Investing in providers is key to quality of care

The year kicked off with the implementation of several large initiatives, including new populations of focus for Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports (ECM/CS), the addition of Mariposa and San Benito counties to our service areas, and the expansion of full-scope Medi-Cal for adults ages 26-49, regardless of immigration status.

The Alliance maintains an unwavering commitment to increase the availability, quality and access of health care services for our more than 456,000 members. Looking ahead, a key part of this work includes investing in our provider network through DHCS funding and our Medi-Cal Capacity Grant Program (MCGP).

Investments include:

- CalAIM Incentive Payment Program dollars to build capacity in our service areas for ECM/CS.

- MCGP Workforce Recruitment Program grants to support the hiring of new health care professionals, including Community Health Workers and medical assistants. These new benefits support members and are key positions that will improve access to care and alleviate provider shortages.

- MCGP grant funding for equity-based training for providers and new technology to improve member experience.

These are just a few examples of how the Alliance strategically invests to address the most pressing needs within our provider network and local communities. I encourage you to learn more about funding opportunities by visiting our website, **www.thealliance.health**.

Alliance providers are essential partners in our work toward health equity and person-centered delivery system transformation. Thank you for continuing to serve our members and improve lives in our communities.

Michael Schrader
Michael Schrader, CEO

Alliance Board Meetings
Wednesday, March 27, 2024
3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday, April 24, 2024 (Merced County)
10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 22, 2024
3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Physicians Advisory Group (PAG) Meeting
Thursday, June 6, 2024
Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Whole Child Model Clinical Advisory Committee (WCMCAC) Meetings
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Noon to 1 p.m.

Thursday, June 20, 2024
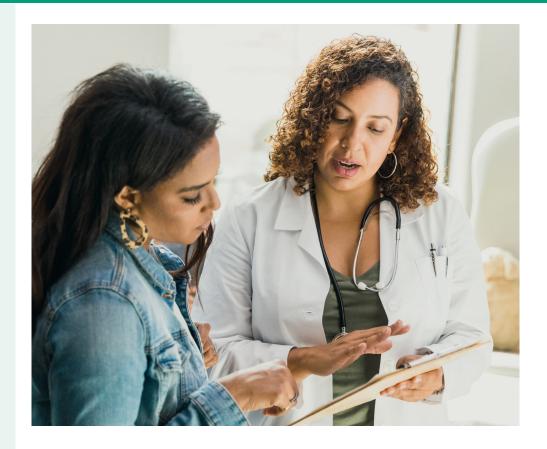Noon to 1 p.m.

Coming soon: New care management system

The Alliance is updating the Provider Portal to utilize a new care management system called Jiva. This shift in care management systems will facilitate improvements in the system of care for members, especially those with complex medical and social needs.

The Jiva platform offers improved tools to:

- Support population and individual care management.
- Promote more flexible reporting.
- Improve integration with other applications.
- Provide reliable software support.

We are committed to providing comprehensive support for providers through this transition. The Alliance will be providing webinars, training resources and an updated Provider Portal User Guide to ensure care teams are set up for success.

If you have questions, please call the Alliance's Care Management team at **800-700-3874, ext. 5512**.

Welcome, Mariposa and San Benito county providers!

The Alliance is proud to announce its expansion to serve the communities of Mariposa and San Benito counties, alongside our existing coverage in Merced, Monterey and Santa Cruz counties.

We look forward to nurturing strong provider partnerships in Mariposa and San Benito counties, and we are actively recruiting providers in the newly added regions to join our network. We are grateful to providers across all counties for your continued collaboration and commitment to delivering exceptional care.

Those who were previously Medi-Cal members automatically transitioned to the Alliance, effective Jan. 1. They should have received a welcome packet that included information on accessing care as an Alliance member. Residents interested in determining their eligibility for Medi-Cal should contact their local enrollment agency.

For more information about joining the Alliance network, visit **www.thealliance.health/for-providers/join-our-network** or call the Alliance's Provider Services department at **831-430-5504**.

Sign up to receive provider news and updates in one easy step! Visit **www.thealliance.health/provider-signup**.

HEALTHY PEOPLE. **HEALTHY** COMMUNITIES.

Doula recruitment funding available

The Alliance's Medi-Cal Capacity Grant Program (MCGP) makes funding available for doula workforce recruitment to provide critical support for this new type of provider in the Medi-Cal delivery system.

