
Covered California: Promoting Health Equity and Reducing Health Disparities

Covered California Board Meeting
March 21, 2013

Addressing Health Equity and Health Disparities Central to Covered California's Mission and Values

Mission: To increase the number of insured Californians, improve health care quality, lower costs, and reduce health disparities through an innovative, competitive marketplace that empowers consumers to choose the health plan and providers that give them the best value.

Values:

- **Consumer-focused:** At the center of Covered California's efforts are the people it serves, including patients and their families, and small business owners and their employees. Covered California will offer a consumer-friendly experience that is accessible to all Californians, recognizing the diverse cultural, language, economic, educational and health status needs of those we serve.
- **Affordability:** The Exchange will provide affordable health insurance while assuring quality and access.
- **Catalyst:** Covered California will be a catalyst for change in California's health care system, using its market role to stimulate new strategies for providing high-quality, affordable health care, promoting prevention and wellness, and reducing health disparities.
- **Integrity:** The Exchange will earn the public's trust through its commitment to accountability, responsiveness, transparency, speed, agility, reliability, and cooperation.
- **Partnership:** The Exchange welcomes partnerships, and its efforts will be guided by working with consumers, providers, health plans, employers and other purchasers, government partners, and other stakeholders.
- **Results:** Covered California will be measured by its contributions to expanding coverage and access, improving health care quality, promoting better health and health equity, and lowering costs for all Californians.

Health Equity and Health Disparities Defined

Health Equity: Attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires the elimination of health and healthcare disparities.

Health Disparity: A particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social or economic disadvantage. As articulated by the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities, health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater social and/or economic obstacles to health and/or a clean environment based on factors including their racial or ethnic group; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive or physical disability; sexual orientation; or geographic location.

Covered California Health Equity Efforts: Plan Management and Delivery System Reform

- Adopted health plan selection and provider contracting policy guidelines related to ensuring health equity and reducing health disparities:
 - Assure access to quality care for individuals with varying health statuses and conditions
 - Reduce health disparities and foster health equity for all Covered California members, taking special circumstances into account in evaluating health disparities
- Requiring EValue8 health disparity questions
 - Covered California is considering that selected plans be required to participate in initiatives geared at measuring and addressing health disparities
- Developing Covered California contract provisions to address health disparities:
 - Non-discrimination requirements
 - Availability of interpreters and translation as required by state law
 - Care Coordination Plans for individuals with disabilities
 - Availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate communications to enrollees
 - Use of information gathered through eValue8 to address disparities in health status and utilization
 - Use of health disparities data in combination with enrollee health assessment information to target reduction of disparities

Covered California Health Equity Efforts: Marketing, Outreach and Enrollment Assistance

- Adopted principles related to marketing, outreach and enrollment assistance:
 - Consider where eligible populations live, work and play
 - Marketing and outreach strategies will reflect and target the mix and diversity of those eligible for coverage
 - Establish a trusted statewide enrollment assistance program
- Addressing health disparities through marketing plan components:
 - Research: focus groups in multiple languages
 - Creative engagement: development of communication material for radio, newspaper and magazine to reach diverse communities
 - Collateral material: educational materials on coverage options
 - Social media: social media campaign including multi-lingual text responses
 - Paid media: targeting to diverse audiences
 - Website: will be accessible to individuals with disabilities and limited English proficiency
 - Community mobilization: multicultural and multi-geographical planning for outreach and education grant program and Assistors

Covered California Health Equity Efforts: **Eligibility and Enrollment**

- California Healthcare Eligibility, Enrollment and Retention System (CalHEERS) goals include:
 - Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate enrollment services and systems
 - Seamless transitions between health programs
 - Minimal consumer burden
- Development of single streamlined application
- Planned enrollment monitoring and reporting on key elements that could include:
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Language
 - Gender
 - Region (e.g., specific counties, urban, suburban, rural)

Covered California Health Equity Efforts: Research and Evaluation

- CalSIM model of Covered California enrollee population
- Qualitative interviews to inform marketing and outreach campaign conducted in 11 languages in addition to English
- Evaluation plan for Covered California that will assess disparities across all evaluation domains potentially including:
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Language
 - Gender
 - Region (e.g., specific counties, urban, suburban, rural)
 - Disability
 - Educational attainment
 - Sexual orientation
 - Income

Covered California Health Equity Efforts: **Stakeholder Engagement**

Engaging diverse stakeholders:

- Board meetings held around California with opportunities for public comment
- Webinar and phone participation options for Board and stakeholder meetings
- Stakeholder advisory groups

Providing Input

Input is welcome on the principles, policies and actions outlined above as well as additional actions for consideration by Covered California.

Please send input to info@hbex.ca.gov