

**Health Plan of San Mateo**  
**Cal MediConnect Advisory Committee**  
**Friday, January 21, 2022 – 11:30 p.m.**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**-Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams-**

Important notice regarding COVID-19: Based on guidance from the California Department of Public Health and the California Governor’s Office, in order to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus, Health Plan of San Mateo offices were closed for this meeting, and the meeting was conducted via online meeting/teleconference. Members of the public were invited to submit public comment via email to the Clerk in advance of the meeting and were also able to access the meeting using the web and teleconference information provided on the meeting notice.

**Committee Members Present:** Art Wolf, Beverly Karnatz, Gay Kaplan, Evelina Chang, Lisa Mancini, Kirsten Irgens-Moller, Ligia Andrade Zuniga, Dr. Darlene Yee-Melichar , Nina Rhee, Ricky Kot.

**Committee Members Absent:** Teresa Guingona Ferrer, Claire Day, Amira Elbeshbeshy, Diane Prosser, Pete Williams.

**Staff Present:** Pat Curran, Karla Rosado Torres, Colleen Murphey, Sophie Boudreau.

**1. Call to Order / Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 11:30 a.m. by Gay Kaplan.

**2. Public Comment**

There were no public comments received via email prior to the meeting or made at this time.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes for October 15, 2021, were unanimously approved as presented:

**4. Adopt a resolution finding that, as a result of continuing COVID-19 pandemic state of emergency, meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees**

In accordance with AB 361, a resolution for approval was presented finding that meeting in person would present imminent health risk due to COVID-19. All in attendance were in favor. The resolution is attached to these minutes as part of the record.

## 5. State/CMS Updates

Mr. Curran touched on some of the changes coming through DHCS and CMS:

- Cal MediConnect program will be replaced at the end of 2022 by the Dual Special Needs Plan (D-SNP). Karla Rosado Torres will give an update later this meeting.
- The state budget has a large surplus and will have a positive impact on Medi-Cal beneficiaries through CalAIM programs and will continue in furthering the efforts the health plan has made related to housing and other services.
- The proposed budget expands eligibility for Medi-Cal to adults regardless of citizenship status which will dramatically reduce the number of members in the ACE program. This does not affect our Cal MediConnect program but will benefit our community.
- The dental transition effective January 1, 2022 as a Medi-Cal benefit affecting all Medi-Cal members has been successful so far. The major challenge is access for adults which was limited before and will take time to turn around. Staff is helping members access care and better understand what is covered. Very few calls have been received regarding access for children. GGRC is helping by opening up access and referral patterns for adults that have special needs, which has been limited. Ms. Karnatz commented on a meeting with the HPSM Dental Manager, Marisa Cardarelli, where the issue around dentures was discussed. Mr. Curran stated that staff is working on this issue.

**[Art Wolf joined the meeting at this time]**

## 6. HPSM Updates

### a. Vaccine & Testing Updates

Colleen Murphey, Network and Strategy Officer, gave an update on vaccination efforts and how the health plan is supporting providers and members with the current surge of COVID cases.

In terms of the surge, staff had been focusing on supporting residents in congregate care facilities by reaching out to SNFs and RCFEs and following vaccination rates and later, booster rates. County Health teams went into facilities to provide assistance with some vaccinations and were able to attain a vaccination rate over 95% for this population. Booster rates were also quite high. Unfortunately, this week there has been a surge of cases higher than expected increasing to about five times the case rate in the community. We are seeing lower hospitalization rates compared to last year but staffing shortages due to COVID illness has created backlogs. Staff has been spending time with our hospital partners and county health partners to try to problem solve the issue of people getting stuck in the hospital with no place to go. Ms. Murphey reported on a meeting with County Public Health leaders Dr. Scott Morrow and Marc Meulman with nursing facility staff to discuss the issues they are facing and to highlight resources around testing and PPE for those facilities. This will continue to be the focus over the next couple of weeks.

Ms. Irgens-Moller stated that the Ombudsperson Program goes into the skilled nursing facilities weekly and what they have witnessed is each facility is handling this differently. She stated that it would be helpful if the Ombuds staff could be included in these types of meetings to reinforce a consistent message. Ms. Murphey agreed and will include them in any future meetings.

