

California health plans are helping to drive better, more equitable health outcomes by building tools that increase and improve access to quality and affordable, culturally competent care.

Health plans are implementing programs and initiatives for our most vulnerable members to help them lead healthier lives. These efforts include:

- **partnering with local community organizations**
- **culturally competent care**
- **targeting systemic inequities**

Health plans are implementing new practices to better deliver culturally competent care through physician training, translation services to reduce language barriers, and partnering with providers and organizations in targeted communities.

Culturally competent care is “care that respects diversity in the patient population and cultural factors that can affect health and health care, such as language, communication styles, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.” Culturally competent care recognizes the experiences of marginalized and underserved communities, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, language, gender, religion, immigration status, housing status, disability, sexuality, and more.

Partnering with local community organizations to connect their communities with needed health care resources.

- Uplifting community partners that engage low-income and communities of color by providing 1:1 matching for contributions.
- Working with mySidewalk to design a Neighborhood Dashboard to empower community organizations, health advocates, hospitals, physicians, public health officials, and policymakers to better understand the health of their neighborhoods, helping to identify and solve community-specific health inequities.
- Giving nearly \$2 million in grants to community organizations working in low-income, Asian American, Black, LGBT, and rural communities across the state to help enroll, retain and understand coverage needs for eligible Medi-Cal Members.

Implementing culturally competent care to ensure all Californians have access to and understanding of their health care needs.

- Opening Culturally Competent Care clinics with information available in numerous languages and Member Services call centers with staff fluent in over 140 languages.
- Addressing breast cancer diagnosis disparities among African American and Hispanic women by reducing barriers to mammogram screenings through increased culturally competent educational letters and telephone outreach, ultimately improving screening rates by nearly 30%.
- Providing real-time video interpretation services to help patients and their providers overcome communication barriers, helping patients better understand their health and treatment and leading to more successful outcomes.

- Publishing provider cultural competency trainings and digital tools online as a constant resource for providers.
- Ensuring accurate understanding of care and reducing the burden on limited English proficient families by providing interpreters and never asking a minor or family member to translate.
- Combatting health disparities experienced by African Americans, who are diagnosed with higher rates of stroke, hypertension-related heart disease, and end stage renal disease, through culturally competent mailings, member care calls, physician cultural competency training, and quarterly reporting to physicians to ultimately increase the percentage of members with clinically acceptable blood pressure by 36%.
- Increasing physician workforce diversity to better reflect the communities they serve.
- Those enrolled in Managed Care with English as their second language receive access to interpreters and documents in their preferred language.
- Identifying languages with increasing need of interpreter and translation services to meet the needs of growing populations.
- Developing online learning programs for healthcare providers and staff to engage stronger strategies and practices for the medical needs of LGBT patients.
- Improving culturally competent health care among Hmong families in Fresno County by working with members who may be utilizing Eastern medicine techniques. By identifying key Eastern medicine practitioners to collaborate on educational opportunities the program addressed cultural and language barriers between members and providers. Evaluation of this new approach will include monitoring of pharmacy data and patients on medication persistence within Asian populations in Fresno County.
- Establishing internal councils to govern and hold health plan equity standards accountable.

California's health plans are investing in communities experiencing health equity gaps by providing support to heal and rebuild from the impacts of inequity.

- One health plan is contributing \$25 million in grants to support efforts to end systemic racism, the trauma it leads to, and the impact on victims' health.
- Supporting doula services for low-income women and women of color, as well as increasing technical support for community-based birthwork programs.
- Markedly improving maternal and newborn health among African Americans through a collaborative, audience-focused training initiative. The program trained African American doulas to conduct prenatal visits and education on childbirth, labor, delivery, nutrition, lactation support, and childbirth classes, as well as provide three postpartum visits. While many mothers in the program are still in the midst of pregnancy, all births have completed without C-section.
- Elevating the role of doulas for pregnant women in order to measurably improve full-term births and breastfeeding initiation for women with a history of pre-term birth in Fresno County. The new program helped women not only deliver healthy babies in the midst of a pandemic, but also obtain more stable housing and contribute to long-term improved health.
- Coordinating data to assess health disparities among African American women in the Antelope Valley in order to identify barriers and strategies to reduce disparities. Working with local nonprofits and service agents, analysis and community assessment helped to target members, providers, and system level barriers for solutions. Programs, such as transportation for women and their dependent children to postpartum visits, were a result of these efforts. Later analysis found direct improvement with African American women postpartum compliance improving from 17% in 2014 to 33% in 2016 and 36% in 2017. The gap between African American members' and Caucasian members' compliance in the Antelope Valley was also reduced from 10% in 2015 to 6% in 2017.

- **Creating** a postpartum program in which mothers receive care from nurse practitioners in their homes, are screened for postpartum depression, and more. To implement this program in a way to address the disparity, the plan created a two-prong approach to address key barriers: 1) access to care, and 2) member engagement in their own care. By providing nurse practitioner care in patients' homes, access to care was increased. To further improve member engagement in their own care, gift cards were offered to assist engagement in their own care and reduce barriers, such as competing priorities, transportation, and perceptions of racism at the doctor's office. Gift cards were instrumental in reducing no-show rates in the first six months of the program. The program led to a 37% increase in African American women completing a postpartum visit between 2016 and 2017.
- **Pledging** \$50 million to national organizations leading the way to fight racial inequities, improve access for low-income communities, advocate for community involvement in policymaking, and more.

Reducing the impact of COVID-19 on California's most underserved families

- **Partnering** with the California Endowment and Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to host a COVID-19 Disparities Leadership Summit, which brought together dozens of health care and community leaders to identify innovative strategies to address the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Black and Latino communities. The Equity and Resilience Initiative was thus launched, offering financial support to community organizations fighting for health, social, and economic justice.
- **Partnering** with a Central Valley United Way chapter to provide support for community organizations financially impacted by COVID-19 in rural Tulare County.
- **Investing** \$25 million to provide support for up to one thousand new permanent housing units for formerly homeless Californians, targeting a critical link to ensuring health and stopping the spread of COVID-19.
- **Enabling** telemedicine and technology-enabled services for over 10,000 members through a \$123,000 grant.

- **Breaking** barriers to equitable health outcomes of COVID-19 by giving \$100,000 in support of testing for low-income and housing insecure communities.
- **Eliminating** barriers to telehealth that can lead to misdiagnosis, under-diagnosis, and inaccurate treatments by distributing low-cost telehealth home medical kits to high-risk members, which include wrist blood pressure monitors, digital thermometers, weight scales, hand sanitizer, and more.

Engaging with community organizations to deliver information and care to unhoused and housing-insecure populations.

- **Creating** programs to provide well-rounded and preventative coordinated care for home-insecure populations in the Central Valley. By utilizing data on disengaged members to identify potentially homeless populations receiving Managed Care, one plan then worked with local urgent care centers and churches to provide showers, clean clothing, toiletries, and meals, as well as health assessments, immunizations, and glucose screenings. Through this and ongoing outreach to this population, over 100 members received non-emergency care services, while nearly 100 more received one-on-one health education on medical conditions, and over a dozen more set up pathways for ongoing primary care.
- **Supplying** Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and counties with equipment to build school and homeless telehealth programs, helping students receive care from FQHC school-based health centers and dense areas of unhoused individuals.
- **Raising** nearly half a million dollars and providing nearly 16,000 meals to Californians in need.