As of Jan. 1, 2023, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) added the Doula Services Benefit (**www.thealliance.health/doula-services-benefit**) as a new Medi-Cal benefit. Doulas are birth workers who provide health education and advocacy – as well as physical, emotional and non-medical support – to pregnant and postpartum women before, during and after childbirth. Doulas offer support in the form of health navigation, lactation support, birth plan development and connection to community-based resources.
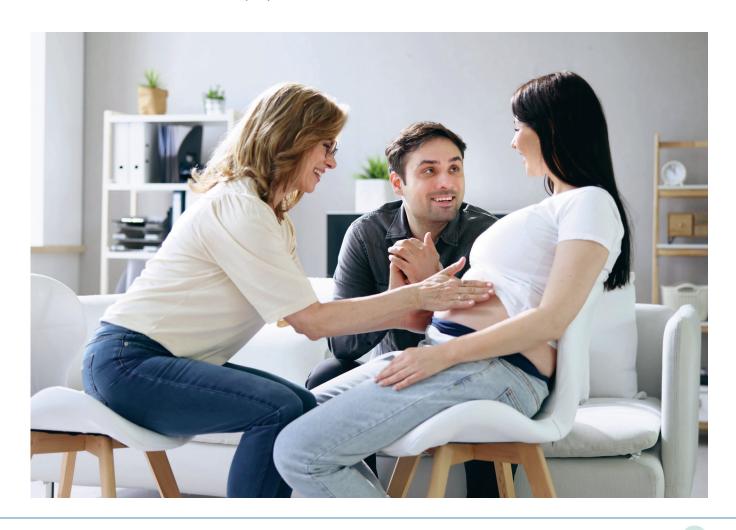
The Doula Recruitment grant provides up to $65,000 to individual doulas (sole proprietors), or to organizations hiring doulas, to cover recruitment and first-year costs of doulas who become credentialed with the Alliance to provide the Doula Services Benefit to the Medi-Cal population.

To learn more, visit the Doula Services Benefit webpage at **www.thealliance.health/doula-services-benefit**.

The next application deadline for all MCGP programs, including Doula Recruitment, is **April 16, 2024**. For more information, visit the Doula Recruitment Program webpage at **www.thealliance.health/workforce-recruitment-programs**.

For questions, please email the Alliance's Grant Program team at **grants@ccah-alliance.org**.

ECM/CS services launched in Mariposa and San Benito counties!

Enhanced Care Management (ECM) provides a whole-person approach to care that addresses the clinical and non-clinical circumstances of a high-need Medi-Cal managed care member. Community Supports (CS) are services or settings designed to address health-related social needs of members.

ECM services continue for previous populations of focus and expanded this year to include Birth Equity (Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander pregnant and postpartum individuals) and Adults & Youth transitioning from incarceration (post-release services only). Additionally, ECM/CS services were launched in Mariposa and San Benito counties Jan. 1, 2024.

Referring members to ECM/CS services

Providers are in a unique position to identify Alliance members' needs. The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) emphasizes how important it is for managed care plans like the Alliance to source most Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports (ECM/CS) referrals from community providers like you!

As part of California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM), ECM/CS services coordinate aspects of care for the highest-need Medi-Cal members and serve as cost-effective alternatives to covered Medi-Cal services.

Providers or requesting entities may refer members to ECM and CS services using one of the following methods.

Provider Portal referral

Registered providers can log in to the Alliance Provider Portal to submit, inquire about, cancel or add information to existing referrals at **provider.portal.ccah-alliance.org**.

Online referral on our website

All community entities can submit referrals for Enhanced Care Management or Community Supports by completing the appropriate form. The following list of forms can be found on the Alliance's ECM/CS referrals page at **www.thealliance.health/ecm-cs-referrals**.

ECM referrals
- Adult ECM Provider Referral Form (age 21 and over).
- Youth ECM Provider Referral Form (age 20 and under).

CS referrals
- Housing.
- Environmental Accessibility and Adaptability.
- Meals.
- Personal Care and Home Maker Services and Respite Services for Caregivers.

Phone
Refer a member to ECM/CS services by calling **831-430-5512**.

The Alliance offers no-cost language assistance services

The Alliance is committed to ensuring that our members have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate care. The Alliance offers a variety of language assistance services that our provider network can utilize, including:

Telephonic interpreting services
Alliance Providers may directly access a qualified telephonic interpreter 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please see our quick reference guide for instructions on how to utilize this service: **www.thealliance.health/interpreter-services-reference-guide**.

