

1600 Green Hills Road, Suite 101
Scotts Valley, CA 95066-4981
831-430-5500

950 East Blanco Road, Suite 101
Salinas, CA 93901-4487
831-755-6000

530 West 16th Street, Suite B
Merced, CA 95340-4710
209-381-5300



PROVIDER SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

2021 Provider Satisfaction Survey Executive Summary October 2021

Background

The Alliance conducts an annual Provider Satisfaction Survey (Survey) in order to assess contracted providers' overall satisfaction with core health plan operations. Annual results are used to inform future initiatives and educational opportunities for the provider network, and in conjunction with other health plan data, provide insight into where the Alliance can focus improvement efforts. Survey performance is shared with the Alliance Network Development Steering Committee (NDSC) and the Continuous Quality Improvement Workgroup-Interdisciplinary (CQIW-I), where results and future action are discussed.

The Alliance recognizes that provider focus in 2020 and 2021 was dedicated to managing the health and safety of patients and staff at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Results should be contemplated and will be discussed through the lens of the unique impacts to the health care system for these measurement years.

2021 Survey Methodology

In-area contracted Primary Care Providers (PCPs) and Specialists are surveyed. In 2021, and for the tenth consecutive year, the Alliance contracted with SPH Analytics to conduct the Survey, which is administered in Q2 and Q3 through mail, internet, and phone outreach (the 2021 survey was conducted between June and September). The 2021 Survey included 7 demographic questions, 12 standard questions, and 14 custom questions. The standard questions allow Alliance results to be benchmarked against SPH Analytics' Medicaid Book of Business (Medicaid BOB), including over 30,000 Medicaid respondents from across the country. Importantly, the Medicaid BOB comparison is to the year prior (meaning, our 2021 results are compared to the BOB 2020 results), which becomes particularly relevant when considering that both 2020 and 2021 data were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic. The additional custom questions provide feedback on provider satisfaction with Alliance cultural and linguistic programs, incentive programs, provider portal functionality, and timely access and community care coordination, such as the Nurse Advice Line (NAL), among other services. MY 2021 survey response rate information is detailed below in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey Responses

Category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Sample Size	1,445	1,239	1,356	1,028	1051
Provider Response Rate*	15%	20%	17%	18%	17%**
Group Response Rate	45%	50%	55%	45%	50%

*14% of PCP's responded in MY 2021, versus 19% of specialists.

** 35% of respondents were physicians in MY 2021 (rather than office managers), versus 43% in MY 2020.

2021 Survey Performance: Standard Questions

The Survey measures overall provider satisfaction with the Alliance, with the top two responses on a five-point scale indicating that a provider is satisfied. Of note, the MY 2021 overall satisfaction score was the highest yet recorded.

HEALTHY PEOPLE. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

www.thealliance.health

1600 Green Hills Road, Suite 101
Scotts Valley, CA 95066-4981
831-430-5500

950 East Blanco Road, Suite 101
Salinas, CA 93901-4487
831-755-6000

530 West 16th Street, Suite B
Merced, CA 95340-4710
209-381-5300



PROVIDER SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

Table 2: Overall Satisfaction with the Alliance

Provider Category	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
% of Alliance Providers Satisfied	82%	81%	84%	88%	87%	84%	89%

In 2021, the Alliance's overall satisfaction rate increased by 5 percentage points compared to the year prior. This performance change was determined to be significantly higher by SPH and remained significantly higher than the Medicaid BOB average comparative rating (as noted previously, the Medicaid BOB rating is for the 2020 survey year). 92% of PCPs responded they were satisfied with the Alliance, compared to 89% of specialists. Monterey and Merced County respondents reported the highest overall satisfaction at 91%, followed by Santa Cruz at 82%. Interestingly, Nurses, office staff, and office managers who responded that they were 94% satisfied, followed by physician respondents at 80%. Given that the majority of provider staff with whom the Alliance interacts on a daily basis are Office Managers and front-line office workers, these data reflect positively on the support our customer-facing staff provide.

The Survey also measures satisfaction with specified categories of core health plan operations. Within these composite categories, several questions on the subject "roll up" to provide an overall satisfaction rating for each category. While satisfaction with Alliance core health plan services has historically landed in the top quartile of SPH Analytics' Medicaid BOB respondents, MY 2021 rankings all fall at the 100th percentile with the exception of Network/Coordination of Care, which ranks at the 98th percentile. Notably, these are the highest comparative composite rankings achieved by the Alliance to date and represent a significant achievement in satisfaction with core health plan operations. These data and a comparison to MY 2020 Alliance summary ratings are outlined below in Table 3.

Table 3: Satisfaction by Category

Category	2020 Alliance Summary Rate	2020 Percentile* Ranking	2021 Alliance Summary Rate	2021 Percentile* Ranking
Alliance comparison with other health plans	59%	97th	67%	100th
Provider Relations	56%	94th	62%	100th
Call Center Staff	57%	96th	70%	100th
Utilization & Quality	58%	97th	65%	100th
Finance Issues (Claims Processing)	51%	98th	60%	100th
Network/ Coordination of Care	42%	94th	47%	98th
Pharmacy	37%	98th	47%	100th

When exploring the data in more detail and comparing the three counties, Santa Cruz County respondents are more satisfied with Finance Issues than Monterey and Merced County respondents. Santa Cruz and Monterey County respondents are more satisfied in Utilization/Quality Management than those in Merced County. Merced and Monterey County respondents are more satisfied in Network/Coordination of Care, Pharmacy and Call Center Staff than those in Santa Cruz County. Smaller practices continue to be more satisfied than those with 5 or more physicians on staff. These demographic data provide valuable insight into areas of opportunity to explore.

