy and confidentiality

during this meeting is paramount. Guidelines for what is considered appropriate for discussion during this meeting should be established.

**7. Member Feedback and Experience**

This item was not discussed.

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m. The next Cal MediConnect Consumer Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 3, 2021 at 11:30 a.m.

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Laurie Nakahira, DO, Chairperson  
Cal MediConnect Consumer Advisory Board