Face-to-face interpreting services
Providers may request a face-to-face interpreter for a member's appointment by completing a request and submitting by fax to **831-430-5850**. The form is available on our website at **www.thealliance.health/interpreter-request**. Prior approval is required.

HEALTHY PEOPLE. **HEALTHY** COMMUNITIES.

Submit a Treatment Authorization Request (TAR) form

Submit a TAR form to request services and attach appropriate documentation. TAR forms are available at **www.thealliance.health/Treatment-Authorization-Request** and may be submitted via email or fax.

- Email to **listecmteam@ccah-alliance.org**.
- Fax to **831-430-5819**.

To learn more about ECM/CS programs in Mariposa, Merced, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties, including how to refer Alliance members to ECM and CS, visit our ECM/CS provider page for providers at **www.thealliance.health/ecm-cs**.

ECM/CS Populations of Focus	Adults	Children and Youth
Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness: Adults without dependent children/youth who are living with them experiencing homelessness.	✓	
Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness: Homeless families or unaccompanied children/youth experiencing homelessness.	✓	✓
Individuals at risk for avoidable hospital or ED utilization (formerly "high utilizers").	✓	✓
Individuals with serious mental health and/or high substance use disorder (SUD) needs.	✓	✓
Individuals transitioning from incarceration.	✓	✓
Adults living in the community and at risk for long-term care (LTC) institutionalization.	✓	
Adult nursing facility residents transitioning into the community.	✓	

Full-scope Medi-Cal expands to ages 26-49

As of Jan. 1, 2024, full-scope Medi-Cal is now offered to adults ages 26 through 49, regardless of immigration status. This update makes Medi-Cal available to people of all ages who meet other eligibility rules.

Full-scope Medi-Cal covers services including:

- Medical care.
- Dental care.
- Emergency care.
- Mental health care.
- Family planning.
- Alcohol and drug use treatment.
- Pharmacy services.
- Medical supplies.

We encourage you to contact your assigned Provider Relations Representative if you are able to increase your capacity to help see these members. You can reach out to Provider Relations at **831-430-5504**.

For more information on this expansion, please visit the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) webpage: **www.morehealth.org/DHCS-medi-cal-expansion**.

Interpreter services for hearing impaired

Providers may also use the Hearing or Speech Assistance Line at **800-735-2922** (English) or **800-855-3000** (Spanish) to communicate with a hearing-impaired member via phone.
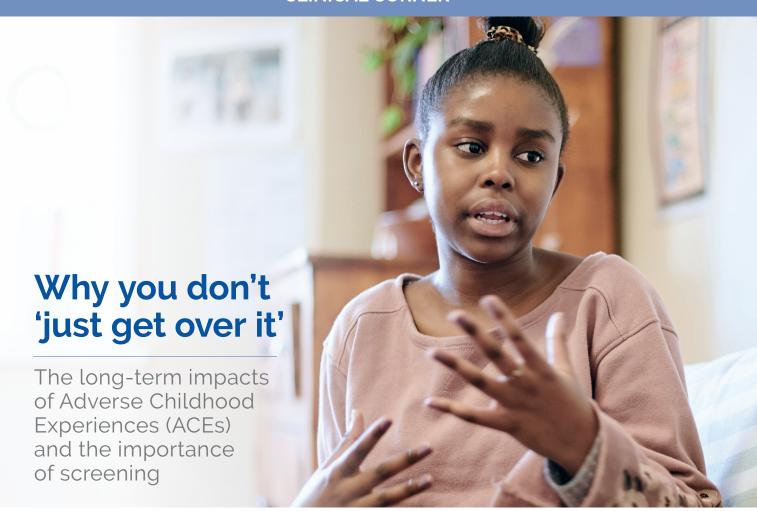
Using an untrained interpreter may result in miscommunication of medical information, compromising quality of care. For this reason, the Alliance discourages providers from using family members or any unqualified personnel as interpreters.

For additional information on the Alliance Language Assistance Services, please visit our website at **www.thealliance.health/cultural-and-linguistic-services** or call the Alliance Health Education Line at **800-700-3874, ext. 5580**.

