

PROVIDER BULLETIN

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR PROVIDERS

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A Message from Our CEO

As we head into the summer season on the Central Coast, I am pleased to share some notable accomplishments in quality and access made in partnership with our provider partners.



In May, CenCal Health achieved accreditation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for our Medi-Cal program serving the Central Coast. This recognition highlights our joint commitment to deliver access to high-quality healthcare, operational excellence, and a positive experience for our members, confirming the quality of our managed care operations.

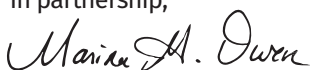
NCQA is an independent, nonprofit organization that assesses and reports on the quality of managed care plans and other health-related programs. NCQA's Health Plan Accreditation program provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating health plan quality. Accreditation by NCQA helps support the objectives of managed care plans like CenCal Health – to keep members at optimal levels of health while also controlling costs and meeting government requirements. Congratulations to our provider partners on your contributions to this monumental achievement!

At the end of April, CenCal Health awarded 16 grants totaling \$5,542,406 to address critical capacity and health care workforce needs in San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara County. Through the Medi-Cal Capacity, Access and Workforce Development Grant Program (Capacity Grants), which was launched in January of 2025, we are collaborating with local provider and community organizations to improve healthcare access and capacity through targeted funding aimed at provider recruitment, workforce training, education, and practice support. In this first round of funding, the Capacity Grants focused on enhancing primary care and pediatrics, behavioral health, and specialty care services.

With the vision of our Board of Directors approving its investment, we anticipate supporting the addition of over 30 health care staff and impacting approximately 19,000 members in both counties.

We are paying attention to the evolving federal and state landscape and offering Town Hall meetings to keep you apprised and identify opportunities for advocacy on important health policy topics. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our healthcare partners for your unwavering dedication to quality care and compassionate service. Together, we are fostering healthier communities.

In partnership,



Marina Owen, CenCal Health CEO

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

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CenCal Health Earns Accreditation from National Committee for Quality Assurance

CenCal Health is pleased to share with our provider partners that the health plan has received accreditation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for our Medi-Cal (Medicaid HMO) program on the Central Coast.

By successfully demonstrating our commitment to high-quality healthcare, operational efficiency, and member experience, CenCal Health earned accreditation for the quality of managed care operations.

Our CEO, **Marina Owen**, emphasized the significance of this milestone: “Our 3-year pursuit of this designation is aligned with CenCal Health’s strategic plan and was a priority to support the best outcomes for our members through improvements to our health plan operations and care delivery systems. With this accomplishment, our local health plan has further invested in the health and well-being of more than 240,000 children, adults, and seniors we serve.”

NCQA accreditation serves as a comprehensive framework for assessing health plans, ensuring they meet rigorous quality standards.

Leading the accreditation process was **Carlos Hernandez**, CenCal Health Chief Quality Officer. “The NCQA Health Plan Accreditation experience proved the most rigorous and comprehensive independent assessment that CenCal Health has ever undertaken. The survey readiness experience transformed our operational processes to further standardize best practices, plan-wide,” Hernandez said. “And though we have successfully achieved our initial goal of health plan accreditation, we are committed to continual accreditation readiness for the future.”

We extend our deepest gratitude to our Board of Directors, healthcare partners, and team members for their commitment to quality care and compassionate service.

For more information on the accreditation, please read our press release:

<https://qrco.de/NCQA-Press>



Support Health Access with the Transportation Benefit

Did you know that CenCal Health members can receive medical transportation as a covered Medi-Cal benefit?

CenCal Health covers transportation to and from medically necessary services, such as doctor appointments, specialty mental health care, substance use disorder treatment, dental visits, pharmacy and medical supply pickups, and more.

CenCal Health partners with Ventura Transit System (VTS) to schedule and manage transportation services for CenCal Health members.



Cultural & Linguistic Resources Available for Your Practice

CenCal Health is committed to health equity and recognizes the importance of delivering services in our members' preferred languages. To help providers effectively communicate with their patients, we offer support through telephonic, in-person, and video remote interpreter services.

Language Access Program Services Available:

- Interpreter services at medical appointments for spoken languages as well as American Sign Language for deaf/hearing impaired members. Telephonic and Video Interpreter Services for spoken language are available on a 24-hour basis for medical encounters in over 200+ languages through CenCal Health's language line vendor, Certified Languages International.
- "Face-to-Face" Interpreter Services are available for American Sign Language, Mixteco, and Spanish (limited to defined criteria) Monday through Friday, 24/7, with advance notice. Please call CenCal Health Member Services at 1-877-814-1861 to schedule face-to-face services.

