

Work with us toward equal access and person-centered health care

In 2022, the Alliance embarks on an ambitious multi-year journey with you, our members and our community partners to advance two key strategic priorities: Health Equity and Person-Centered Delivery System Transformation. We strive to make significant systemic change that improves the health and well-being of every member we serve.

To fully address health inequities, we will intentionally shift practices and policies that have benefited some and left some out, we will work to understand root causes, and we will act with our members and partners to remove barriers to health. To transform the delivery system, we will center on the people we serve, honoring their self-determination, and support evolution toward a system that yields health through shared decision-making and action, rather than a system that simply delivers health care services.

The Alliance's 2022–2026 Strategic Plan shares details on the work ahead: www.thealliance.health/about-the-alliance/strategic-plan-2022-2026.

While we advance equity and transformation, we are steadfast in our commitment to operate an effective and efficient Medi-Cal program. We are committed to show up in our value of collaboration with our provider partners, who are vital to our success and to our community health and well-being. Given the Alliance's 26-year history of success in increasing access to high-quality health care in our region through local innovation, I am confident that, together, we can succeed. I look forward to the journey ahead with you as we pursue our vision of Healthy People, Healthy Communities.

Stephanie Sonnenshine

Stephanie Sonnenshine, CEO

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Alliance Board Meetings

Wednesday, March 23, 2022
3-5 p.m.

Wednesday, April 27, 2022
3-5 p.m.

Wednesday, May 25, 2022
3-5 p.m.

Based on the circumstances of the pandemic, meetings may be held via videoconference or teleconference. Please check the Alliance website for meeting details.

Physicians Advisory Group Meeting

Thursday, June 2, 2022
Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Whole Child Model Clinical Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, March 17, 2022
Noon to 1 p.m.



Provider Satisfaction Survey results are in for 2021

Every year the Alliance contracts with SPH Analytics to conduct a Provider Satisfaction Survey. In addition to assessing overall satisfaction with the Alliance, the survey measures provider satisfaction with access to urgent and routine care, Cultural and Linguistic Services, and the Provider Portal. Key findings and trends are closely tracked, and we use feedback to inform short-term and long-term initiatives.



» Some highlights from 2021 include:

Of providers who responded,

89% indicated that they are completely or somewhat satisfied with the Alliance.

Of providers who responded,

99% indicated that they would recommend the Alliance to other physicians.

In nearly all areas of core health plan operations, **providers rated the Alliance at or near the 100th percentile compared to other health plans** surveyed by SPH Analytics. These results are landmark achievements in satisfaction. We're thrilled to continue supporting providers through the challenges of the pandemic.

The Alliance is grateful to provider offices that made time to complete the survey. We are committed to using your candid feedback to advance a shared vision of Healthy People, Healthy Communities. We invite you to participate in the 2022 survey, which launches this summer.



Alliance recognized for member satisfaction in pediatric care

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) recognized the Alliance with a Consumer Satisfaction Award, thanks in great part to our providers going above and beyond in pediatric care in 2021.

This new award is based on the Alliance's high scores in the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey, which collected feedback from nearly 400 Alliance members. The DHCS-conducted survey measures member satisfaction in areas such as provider communication, customer service, and access to timely and needed care.

The Alliance's Quality Improvement and Population Health (QIPH) Department works to support providers in improving provider-patient relationships. Several Alliance staff members from the QIPH team were present to receive the award during the 2021 DHCS Quality Conference that took place online on Oct. 27, 2021.



This prestigious Consumer Satisfaction Award represents one of the Alliance's core values of improvement. The work this award recognizes would not have been possible without strong partnerships with our providers. The Alliance thanks you for your role in continually improving service for Alliance members and our communities!

Initial Health Assessment: Why it is important

Primary care providers are responsible for providing the full scope of primary care services to their Alliance members, including the state-mandated Initial Health Assessment (IHA). This is a complete evaluation of a member's health, and it is an important first step toward managing acute, chronic and preventive health care needs. It is also a good opportunity to provide members with health education counseling and refer them to classes



or Alliance services, as applicable.

All Alliance members should receive their IHA within 120 days of enrollment. It is best practice to assign staff to review your clinic's Newly Linked Members and 120-Day IHA Report in the Alliance Provider Portal on a monthly basis. This report will provide you with information on when your Alliance

patients are due for an IHA, if they have already completed their IHA or if they are past due.