Ms. Murphey added that they are now seeing a 75% vaccination rate for HPSM members overall, moving us closer to the overall county vaccination rate. Rates for vaccination of CMC members in particular remain quite high and staff are focusing on getting messaging out regarding boosters. They are also working on getting younger children vaccinated.

**b. Medi-Cal Rx**

Mr. Curran stated that the state has taken over the administration of the pharmacy benefit (Medi-Cal Rx) as of January 1, 2022 for most Medi-Cal members. This carve out does not affect the CMC members' primary pharmacy coverage from HPSM under Cal MediConnect.

**c. D-SNP Transition Update**

Karla Rosado Torres, Medicare Product Manager, presented an update on the transition of the Cal MediConnect program to a Dual Special Needs Plan (D-SNP) effective January 1, 2023.

She explained that this transition should not have any significant impact on members. Members will continue to receive the same care coordination and services. The state calls this a "lift and shift" so members will receive a couple of notices and then everything will remain the same for the members.

She added that, behind the scenes, staff will be working on some major tasks to accomplish this transition. In the next couple of weeks, staff will be submitting a CMS application including a model of care which will need to be developed. These are very large projects that need to be submitted by mid-February. Our Utilization Management Team and Quality Team have already completed some of this work. In addition, this transition will make HPSM subject to the CMS star ratings for this program. This is a quality bonus program which measures our quality and member experience requiring significant planning in preparation for these measures. Another facet to this transition is the revising and development of member materials and notices. Staff is working with CMS and DHCS on all of this material.

Ms. Rosado-Torres shared that staff is taking this opportunity to also review our benefits for possible gaps around social determinants of health that could impact members and hope to have more to share on this subject at our next meeting.

## **7. CCI Ombudsperson Report (Legal Aid)**

Ms. Chang reported:

- Eligibility for the undocumented population for people over 50 years old is targeted for implementation in May 2022. The state is encouraging everyone who is eligible to enroll in restricted scope now so that the transition will go smoothly.
- A change in the income level of the asset test is targeted for July 2022. This will change the limit from \$2,000 a year to \$130,000 a year for an individual and will lead up to elimination of this asset test by January 2024.
- The moratorium on Medi-Cal negative action due to the public health emergency is set to expire on April 16, 2022.
- The county has a tentative refresher training for the spousal impoverishment program, but she has not heard about any updates as to when this will take place.

## **8. LTC Ombudsperson Report**

Ms. Irgens-Moller reported:

- The Ombudsperson program works at the express wishes of residents and what she is hearing from staff is that they do not have access to a lot of information or resources. The surge is very frightening for the staff and residents. Staffing shortages seem to be a problem at all the facilities or as it is perceived as so. Changes with CalAIM are unclear to the Ombudsperson staff and what it will mean for people. IOA seems to have fewer funds to help people move. She asked if it was possible to get an information sheet explaining Cal AIM impacts or for a training to help staff disseminate this information.
- Confusion around visitation guidelines is a continuing issue. CMS and state guidelines are consistent, but the county has different information. This has caused some facilities to lockdown while others are open, and some have no communal activities.
- In terms of the booster, some smaller facilities are asking if they can have someone come out to administer those especially for people who are bedridden or do not have access to vans or Ready Wheels.
- She reminded that the Ombudsperson Program could assist with messaging to residents, and they would be happy to help disseminate information to those dual eligibles in our community.

Ms. Murphey agreed that the guidance is convoluted and not everyone is in agreement right now. She stated that there are two communicable disease control nurses serving the skilled nursing facilities, one is working within the north county and the other in south, who can provide guidance on the interpretation of these guidelines at least for isolation protocols. When it comes to communal activities and visitors, there is a strong preference for trying to keep some of those social supports and visitors going given how important they are. Ms. Murphey will connect these nurses with Kirsten to help answer these questions. She also talked about possible mobile vaccination options and some larger scale vaccination events for the nursing facilities.

