



The Medi-Cal Access Project: Increasing Awareness of Medi-Cal Managed Care and Promoting Voluntary Enrollment for Seniors and People with Disabilities

Summary Report of Year One

The Project: Health Research for Action (HRA), a center in UC Berkeley's School of Public Health, has received funding from the California Department of Health Services (DHS) for the four-year *Medi-Cal Access Project*. The main goal of this project is to promote voluntary enrollment into Medi-Cal Managed Care for seniors and people with disabilities. To this end, HRA has spent the past year conducting formative research to understand how seniors and people with disabilities learn about their Medi-Cal delivery options and make decisions about these options. Based on these findings, HRA has developed a guidebook to increase awareness of Medi-Cal Managed Care and promote voluntary enrollment.

This report summarizes the findings from the formative research, which included feedback from English-, Spanish-, and Chinese-speaking seniors and people with disabilities in Alameda, Riverside, and Sacramento counties.

The Research: The research conducted this year included:

- **24 consumer interviews:** Conducted one-on-one, with seniors and people with disabilities on Medi-Cal, to gather background information.
- **18 focus groups with 105** seniors and people with disabilities with Medi-Cal.
- **53 key informant interviews** with providers and advocates who are familiar with these issues.
- **36 usability tests:** Conducted one-on-one, with seniors and people with disabilities on Medi-Cal, to test specific chapters of the guidebook.

The Advisory Group: HRA has worked closely with a 24-member advisory group throughout this project. The advisory group is composed of advocates, Managed Care Plan representatives, health care providers, policymakers, and Medi-Cal beneficiaries.



The Intervention: Based on findings from the formative research and input from the advisory group, HRA has developed a user-friendly consumer guidebook. This guidebook will be mailed to beneficiaries with Regular Medi-Cal in the target population, starting in early 2008. Based on findings from the formative research, additional interventions will be created in the remaining three years of the project.

The Main Findings: Main findings from the formative research are:

- Beneficiaries do not trust HMOs or Medi-Cal.
- Beneficiaries fear that if they join a Managed Care Plan and are not satisfied, they cannot return to Regular Medi-Cal.
- Beneficiaries and providers do not clearly understand the options; both want more information.
- Beneficiaries want a tool to help them compare, side-by-side, the benefits of the Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans in their county and Regular Medi-Cal. They want phone numbers, information about costs, prescription drugs, specialists, quality of care, and hospital choices.

A complete report, including detailed research findings, is available at:

<http://healthresearchforaction.org/evaluation/medicaid-guide-medi-cal-access-project-report-2007.pdf>