You can also submit IHA dummy codes for when your clinic has made three unsuccessful attempts (two by telephone and one written) to schedule a member for their IHA. The dummy code can be submitted via the Alliance Data Submission Tool for compliance and for the IHA Care-Based Incentive.

Additional information about IHAs, including billing guidelines and codes, can be found in the Alliance Provider Manual.

You can find the Provider Manual at www.thealliance.health/for-providers/resources/provider-manual.



Are you billing for Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs)?

Providers play an important role in screening children and adults for Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs). ACEs and toxic stress are linked to serious and costly health conditions, but the effects of ACEs are treatable. The Alliance encourages all primary care clinics to use ACE screenings.

Step 1. Make sure providers complete the ACEs Screening Training and attestation (www.training.acesaware.org). CME credits are available. Nonclinical staff training is available at www.morehealth.org/acescreenings.

Step 2. Review the ACEs Aware website (www.acesaware.org) for information on implementing ACE screenings in your clinic. It offers tool kits, implementation guidelines and community resources.

Step 3. Once providers complete the training and attestation, the Alliance will reimburse \$29 per screening using the billing codes listed below. Federally Qualified Health Centers are eligible for the payment in addition to their existing Prospective Payment System payment but need to bill on a **separate claim**. ACE screenings completed via telehealth visits qualify for payment.

HCPSC CODE	DESCRIPTION
G9919	Score 4 or greater (high risk), results are positive.
G9920	Score between 0 and 3 (lower risk), results are negative.

The Alliance has added ACE screenings as an Exploratory Measure in the 2022 Care-Based Incentive program (www.morehealth.org/incentiveprogram). If you have questions, contact your Provider Relations Representative.



Important Facility Site Review (FSR) changes

Big changes are occurring in the Facility Site Review (FSR) process. The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has updated the FSR and Medical Record Review (MRR) criteria that were implemented on March 1, 2022. These updates align with local, state and federal regulations to ensure provision of preventive services in accordance with:

- American Academy of Pediatrics, Bright Futures.
- U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, Grade A and B recommendations.
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.
- The Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program.

The MRR criteria have grown from 77 items to 142 items, with additional criteria in the FSR audit as well. Please find the draft surveying tools and guidelines on the Alliance website at www.thealliance.health/for-providers/manage-care/quality-of-care/site-reviews/facility-site-review.

Our FSR provider training video, "Preparing for a Facility Site Review," is available on the Alliance website under "Provider Trainings." The MRR provider training video will be posted once updates are finalized. It is important for providers and staff to understand the updated criteria and prepare for an audit by aligning current practice with the guidelines.

If you have questions regarding the FSR process or implementation of the new criteria, please contact the Alliance Quality Improvement Department at [831-430-2622](tel:831-430-2622).



New medications available for type 2 diabetes

There are several medications to help treat type 2 diabetes. Below you can find a brief overview of two new types of antidiabetes medications that are on the Medi-Cal Rx Contract Drugs List.

SGLT2 inhibitors: Jardiance, Farxiga

Mechanism: increase urinary glucose excretion. They have cardiovascular and renal benefits, and they help patients lose weight and reduce blood pressure.

Possible side effects: yeast infection, urinary tract infection and dehydration. There could be an increased risk of bone fracture or amputation.

GLP-1 receptor agonists: Byetta, Bydureon, Victoza, Trulicity, Ozempic, Rybelsus

Mechanism: enhance insulin secretion and slow gastric emptying. Victoza, Trulicity and Ozempic have cardiovascular benefits. They also cause loss of appetite, which helps with weight loss.

Possible side effects: nausea, vomiting and diarrhea that usually improve with time. Pancreatitis has been reported rarely.



If you have questions regarding these medications, call the Alliance Pharmacy Department at [831-430-5507](tel:831-430-5507).

How to support your breastfeeding patients when they return to work

Returning to work presents challenges to breastfeeding, disproportionately affecting parents in low-wage jobs, including agriculture. Most employed mothers need lactation accommodation, including time to travel to the lactation space, pump, clean and store the pump, and store their milk. California law addresses the unique situation of farmworkers needing a private place to pump (see California Labor Code, Section 1030-1034). With support, many have successfully combined work and breastfeeding. Suggestions for space can be found on the Office of Women's Health website at www.morehealth.org/lactationbreaktime.

Health care professionals have a unique opportunity to support breastfeeding parents as they return to work. Although patients consider their doctor's advice to be important, providers underestimate their influence, feeling they have inadequate knowledge and clinical competence to counsel breastfeeding parents.



