

Comments on the Duals Demonstration Project

Silicon Valley Independent Living Center is a nonprofit organization run by and for people with all types of disabilities, of all ages, throughout Santa Clara County.

We are concerned about several aspects of the proposed Duals Demonstration project. First, the entire project seems to be based on an underlying assumption that the only way to address the problems of care coordination within the existing fee-for-service system is through managed care. Managed care, particularly the capitated approach suggested on p. 5, is a poor fit for the population of dual eligibles, which you yourselves describe on p. 2 as being “older, poorer and sicker” than other enrollees. With this population, the only way a health plan could deliver on its promised savings would be by denying needed care to enrollees.

Also, Table 4 on p. 7, ranking the counties by population of dual eligibles, suggests that the project is most interested in serving large, urban counties as a back-door way of forcing the largest number of recipients into managed care. A true demonstration would include at least one medium-sized and one small, rural county among the four demonstration counties.

We would prefer to see a demonstration that addresses the service coordination issues between Medi-Cal and Medicare directly, perhaps through the use of care coordinators, rather than this kind of radical shift to managed care. In Hawai‘i, where all aged, blind and disabled (ABD) Medicaid recipients were recently shifted to managed care, the result was chaos in service provision, with patients turned down at pharmacy counters due to miscommunications between the health plans and the pharmacy, all for a negligible savings of around four percent. California can and must do better.

Sincerely,

Mark Romoser
Community Advocate
Silicon Valley Independent Living Center
San Jose, CA