Why you don't 'just get over it'

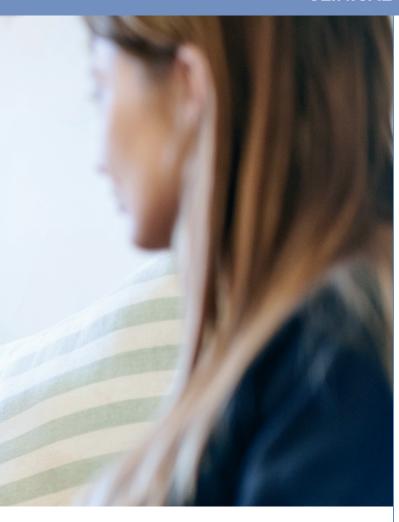The long-term impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the importance of screening

"What is wrong with you?" You may have thought this when someone seemingly overreacted to what you consider a minor situation. The better question might be, "What happened to you?" The answer might be adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

ACEs can include things such as household dysfunction, abuse or neglect. They can also come in the form of any prolonged or severe threat to personal safety, including housing or food insecurity, discrimination, and community violence. Experiencing these stressors, without buffering supports, is known as toxic stress – a degree of stress that makes it challenging to carry out everyday functions.

Providers are in the unique position to identify patients at risk through universal screening and provide the interventions, resources and supports that can improve health outcomes for patients and their families. Resources are available to learn more about screening and free provider training at **www.acesaware.org**.

Toxic stress is dose dependent and places one in a state of near constant "fight or flight," leading to structural changes in areas of the brain associated with fear response, impulse control and executive function. It also leads to persistently elevated levels of adrenaline and cortisol, which can lead to physiologic changes that include elevated blood glucose levels, increased cholesterol and a weakened immune system.

An adult who experienced four or more ACEs as a child is twice as likely to develop cardiovascular disease and 3 times more likely to develop chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) than a child who experienced no ACEs. The impact of ACEs is even more significant when it comes to mental health and emotional well-being. Adults who experienced four or more ACEs as a child are 3.7 times more likely to experience anxiety, 4.7 times more likely to have depression, nearly 7 times more likely to use alcohol and 37.5 times more likely to attempt suicide.

HEALTHY PEOPLE. **HEALTHY** COMMUNITIES.

Youth under the age of 17 who experienced or are experiencing four or more ACEs are 7 times more likely to miss school; 9 times more likely to complain of unexplained somatic symptoms, such as headache or abdominal pain; and are nearly 33 times more likely to have learning or behavioral problems.

Back to the question, "What happened to you?" The long-term repercussions of ACEs don't just go away once the stressors are gone, and one doesn't just "get over it." Data shows that ACEs can affect anyone – more than 60% of adults experienced at least one ACE. But we also know that positive responses to stress, such as physical activity and mindfulness, community supports, fostering healthy relationships, and building life skills, can buffer and strengthen children and families.

To learn more, visit **www.morehealth.org/ACEs-aware**.

Welcome, new providers

New ECM/CS Providers
- Access Care Management (ECM/CS), Merced, Monterey and San Benito counties
- Association of Faith (CS), Santa Cruz County
- The Free Guide (ECM/CS), Santa Cruz County
- HERS (ECM/CS), Monterey County
- Lifewise CHM (Wineteer) (CS), all counties
- Omatochi Corp. (ECM/CS), Monterey and Santa Cruz counties
- OverSightMD (ECM), Merced, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties
- Pacific Rehab (ECM), Monterey County
- Resources for Independence (CS), Merced County
- St. Vincent Preventative Family Care (ECM/CS), all counties
- Turning Point Community Programs (ECM/CS), Merced County
- Upward Health (ECM), all counties

Mariposa County

Primary Care
- Shane Patterson, MD, Family Medicine
- Nandeesh Veerappa, MD, Family Medicine

Referral Physician/Specialist
- Robert Horvat, MD, Endocrinology
- Alton Smalley, DPM, Podiatric Medicine

