

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES Medi-Cal Member Advisory Committee

### PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

October 10, 2023  
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.  
(Virtual Meeting)

**Participants:**

- Medi-Cal Member Advisory Committee (MMAC) Members: 12 of 15 MMAC Members
- Department of Health Care Services (DHCS): Michelle Baass, René Mollow, Brian Hansen, Maria Romero-Mora, Susan Philip, Palav Babaria, Paula Wilhelm, Jacey Cooper, Tracy Arnold
- Meeting Facilitators: Everyday Impact Consulting (EIC)
- Guest Speakers: Melissa Muganzo (Muganzo Entertainment)

**Materials:** Agenda, Presentation

### **Optional Prep-meeting – Language Justice Orientation (15 minutes)**

Attendees were assisted to connect via Zoom, informed about interpretation and other meeting logistics.

### **Welcome**

The meeting began with opening remarks from Director Michelle Baass, who extended her gratitude for the learning taking place through this recently formed committee, and expressing the openness to feedback and improvement from DHCS' part for the Medi-Cal program. Director Baass stated that the goal with this committee is to listen and hear from members about what is working well, what are the challenges, and what feedback members have about the Medi-Cal program.

### **Grounding Activity**

A grounding activity was facilitated by EIC, inviting everyone to warm their hands by rubbing them together, then placing them over their heart and bellies, while being mindful of their breath, present in the moment, and grateful for the people in their lives.

### **Recap & Check-Ins**

EIC provided a recap of the August 2023 MMAC meeting. Following the recap, MMAC members checked in and were asked to use one to two words to share their experience so far with participating in the MMAC. Members used such words as informative, inspirational, community-minded, and empowering to respond to the check-in prompt. René Mollow, Deputy Director of Health Care Benefits and Eligibility; Susan Philip, Deputy Director of Health Care Delivery Systems; Paula Wilhelm, Assistant Deputy Director for Behavioral Health; and Palav Babaria, Deputy Director and Chief Quality and Medical Officer, Quality and Population Health Management, introduced themselves. DHCS Director Michelle Baass then provided an update on the progress, work, and follow-ups that have occurred since the MMAC launched earlier this year.

### **Large Group Discussion: CalAIM Initiative and Benefits**

EIC introduced the CalAIM initiative as the group discussion topic, and invited Palav Babaria and Susan Philip to present on the Enhanced Care Management benefit and Community Supports services, respectively.

Following the presentations, EIC facilitated a 35-minute large group discussion, with facilitators asking about member experiences of having care coordinators or someone assisting them with their health care needs. Members shared the following responses:

- A member who hasn't had a care coordinator was glad to hear about the group's experience and to know this was a resource they could count on to help them navigate their health care needs.
- Another member who hasn't used care coordination services in the past asked about the qualifications and experience care coordinators had in helping folks with learning disabilities navigate their needs.
- Of members who previously had care coordinators, one stated they felt accepted by the coordinator who helped them get care. The member felt the coordinators honored the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, but could have been more qualified in terms of language access and helping individuals whose primary language is not English.
- Another member spoke highly of their experience with their care coordinator, and how attentive to their needs they were, but lamented that they were unable to continue receiving coordinator assistance with care due to budget cuts.
- One member felt it was not easy to work with their care coordinator to step down (or up) to different levels of care and was told by their coordinator that there are some services only available to certain people, judging the member based on the coordinator's perception that the member did not need certain services.
- Lastly, a member who has worked with up to seven care coordinators at a time for their child expressed they felt like the coordinators were not very helpful, but instead often asked for updates from the member about what other coordinators had done or said. The member shared that there was one care coordinator who did communicate effectively with them and other care coordinators.

A second question that the group discussed and gave their input on was: When you hear that Medi-Cal can help members find affordable housing, how do you react, and what questions come to mind? Many members expressed this being the first time hearing about these services and shared their questions, thoughts, and experiences:

- Members expressed skepticism and wanted more information about this service. They said the process of navigating the search for affordable housing is fractured, and they previously received offers from other groups and agencies to help them find affordable housing, but they were ultimately not helpful and ineffective.
- Questions arising from the discussion included: Is this the first time that Medi-Cal is providing help with helping to find affordable housing, and could they really help? What kind of supports around affordable housing would these services include? Who would Medi-Cal be partnering with, and what methods are they using?

- One member expressed concern about the expansion of Medi-Cal services to new areas due to an effective initiative, but said there are currently a lot of priority areas in Medi-Cal that still need improvement.

Susan Philip and Director Baass provided more context and answers to member questions, particularly regarding eligibility for some supports and the services offered in different counties through managed care plans. Susan clarified how the support for finding affordable housing would fall into Community Supports services and not be paid directly from Medi-Cal to members.

### **Next Steps**

Action items, post-meeting surveys, and information for the next meeting on January 9, 2024, were presented by EIC.

### **Closing Poem**

A spoken word poem named “Dear Social Justice Leader” was recited by performer Melissa Muganzo, acknowledging and thanking members for their work and dedication towards a better tomorrow for their communities.

### **Closing Remarks**

The meeting concluded with closing remarks from Director Baass, who thanked members for an engaging meeting and for sharing their responses and perspectives regarding the new benefits that were discussed.