Need to Cancel a Scheduled Interpreter?

If a provider needs to cancel a scheduled interpreter appointment, please call the toll-free Member Services line at 1-877-814-1861 and inform the Member Services Representative of the request to reschedule or cancel.



Please do not call the interpreter directly to inform them of the cancellation. CenCal Health will communicate all cancellations and changes to the interpreter.

Are you or your staff fluent in a language other than English, and would you like this represented in CenCal Health's Provider Directory? Contact the Provider Services Department at 805-562-1676.

To learn more, please reference our website to find additional resources and access to interpreter services: cencalhealth.org/providers/cultural-linguistic-resources/

Requirements:

- **For Non-Medical Transportation (NMT)**
 - » NMT services do NOT require a Physician Certification form.
 - » CenCal Health members must contact VTS directly at 1-855-659-4600, 5-7 business days in advance to schedule transportation.
- **For Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)**
 - » All NEMT services require a Physician Certification Statement (PCS) form.
 - » Download the PCS form within the Provider Portal or here: cencalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/202504_NEMT-Transportation-PCS-form_tagged.pdf
 - » The PCS form must be initiated by the member's referring physician.
 - » Fax the completed form to CenCal Health's Health Services Department at 805-681-3071, 5-7 business days prior to issuing authorization approval.
- **Members must be eligible at the time of service.**
- **The transportation provided must be the least costly method that meets the members' needs.**
- **VTS and CenCal Health will coordinate along with the member's practitioner to determine the type of transportation required.**

For additional information about the transportation benefit, visit: cencalhealth.org/providers/authorizations/

If members need further assistance when scheduling NMT services, please refer them to the Member Services Department at 1-877-814-1861.

Men's Health Awareness Month

In honor of Men's Health Awareness Month this June, CenCal Health is highlighting the importance of timely checkups with Primary Care Providers (PCP) for those at risk of developing prostate cancer.

The prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test is available to patients to help detect this cancer early on. This test is encouraged for individuals who have higher risk characteristics, such as being African American, having a family history of prostate cancer, and having a family history of the BRCA gene. The following recommendations are encouraged for providers to follow when discussing the necessity of the PSA test:

- **Ages 40 and under**
 - » The PSA is not recommended for this age group.
- **Ages 40 to 54 years**
 - » Patients who are average risk aren't advised to get the PSA test.
 - » Patients around age 45 and at higher risk may benefit. Providers are encouraged to discuss the pros and cons of testing for these patients when deciding whether to get the PSA test.
- **Ages 55 to 69 years (USPSTF recommended age range)**
 - » Providers are encouraged to discuss the pros and cons of testing for these patients when deciding whether to get the PSA test.
- **Ages 70 and older**
 - » The PSA test is usually not recommended according to USPSTF.

Billing

- G0102: Rectal examination as part of prostate cancer screening
- G0103: Use of the prostate-specific antigen screening tool
- Z12.5: Specific screening exam utilized for neoplasm of the prostate

If you feel case management may be necessary for your patients, please review CenCal Health's web resource to see if the member qualifies for management services and to complete a case management referral:

cencalhealth.org/providers/case-management/

For further educational information to provide patients, review the Health and Wellness section of CenCal Health's website for our online health library, self-care tips, and self-management tools: cencalhealth.org/health-and-wellness/

For any further information, reach out to the Population Health team at populationhealth@cencalhealth.org.



Enhancing Health Outcomes Through Social Drivers of Health (SDOH)

At CenCal Health, we are committed to addressing social drivers of health (SDOH) to improve health outcomes, promote quality of life, and foster health equity. SDOH factors include the conditions in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that significantly influence an individual's overall health outcomes.

Focusing on these key drivers can reduce health inequities and ensure that every member has the support they need to thrive. **We rely on your partnership** to help us gather the essential data that informs our understanding and response to these critical factors. This enables us to allocate resources more effectively and provide tailored care addressing the root causes of health disparities.

Why SDOH Data Matters

We encourage all providers in our network to continue collecting and reporting SDOH data at each patient visit. By documenting and submitting SDOH Z-codes to CenCal Health, you help us:

- Identify critical needs within our membership
- Determine the appropriate level of case management support
- Enhance our ability to connect members with necessary resources and services
- Shape the creation of targeted educational materials and programs designed to address member risks and improve health outcomes through whole-person care approaches

Reporting SDOH with Z-Codes

To streamline the collection of SDOH data, we've provided a list of key categories and corresponding Z-codes for your reference. By accurately coding these conditions, you support CenCal Health's efforts to assess member needs and tailor interventions.