Merced County

Primary Care
- Jiwu Sun, MD, Internal Medicine

Referral Physician/Specialist
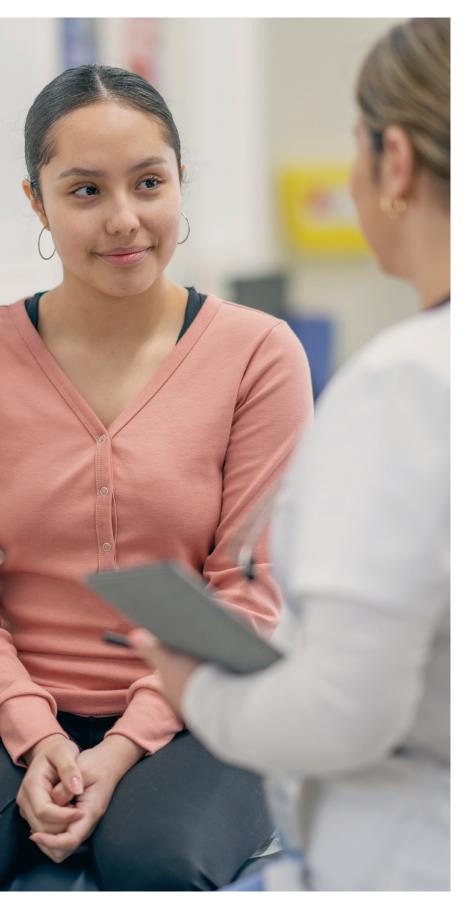- Linda Ottemoeller, MD, Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Abhijit Shaligram, MD, Surgery
- Peter Van Steyn, MD, Orthopaedic Surgery

Monterey County

Primary Care
- Ahmad Ahmadzia, MD, Family Medicine
- Gregory Ceus, MD, Family Medicine
- Miguel Dorantes, MD, Family Medicine

Chlamydia screening for teenaged females at well-visits

Chlamydia Screening in Women, an NCQA HEDIS measure, looks at female members 16-24 years of age who are showing as sexually active (identified by claims, pregnancy test or prescription for birth control) who had at least one test for chlamydia during the year. This measure is a challenge for providers, especially pediatricians, because the provider may prescribe birth control to alleviate symptoms for teenage menstrual cycles unrelated to sexual activity.

The plan identified gaps for members aged 16-17 years of age who are not reporting as being sexually active and are being prescribed birth control but not a chlamydia screening. The American Academy of Pediatrics[1] and the CDC recommend testing for chlamydia yearly at well-visits with an opt-out approach.

Capturing a urine sample as part of a routine well-visit normalizes the previously awkward discussion about sex. This is of no cost to Alliance members and will count toward your performance in the chlamydia screening measure for Care-Based Incentive (CBI) and HEDIS programs. For more information, visit the CBI Resources page on the Alliance website at **www.thealliance.health/CBI-resources** or contact your Provider Relations Representative for more information.

[1]**www.morehealth.org/aap-sti-testing**

HEALTHY PEOPLE. **HEALTHY** COMMUNITIES.

Health education and disease management programs

Providers can refer members who would like additional support in managing their health to the Alliance's health education and disease management programs.

The following Alliance programs support members in their journey to health and wellness:

- **Healthy Moms and Healthy Babies** – for members who are pregnant or recently had a baby.
- **Healthier Living Program** – for adult members living with a chronic condition(s).
- **Live Better with Diabetes Program** – for adult members diagnosed with diabetes.
- **Healthy Breathing for Life** – for pediatric and adult members diagnosed with asthma.
- **Adult Weight Management** – for adult members who are overweight or obese.
- **Healthy Weight for Life** – for parents of pediatric members between the ages of 2 and 18 who are at risk of or diagnosed with childhood obesity.
- **Tobacco Cessation Support** – for adult members who want to stop smoking and/or using tobacco products.

To refer a member to any of the Alliance programs, please use the Alliance referral form located on the Alliance Provider website at **www.thealliance.health/ health-programs-referral**.

If you have questions, please call the Alliance Health Education Line at **800-700-3874, ext. 5580**.

Well-care frequencies and visit catch-up

The Alliance has extended the billing frequency for child well-care visits up to the third birthday, allowing catch-up opportunities for those who are behind. Utilize CPT codes 99391 and 99392 with a billing frequency of every 14 days.
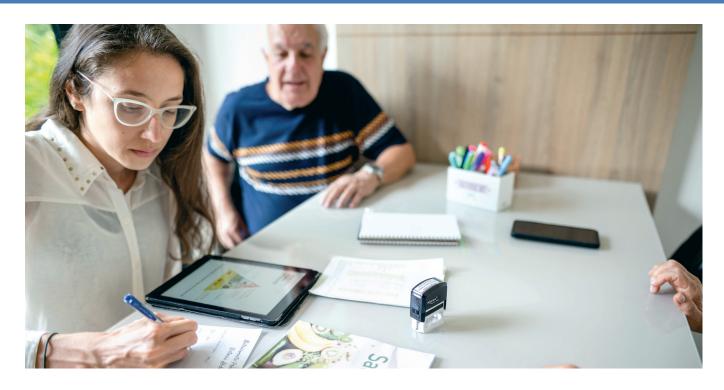
Best practices

- Adhere to the Bright Futures periodicity schedule at **www.thealliance.health/ BFPS** for guidance on well-care intervals, screenings and surveillance.