Mr. Curran stated that he will have more presentations at upcoming meetings about CalAIM and thought it would be good to prepare a summary document on our continued work on Community Supports. Ms. Irgens-Moller asked about Landmark phasing out. Ms. Murphey confirmed that this transition is due to be final by the end of February. A new provider partner, Upward Health, has been selected through an RFP process to offer the home advantage program. The Chief Medical Officer of Upward Health, Dr. Mihale, has been meeting with a number of our primary care physicians and will begin meeting with some of the facilities. Ms. Murphey will share some materials with this group in the future.

**9. Questions about reports distributed prior to meeting.**

**a. HPSM Dashboards**

Mr. Wolfe asked about the numbers in the report related to long term care facilities and community based going back to Q3 where the numbers were lower than they have been historically. Mr. Curran did not have the answer to this question but stated that last year there lower census at SNFs before COVID was in a surge and there was a reluctance for people to enter these facilities. This is the first time in memory that there were several open beds. Ms. Murphey stated they would look into this.

**b. IHSS**

Ms. Mancini announced that Nina Rhee is now the new Deputy Director as Chris Rodriguez has retired. Nina has been working in their IHSS program for many years and they are thrilled to have her as the Deputy Director of Aging and Adult Services.

Ms. Mancini reported that the county will receive around 50,000 COVID test kits and Aging and Adults Services has requested a number of these. They plan to send some out to IHSS recipients and their caregivers, and on behalf of the Ombuds program. This is especially important and is our first priority for those who work on the IHSS registry and those who go into multiple locations. The remainder will be distributed throughout the population with a number will go to the smaller, six bed boarding care homes as a priority. The county will ask for more, but this is the first batch and she is thrilled to get these test kits for our older adults and people with disabilities. Another priority area are the childcare centers and schools, and the nutrition providers that provide meals to the homebound.

Ms. Karnatz pointed out that residents may have confusion on how to use these test kits her three facilities plan to link their residents with their services coordinators to assist them. Ms. Mancini stated that Dr. Curtis Chan, Deputy Health Officer, is preparing a letter to be sent with each test kit. She will share that letter with this group. Ms. Kaplan expressed concern for people who are visually impaired. Ms. Mancini stated that the people they are reaching out to with these test kits are IHSS recipients who have caregivers who could assist them.

Ms. Mancini reviewed the numbers contained in the IHSS report which shows that the number of IHSS cases and referrals continue to rise. This is being addressed in many different levels. One issue is the staffing as they have had difficulty keeping up in that area. They have reached out to the County Manager's office in hopes to address the continual increase in IHSS.

**10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

*C. Burgess*

C. Burgess, Clerk of the Commission

**RESOLUTION OF THE  
Cal MediConnect Advisory Committee**

**IN THE MATTER OF APPROVAL OF TELECONFERENCE MEETING  
PROCEDURES PURSUANT TO AB 361 (BROWN ACT PROVISIONS)**

**RECITAL: WHEREAS,**

- A. In the interest of public health and safety, as affected by the state of emergency caused by the spread of COVID-19, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors recently found that meeting in person would present imminent risk to the health or safety of attendees of public meetings and accordingly directed staff to continue to agendize its public meetings only as online teleconference meetings; and
- B. The Board of Supervisors strongly encouraged other legislative bodies of the County of San Mateo that are subject to the Brown Act to make a similar finding and avail themselves of teleconferencing until the risk of community transmission has further declined; and
- C. The Committees of the San Mateo Health Commission must make such a finding under AB 361 in order to continue to conduct meetings as online teleconference meetings.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:**

- 1. The CMC Advisory Committee hereby finds that in the interest of public health and safety, as affected by the state of emergency caused by the spread of COVID-19, meeting in person would present imminent risk to the health or safety of attendees of public meetings for the reasons set forth in Resolution No. 078447 of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and subsequent resolutions made pursuant to AB 361; and
- 2. The CMC Advisory Committee continues to agendize its meetings only as online teleconference meetings; and presents this item, within 30 days, for its consideration regarding whether to make renewed findings required by AB 361 in order to continue to meet remotely.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the CMC Advisory Committee this 21st day of January 2022 by the following votes:

AYES: Karnatz, Kaplan, Chang, Mancini, Irgens-Moller, Zuniga, Yee-Melichar, Kot.  
NOES: -0-  
ABSTAINED: -0-

ATTEST:

BY: C. Burgess  
C. Burgess, Clerk