The following categories with corresponding Z-code prefixes should be reported when applicable:

- Education and literacy (Z55)
- Employment and unemployment (Z56)
- Occupational exposure to risk factors (Z57)
- Housing and economic circumstances (Z58 / Z59)
- Social environment (Z60)
- Upbringing (Z62)
- Primary support group, including family circumstances (Z63)
- Certain psychosocial circumstances (Z64)
- Other psychosocial circumstances (Z65)

Tips

- Create a workflow to ensure an SDOH assessment during each patient's appointment.
- Document and report conditions that coexist at the time of the visit and that affect patient care treatment or management.
- Coders can utilize SDOH documentation from social workers, community health workers, case managers, and nurses.



Please reference the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Priority SDOH Codes by scanning the QR code to the left or visiting: <https://qrco.de/PkRv7>

If you would like to make a case management referral, please visit CenCal Health's website: cencalhealth.org/providers/case-management/

For additional information about SDOH, please visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <https://www.cdc.gov/about/priorities/why-is-addressing-sdoh-important.html>

Emergency Department Visit Report – Available on the Provider Portal!

In 2023, CenCal Health initiated a Performance Improvement Project (PIP) to increase provider notifications for members with substance use disorders (SUD) and/or serious mental health (SMH) diagnoses following or within 7 days of an emergency department (ED) visit.

CenCal Health has made signification updates to support the goal of improving member health outcomes, functional status, and overall quality of life through addressing medical, behavioral health, and social drivers of health.

CenCal Health “ED Visits Report” is available on the Provider Portal and provides a list of members who are due for a follow-up visit after being seen in the ED. Providers can export and filter this report to identify those members with a SUD/SMH diagnosis. *Since this report utilizes claims data, there may be a lag in the timeliness of information reported.*

Information found in this report includes but is not limited to:

- Member demographic and contact information
- Primary and secondary diagnoses to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes of the ED visit
- Treating ED and date of service

Best Practices

- Establish a daily workflow for checking the new Provider Portal report to identify patients who have recently visited the ED.
- Upon identification, schedule follow-up appointments within 7 days.
 - » Encourage patients to bring their discharge paperwork, including any medications they received upon discharge.
 - » Use the “Teach-Back Method” to ensure patients and caregivers review and understand discharge instructions and their next steps in care.
 - » Engage members in care plans to prevent future ED visits.
- Outreach to patients who cancel appointments and assist with rescheduling as soon as possible.
- Develop a tracking method for patients due or past due for follow-up after discharge.
- To reduce barriers associated with Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), consider referrals to Community Supports (CS) or Enhanced Care Management (ECM). For a full list of SDOH codes, please visit: cencalhealth.org/providers/social-determinants-of-health/

CenCal Health is dedicated to supporting its PCPs in providing high-quality care for patients with SUD or SMH diagnoses. By improving the timeliness of ED visit notifications, we aim to enhance patient outcomes and support better care coordination. We encourage all PCPs to utilize this new report. Thank you for your continued commitment to patient care.

For further questions or support, please reach out to the Population Health team at populationhealth@cencalhealth.org.

Care Management

Care Management support is available for members who have complex medical conditions, high psychosocial risk factors, or need assistance navigating the healthcare system. Utilize CenCal Health’s Provider Portal to determine if the member is currently receiving Complex or Enhanced Care Management or Community Support services. These programs have a dedicated team that can partner with you to support the health, social, and behavioral needs of the member.

For more information or to access referral forms, visit:

- Care Management: cencalhealth.org/providers/case-management/ or call 805-681-8260
- Behavioral Health Care Coordination: cencalhealth.org/providers/behavioral-health-treatment-and-mental-health-services/mental-health-service-provider-resources/
- Community Supports: cencalhealth.org/providers/calaim/

Prenatal and Postpartum Care: What Providers Should Know

CenCal Health requires that all obstetrics and gynecology practitioners ensure timely and adequate care during a patient's gestational and postpartum periods. Timely care can positively impact the prevalence of maternal death, miscarriages, birth defects, low birth weight, and neonatal infections, as well as assess postpartum mood and anxiety disorder (PMAD).

Clinical Guidelines

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends the **first prenatal care appointment in the first trimester**, followed by subsequent visits and a **postpartum care appointment within the first three weeks after birth**, followed by ongoing care as needed, concluding with a comprehensive postpartum care appointment including screening for postpartum depression at multiple visits no later than 12 weeks after birth. This screening should encompass an assessment of the individual's psychological well-being utilizing a validated instrument.