To help equip you for those conversations with breastfeeding parents, review the resources below:

- Consider tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (www.morehealth.org/recommendations), California Department of Public Health (www.morehealth.org/ninesteps), and California WIC Association (www.morehealth.org/lowwagesupport) when encouraging parents to seek lactation accommodation when returning to work.
- Encourage parents to contact their local Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program to get breast pumps, supplies and suggestions for accessing a pumping location at work. Providers can also talk to lactation specialists about combining breastfeeding and work.
 - Merced County: **209-383-4859**
 - Monterey County: **831-796-2888**
 - Santa Cruz County: **831-722-7121**
- Inform Alliance members that they have breastfeeding education and lactation support through the Alliance Breastfeeding Support and Breast Pump Benefit. Alliance members are eligible for a breast pump* at no cost to them if either:
 - Mother or baby has medical issues that prevent nursing at the breast (when medically necessary).
 - The mother is returning to work or school and wants to continue breastfeeding.

*Alliance members are eligible for one personal-use breast pump every three years. If there is a need for a second breast pump during the three-year period, an authorization request must be submitted with documentation stating the reason that the original pump cannot be used.



To learn more about the Alliance Breastfeeding Support and Breast Pump Benefit programs, please visit www.morehealth.org/supportandbenefits or call the Alliance Health Education Line at **800-700-3874, ext. 5580**.



Get to know Enhanced Care Management (ECM)

As of January 2022, the Alliance is providing Enhanced Care Management (ECM) in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. ECM will be offered in Merced County in July 2022.

Part of CalAIM, ECM is a whole-person, interdisciplinary approach that addresses the clinical and nonclinical needs of high-cost and/or high-need Alliance members.

ECM-contracted providers offer the following services to qualifying members:

- Outreach and engagement.
- Comprehensive assessment and care management planning.
- Enhanced coordination of care.
- Health promotion activities.
- Comprehensive transitional care planning.
- Member and family supports.
- Coordination of and referral to community and support services.

Community Supports (CS) are optional, medically appropriate and cost-effective alternative services. The Alliance offers the following community supports:

- Housing transition navigation services.
- Housing deposits.
- Housing tenancy and sustaining services.
- Medically tailored meals.
- Sobering centers (Monterey County only).

*All
providers
in the Alliance's
contracted
network can
refer ECM/CS
members.*



Identifying members for ECM/CS

The Alliance will accept referrals for ECM/CS for members using a “no wrong door” approach. Referrals may come from a community-based entity, an Alliance member, a caregiver, a hospital or health care provider, or an ECM/CS provider.

CalAIM ECM Policy Guide, Appendix B, provides guidance and examples of populations of focus for ECM services (www.morehealth.org/policyguide).

Providers or requesting entities may submit ECM/CS authorization requests to the Alliance via:

- The Provider Portal (www.thealliance.health/for-providers/provider-portal).
- Shared portal platforms, such as Activate Care (www.activatecare.com).
- Fax: **831-430-5819**.
- Telephone: **831-430-5512**.

Information on ECM is also available in the Alliance Provider Manual (Section 11: Care Management Services, pp. 130-133). You can access the Provider Manual on our website at www.thealliance.health/wp-content/uploads/Provider_Manual_2022.pdf.

Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports billing guidance

Effective Jan. 1, 2022, the Alliance offers Enhanced Care Management (ECM) services and Community Supports (CS) consistent with Medi-Cal benefit guidelines.

All ECM and CS services require prior authorization. Claims must include the authorization number, Social Determinants of Health diagnosis code(s), Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes and any required modifiers for the ECM/CS service(s).

Claim submission options

- CMS 1500 Claim Form: For more information, refer to the Claims Section of the Alliance Provider Manual. You can access the Provider Manual on our website at **www.thealliance.health/wp-content/uploads/Provider_Manual_2022.pdf**.
- Invoice: Invoices must be entered in an Excel spreadsheet provided by the Alliance.

HCPCS code and modifiers

- HCPCS code(s) must be submitted with the required modifier(s).
- For telehealth, add modifier GQ as the secondary modifier.
- ECM services are billed in 15-minute increments (15 minutes = 1 unit, 1 hour = 4 units).
- Separate services must be billed on separate lines.

For more information regarding coding options, visit **www.morehealth.org/codingoptions**.

If you have billing questions, please call our Claims Customer Service ACD line at **831-430-5503**.