- Prioritize identification of necessary immunizations and screenings before visits.
- Employ electronic health record (EHR) templates to document age-specific Bright Futures requirements and to trigger reminders for subsequent well-visits.
- Consult the CDC's recommended immunization schedule and talking points with parents at **www.thealliance.health/CRI**.
- Schedule future well-care visits before the member departs.

- Explore our new pediatric tools on our Health Assessments webpage at **www.thealliance.health/HA**.
- Refer to our CBI tip sheets at **www.thealliance.health/CBI** for more best practices!

If you missed our Pediatric Best Practices webinar, the recording is now available on our website at **www.thealliance.health/ PBP-Webinar**.

Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) for Alliance members

Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) is an evidence-based medical approach to manage specific chronic conditions through personalized nutrition plans. These plans are sanctioned by a primary care physician and executed by a registered dietitian (RD).

The Alliance's annual MNT coverage is three hours in the initial calendar year and two hours per subsequent calendar year, requiring prior authorization via the Provider Portal. Any surpassing hours mandate a new authorization, subject to review by the Alliance's RD for medical necessity.

MNT by an RD is a covered benefit for all Alliance members who meet qualifying conditions or are identified as nutritionally at risk. Refer to our MNT Quick Reference Guide for a list of qualifying conditions and risk factors at **www.thealliance.health/mntquickreference**. For inquiries or for additional information on the MNT benefit, contact Alliance RD Tony Nannini at **831-430-4117**.

In addition to MNT, the Alliance provides health education and disease management programs for members who do not meet MNT criteria. To learn more about these programs, visit **www.thealliance.health/hedm** or call the Alliance Health Education line at **800-700-3874, ext. 5580**.

For detailed instructions on how to refer an Alliance member to one of our programs, please see the health education and disease management programs referral form on our website at **www.thealliance.health/hedm/referral**.

Medi-Cal Rx Drug Utilization Review (DUR)

Please review the following Medi-Cal Rx Drug Utilization Review updates as of November 2023.

1. 2023 Immunization Update: COVID-19, Influenza, RSV, HepB, Pneumococcal, HPV, Polio, Mpox and MMR.

This resource is linked on the Alliance's pharmacy services webpage under the "Drug Utilization Review (DUR)" section at **www.thealliance.health/pharmacy-services**.

HEALTHY PEOPLE. **HEALTHY** COMMUNITIES.

Help prevent fraud, waste and abuse

The Alliance is committed to preventing and investigating suspected fraud, waste and abuse (FWA). Health care FWA includes the submission of false claims, falsifying Medi-Cal eligibility, prescription drug diversion or tampering, overutilization, and more. The Alliance conducts investigations involving health care providers, Alliance members, non-healthcare vendors and others.
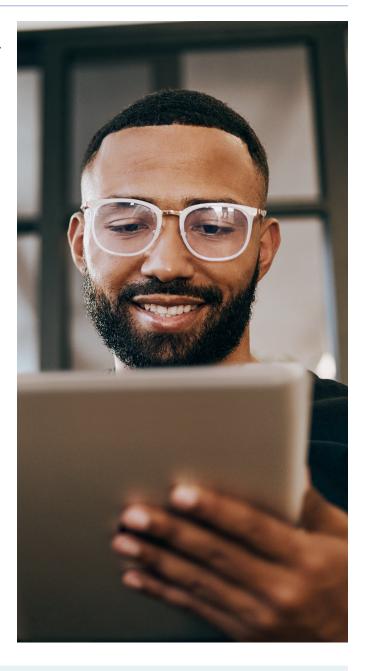
What does this mean for you? Alliance provider contracts require partners to report all suspected FWA concerns to the Alliance within five days of discovery. Preferred Alliance reporting mechanisms include:

- Contacting your Alliance Provider Relations Representative.
- Completing the Compliance Concern Reporting Form on the Alliance website at **www.thealliance.health/ provider-compliance-concern-report**.