Covered Services Under Medi-Cal

CenCal Health members can get support from a doula (birth worker) at no cost to provide additional assistance and support during prenatal and postpartum visits as well as during labor and birth, miscarriage, and abortion. The doula benefit guide and recommendation form can be found on CenCal Health's Provider Training Library:

cencalhealth.org/providers/provider-training-resources/provider-training-library/

Lactation services are also available for members in need of breastfeeding information. An International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) can assess the individual's ability to breastfeed and resolve issues they may have related to breastfeeding. IBCLCs provide up to a two-hour consultation in the office, home, or hospital. For services, please verify authorization requirements in Section H of the 2025 Provider Manual: cencalhealth.org/providers/forms-manuals-policies/provider-manual/

For additional information on doula and lactation services, please call your Provider Relations Representative at 805-562-1676.

Best Practices

Prenatal care

- Document complete assessment of illnesses, medical, family, and social history, including history of depression and support system available at home.
- Communicate ultrasonographic findings.
- Provide education on topics including, but not limited to, adequate weight gain, nutrition counseling, prenatal vitamins, birthing classes, and take-home printed resources.

Postpartum care

- Document complete assessment of physical, social, and emotional well-being.
- Provide education on lactation classes, reproductive planning, and other government assistance programs such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
- Quality Measurement recommends submitting EMR data files to ensure proper completion of this health measure. For further information or assistance, please reach out to the Quality Measurement team at QMGRP@cencalhealth.org.
- Implement a standardized screening tool for the appropriate ages for postpartum checkups as well as scheduling timely follow-up visits. Examples of appropriate depression screening tools:
 - » Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale: LOINC 99046-5
 - » Patient Health Questionnaire: LOINC 44261-6
 - » Beck Depression Inventory: LOINC 89209-1

For further best practice guidance, please reach out to CenCal Health's Practice Transformation Strategist, Sheila Thompson, RN, CPHQ at sthompson@cencalhealth.org. Contact CenCal Health's Population Health team with any questions at populationhealth@cencalhealth.org.

Prenatal and Postpartum Care: What Providers Should Know (cont.)

Resources

- **Wellness and Prevention Campaigns:** Educational materials are mailed to members who are eligible for certain healthcare services, such as Healthy Pregnancy and Healthy Postpartum. For provider reference on these items, please review the mailers, which are provided in Spanish and English here: cencalhealth.org/providers/patient-education-materials/
- **Population Health Management Programs:** Created to ensure equitable care among participants. Several programs are available for pregnant and postpartum women, including but not limited to Community Supports, Disease Management, and Care Management programs. To learn more about Care Management Programs, please visit: cencalhealth.org/members/calaim/
- **For care management referrals,** please visit the CenCal Health website: cencalhealth.org/providers/case-management/
- Please reference the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) toolkit for additional best practices: www.medicaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-08/ppc-for-state-and-medicaid-toolkit.pdf

CenCal Health Holiday Closure

Thursday, June 19, 2025 (Juneteenth Federal Holiday Observed)

Important numbers:

Provider Services: 805-562-1676

Claims Services: 805-562-1083

Pharmacy Services: 805-562-1080

Health Services: 805-562-1082

Member Services: 877-814-1861

Behavioral Health: 805-562-1600

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CalAIM UPDATES

Closed-Loop Referrals (CLRs) for Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and Community Supports (CS) Under CalAIM

Effective July 1, 2025, all referrals to Enhanced Care Management (ECM) or Community Supports (CS) will transition to a Closed-Loop Referral (CLR) process, as part of the Department of Health Care Services' CalAIM (California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal) Population Health Management strategy.

What is a Closed-Loop Referral?

A Closed-Loop Referral ensures that each referral is fully tracked and communicated from start to finish. When you refer a CenCal Health member to ECM or CS:

- The referral is monitored throughout the process, **from initiation and authorization to closure.**
- You will receive **timely updates** on the referral's status.
- The referral concludes with a **clear outcome**, indicating whether the member received the service or, if not, a documented reason (e.g., the member declined, could not be reached, or was deemed ineligible).

How This Benefits Your Patients and Your Practice

As a primary care provider, behavioral health provider, hospital, or community-based partner, the CLR process supports your efforts by:

- Keeping you **informed at every step** of your patients' referral journey.
- Promoting **timely access** to the services your patients need.
- Facilitating **collaborative care coordination** with ECM and CS providers for more integrated, whole-person care.
- **Reducing gaps in care** and driving better health outcomes for your patients.

We value your continued partnership as we strengthen care coordination and ensure every CenCal Health member receives the support and services they need.

More details about CLR notification methods and upcoming training opportunities will be shared soon.

For more information on CalAIM, please visit

cencalhealth.org/providers/calaim/.