Provider Relations staff: March 2022

"In this new role, I plan on leading the Santa Cruz Provider Relations team in our continued commitment to building and maintaining strong partnerships with providers, advocating for their business needs, and delivering superior customer service in order to continue to improve health outcomes for Alliance members."

Maribel Quintero, Provider Relations Supervisor, Santa Cruz County

Congratulations to Maribel, who was promoted to Provider Relations Supervisor, Santa Cruz County, in October 2021!

Maribel joined the Alliance in April 2014 as a Utilization Management Care Coordinator, focusing on reducing hospital readmissions through the Alliance's Care Transitions Program. During this time, she

worked closely with providers and members, building effective relationships in order to help identify and educate members with frequent hospital admissions. In 2016, Maribel was promoted to Provider Relations Representative for Monterey County and was assigned primarily to Salinas and South County Monterey. As a Provider

Relations Representative, she supported providers and their staff with various issues, provided education and training, and collaborated with internal departments to best serve providers. Expanding the Alliance network through provider recruitment continues to be a main focus of Maribel's work in Provider Relations.



The Alliance invites you to take advantage of the resources on the Training page of our provider website at **www.thealliance.health/for-providers/resources/training**. On this page, you'll find the latest trainings for Medi-Cal Rx, Care-Based Incentives, Screening for Adverse Childhood Events and more.

For more information, call a Provider Relations Representative at **800-700-3874, ext. 5504**.



Alliance's Language Assistance Services

➤ Central California Alliance for Health (the Alliance) is committed to treating our members equally. The Alliance does not discriminate, exclude people, or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. We follow federal civil rights laws.

The Alliance provides the following services to our Alliance providers to ensure that we meet language assistance requirements for our members when accessing Alliance services:

- Aids and services to people with disabilities to help them communicate better at no cost, such as:
 - Qualified sign language interpreters.
 - Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats and other formats).
- No-cost language assistance services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
 - Qualified interpreters.
 - Written information in other languages.

? If you have questions about these services, please call the Alliance Health Education Line at **800-700-3874, ext. 5580**, or visit **www.morehealth.org/linguistics**.



Health education and disease management programs available for Alliance members

The Alliance offers innovative programs to help members achieve healthier outcomes. These programs are managed by experienced health education professionals. The Alliance Health Education team provides referrals to local resources and assists members with techniques to stay healthy.

The Alliance offers the following chronic disease management programs:



Diabetes and prediabetes programs:

help educate members about managing diabetes or prediabetes.



Healthy Breathing for Life:

helps educate members about managing asthma.



Healthier Living Program:

for members living with chronic condition(s) like diabetes, high blood pressure or depression. Workshops are offered in three different ways:

- Over the phone.
- Virtually with online meetings.
- In person (currently on hold due to the pandemic).

Alliance members who complete the six-week workshop can receive a Target gift card for up to \$50.



Wellness that Works (formerly Weight Watchers):

Members 18 years and older learn about healthy eating, staying active, and creating health and wellness goals.

The Alliance offers the following programs to support members in staying healthy:



Healthy Moms and Healthy Babies:

for pregnant members and members who recently had a baby. Our team helps with prenatal and postpartum health education, breastfeeding support, pediatric care, and parenting. We will also give referrals to local resources.

Alliance members who see their doctor within the first 13 weeks of being pregnant or within six weeks of joining the Alliance are entered in a raffle for a chance to win a \$50 Target gift card. Members who see their doctor three to eight weeks after having a baby will receive a \$25 Target gift card.



Healthy Weight for Life: for parents with children between the ages of 2 and 18. This program promotes new ways to help children reach a healthy weight and make healthier lifestyle changes. Workshops and education are offered in three different ways:

- Over the phone.
- Virtually with online meetings.
- In person (currently on hold due to the pandemic).

Alliance members who complete the 10-week workshop can receive a Target gift card for up to \$100. Members can also be entered in a raffle to win a bike.



Tobacco Cessation Support:

for members who want to stop smoking and/or using tobacco products. We support the prevention and cessation of tobacco use, and we offer many ways to help members quit smoking or using any tobacco products.



If you would like to refer a member to any health education and/or disease management programs, please use our referral form on the Alliance Provider website: www.morehealth.org/referralform.



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

Rise in eating disorders

Like the rest of the nation, the Alliance has seen a steady increase in referrals for eating disorders during the pandemic. Eating disorders can severely impair an individual's functioning and health. A recent study published by *JAMA Network* reports that the number of hospitalizations for eating disorders – including anorexia, bulimia and binge-eating disorders – rose dramatically during the pandemic.