When completing the FWA report, it is crucial to include pertinent information, such as:

1. Name and contact information of the person reporting the suspected FWA (unless the reporting party chooses to remain anonymous).
2. Identifying information for the entity suspected of committing potential FWA – entity name(s), identification number(s), contact information, etc.
3. Description of the concern.
4. Supporting documentation, if available.

The Alliance encourages providers to be ready to report any suspicious activity as soon as possible and to reach out to Provider Services at **831-430-5504**. More information on Alliance antifraud practices can be found in the Provider Manual at **www.thealliance.health/ provider-manual**.

Billing reminder for the COVID-19 vaccine

To receive reimbursement for the administration fee:

- **Bill the state Medi-Cal program** directly when administering the vaccine to Medi-Cal members.
- **Bill the Alliance** when administering the vaccine to IHHS members.

For additional information, please refer to the 2023-2024 Commercialized COVID-19 Vaccines Medi-Cal Policy Update at **www.morehealth.org/covid19-vaccine-policy-update**.

Partnering with local doctors and specialists to ensure that Alliance members get access to the right care, at the right time.

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE · FOR HEALTH®

Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Yakima, WA
Permit No. 157

Important phone numbers

Provider Services **831-430-5504**
Claims. **831-430-5503**
Authorizations **831-430-5506**
Status (non-pharmacy) . . **831-430-5511**
Member Services. **831-430-5505**
Web and EDI **831-430-5510**
Cultural & Linguistic
Services. **831-430-5580**
Health Education Line. . . **831-430-5580**

Welcome, new providers

– Continued from page 7

- Damon McEnroe, MD, Internal Medicine (San Luis Obispo)
- Natali Silva, MD, Family Medicine

Referral Physician/Specialist
- Ian Atkinson, MD, Family Medicine
- John Bonano, MD, Orthopaedic Surgery
- Thomas Bosshardt, MD, Surgery
- Aiga Charles, MD, Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Benjamin Hendricks, MD, Neurological Surgery (San Luis Obispo)
- Victor Holmes, MD, Ophthalmology
- Colm Murphy, Cardiovascular Disease
- Monica Noya-Santana, MD, Neurology
- John Paas, MD, Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Jeffrey Sasser-Brandt, MD, Family Medicine
- Aileen Wang, MD, Endocrinology Diabetes and Metabolism
- Charles Whisler, MD, Ophthalmology
- John Wilkins, MD, Pulmonary Disease

San Benito County

Primary Care
- Benedict Carota, MD, Family Medicine
- Marni Friedman, MD, Family Medicine
- Marie Grageda, MD, Family Medicine
- Angela Lantin, MD, Family Medicine
- Julian Nguyen, MD, Family Medicine
- Javier Sotomayor-Tapia, MD, Family Medicine
- Arminda Tolentino, MD, Family Medicine
- Anita Tolentino-Macareg, MD, Pediatrics

Referral Physician/Specialist
- Zarin Amin, DO, Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Ralph Armstrong, MD, Gynecology
- Prathibha Chandrasekaran, MD, Gastroenterology
- Piyush Dhanuka, MD, Gastroenterology
- Annette Estrada, DPT, Physical Therapy
- Jun Estrada, DPT, Physical Therapy
- Taynet Febles, MD, Infectious Disease
- Nick Gabriel, MD, Surgery
- Vivek Jain, MD, Internal Medicine
- Joseph Jiang, MD, Cardiovascular Disease
- Michael Koteles, MD, Endocrinology
- Carol Mei, MD, Medical Oncology
- Bret Namihas, MD, Gastroenterology
- Nazhat Sharma, MD, Ophthalmology
- Christopher Verioti, DO, Orthopaedic Surgery

Santa Cruz County

Primary Care
- Heather Cahan, MD, Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine
- Evelin Gonzalez, MD, Family Medicine
- Eric Jackson-Scott, MD, Family Medicine
- Walter Mills, MD, Family Medicine

Referral Physician/Specialist
- Aimee Chang, MD, Ophthalmology
- Yuxi Guan, DPM, Podiatric Medicine
- Alice Shen, MD, Ophthalmology
- Reema Syed, MD, Ophthalmology

Holiday office closures
- Monday, May 27 (Memorial Day)
- Wednesday, June 19 (Juneteenth)

HEALTHY PEOPLE. **HEALTHY** COMMUNITIES.