HEALTHY PEOPLE. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

www.thealliance.health

The Survey also measures provider loyalty, as represented by a combination of the reported satisfaction rating with the Alliance and the provider's likeliness to recommend the Alliance to another physician (Table 4). MY2021 data show no change in loyalty from 2020, and 1% of respondents have since essentially moved from defection to indifference. Despite having the lowest overall satisfaction score of 82%, 100% of Survey respondents in Santa Cruz County indicated that they would recommend the Alliance to other physicians, followed closely by 99% in Monterey and 98% in Merced County. While overall satisfaction increased significantly, loyalty remained static, which affirms the supposition that provider loyalty is driven by more complex factors than simply provider satisfaction.

Table 4: Provider Loyalty

Category	2019	2020	2021
Loyal	87%	91%	91%
Indifferent	11%	7%	8%
Defection	2%	2%	1%

2021 Survey Performance: Custom Questions

The 14 custom questions created by the Alliance measure provider satisfaction with the following composite categories of service:

- Provider Portal/Web Services
- Cultural and Linguistic (C&L) Services
- Timely Access to Services
- Incentive Programs (PCP Offices Only)
- Community Care Coordination (includes Nurse Advice Line)

SPH identified three significantly improved results (access to routine primary care, access to routine ancillary/ diagnostic treatment services, ease of navigating the provider portal) and three opportunities for improvement (access to urgent appointments, access to routine specialty services, satisfaction with the CCS program administered by the Alliance). Notable findings for each category are outlined in Table 5, below. Results for each of the custom questions that contribute to the composite analysis are found in the SPH Analytics 2021 Provider Satisfaction Survey Report, which can be made available for review as needed.

Table 5: Satisfaction with Alliance Services

Category	2021 Survey Findings
Provider Portal/ Web Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 89% of providers find the Portal very or somewhat easy to navigate. ➤ 18% of providers regularly utilize the Linked Member Reports in the Portal (22% of PCPs and 16% of specialists); 8% regularly utilize the Care Based Incentives Reports (24% of PCPs); and 4% regularly utilize the Quality Reports.
C&L Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 80% of providers are satisfied with telephonic interpreting services, and 79% are satisfied with coordination of appointments. ➤ 78% of providers are satisfied with face to face interpreting services, and 78% are satisfied with coordination of appointments. ➤ 73% of providers are satisfied with hearing impaired or speech assistance interpreting services. ➤ 80% of providers are satisfied with the Alliance Health Education telephone line.
Timely Access to Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 69% of respondents were satisfied with access to urgent appointments, 74% with access to routine primary care, 72% with access to routine specialty care, and 76% with access to routine ancillary diagnostic/treatment services.

1600 Green Hills Road, Suite 101
 Scotts Valley, CA 95066-4981
 831-430-5500

950 East Blanco Road, Suite 101
 Salinas, CA 93901-4487
 831-755-6000

530 West 16th Street, Suite B
 Merced, CA 95340-4710
 209-381-5300



PROVIDER SERVICES
 DEPARTMENT

Incentive Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 81% of respondents report that they are motivated by Alliance incentive programs to improve access to and quality of care. ➤ 41% of respondents report that they would like to see changes to the annual incentive budget. ➤ 67% of practices with more than 5 providers are motivated by the incentive program as compared to 87% with 2-5 providers and 100% of solo practices. ➤ 93% of practices in Merced County are motivated by the incentive program as compared to 83% in Santa Cruz and 60% in Monterey.
Community Care Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 60% of respondents indicated satisfaction with receiving follow-up information from Beacon. ➤ 40% of respondents know how to refer members to Community-Based Adult Services. ➤ 47% of respondents refer patients to the Alliance Nurse Advice Line . ➤ 71% of respondents that have used the Alliance's adult Complex Case Management program report satisfaction with it. ➤ 67% of respondents are satisfied with the CCS program administered by the Alliance.

Summary and Next Steps

The MY 2021 Survey data results are remarkable, with landmark highs in satisfaction when compared to prior years. There were significant increases in satisfaction with all areas of health plan operations and in some aspects of access to care. The data are especially remarkable when viewed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to have an immeasurable impact on the health care system. Variances in satisfaction between counties, provider types and office staff warrant additional consideration, and those providers for whom a decrease was noted may be candidates for targeted intervention and follow up.

Additionally, and as discussed in previous summaries relating to these data, Survey outcomes should be assessed as one of many inputs to measuring the effectiveness of health plan services and access to care. The 2021 outcomes will be assessed in partnership with other measures of access and quality, as well as member satisfaction, to gain a more holistic view of Alliance performance in 2021.

In future years, Provider Services will continue to pursue a more accelerated Survey administration timeline to ensure reporting of results within the measurement year if possible, and to then enable timely, focused interventions and analyses.

Note: Detailed survey results are available to Alliance staff upon request. Please contact Rachaelle Schultze, Provider Quality & Network Development Manager, with requests for supplemental data.