This is reflected locally in our claims data. We have seen a rise in the number of Alliance members diagnosed with eating disorders and an even larger rise in the number of claims for these members. This trend indicates an increase in severity of the disease.

Eating disorders are mental health and medical conditions that often include significant and persistent disturbances in eating behaviors, obsession with body weight and emotional distress. The behaviors associated with eating disorders vary. Eating disorders can affect people of all ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and genders.

People with eating disorders experience higher rates of other mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety or substance use problems. Eating disorders also carry an increased risk for suicide and medical complications. It is crucial to connect a patient with the appropriate level of care as soon as possible.

Providing help

For Alliance members, eating disorder treatment is provided by Beacon Health Options for mild to moderate conditions and by county behavioral health departments for severe disease. If you have a patient with an eating disorder who is not in need of immediate hospitalization, please refer to Alliance Case Management (call **831-430-5512**) and Beacon Care Management (email **MC_CCAH@beaconhealthoptions.com**) to facilitate evaluation for appropriate level of care.

The Alliance covers medical nutrition therapy for patients with eating disorders. The SCOFF questionnaire by Morgan, Reid and Lacey is commonly used for screening patients.

When referring for eating disorder care, the following information may help the assessment be completed more quickly:

Medical assessment supporting materials

- Medical history.
- Current medications.

Physical examination

- Blind weight, post-void, in a gown. Do not disclose to patient.
- Height.
- Temperature.
- Pulse rate (resting and with exertion).



- Orthostatic blood pressure (supine, sitting and standing position).
- EKG.
- If no menses in more than six months, conduct a bone density test.
- Pregnancy test for women of reproductive age.

Labs

- Comprehensive metabolic panel.
- Phosphorus and magnesium.
- Complete blood count with differential.
- Amylase.
- Urinalysis with microscopic examination.
- Thyroid panel.
- Transthyretin (prealbumin).
- Vitamin D.
- B₁₂.
- Folate.
- Serum iron and ferritin.

¹Morgan, J. F., Reid, F., & Lacey, J. H. (2000). The SCOFF questionnaire. *The Western Journal of Medicine*, 172(3), 164–165. <https://doi.org/10.1136/ewj.172.3.164>

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



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New providers

Santa Cruz County

Primary Care

- Victoria Chew, MD, *Family Medicine*
- Rose Lovell, MD, *Family Medicine*
- Diana Mokaya, MD, *Family Medicine*
- Teresa Robbins, MD, *Family Medicine*
- Amanda Torczynski, MD, *Family Medicine*

Referral Physician/Specialist

- Michelle Di Fiore, MD, *Rheumatology*
- Kenneth Mensch, MD, *Hand Surgery*
- Kimberly Moreland, MD, *Obstetrics and Gynecology*
- Sirish Nakka, MD, *Sleep Medicine*
- Benjamin Wagner, MD, *Internal Medicine*
- Paul Ware, MD, *Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*
- Christopher Xiao, MD, *Otolaryngology*

Merced County

Primary Care

- Colleen Aitken, MD, *Family Medicine*
- Chuah Cha, DO, *Family Medicine*
- Alexandria Meyers, MD, *Family Medicine*

Monterey County

Primary Care

- Nicole Marie Rose Araneta, MD, *Family Medicine*
- Huy Dao, MD, *Family Medicine*
- Victor Mac, DO, *Pediatrics*
- Raymond Pena, MD, *Family Medicine*

Referral Physician/Specialist

- Victoria Chew, MD, *Family Medicine*
- Ali Naghash Maheri, MD, *Sleep Medicine*
- Eric Mowatt-Larsen, MD, *Emergency Medicine*
- Osman Numair, MD, *Allergy and Immunology*
- Farah Salahuddin, MD, *Rheumatology*
- William Tanner, MD, *Diagnostic Radiology*
- Keith Wexler, MD, *Diagnostic Radiology*
- Lulu Zhang, MD, *Hematology*

Referral Physician/Specialist

- Albert Chan, MD, *Orthopaedic Surgery*
- Garrison Whitaker, MD, *Hand Surgery*



Sign up

to receive provider news by email

Two easy steps:

1. Text: "CCAH" to 22828.
2. Follow the text prompts.



**ALLIANCE
HOLIDAY
CLOSURES**

- Monday, May 30, 2022 (Memorial Day)