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## Medi-Cal Healthier California for All Executive Summary

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has developed a framework for the upcoming waiver renewals that encompasses broader delivery system, program and payment reform across the Medi-Cal program, called Medi-Cal Healthier California for All (formerly known as CalAIM: California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal). This initiative advances several key priorities of the Administration by leveraging Medicaid as a tool to help address many of the complex challenges facing California's most vulnerable residents, such as homelessness, insufficient behavioral health care access, children with complex medical conditions, the growing number of justice-involved populations who have significant clinical needs, and the growing aging population. This proposal recognizes the opportunity to provide for non-clinical interventions focused on a whole-person care approach via Medi-Cal that target social determinants of health and reduce health disparities and inequities. Furthermore, the broader system, program, and payment reforms included in the initiative allow the state to take a population health, person-centered approach to providing services and puts the focus on improving outcomes for all Californians. Attaining such goals will have significant impact on an individual's health and quality of life, and through iterative system transformation, ultimately reduce the per-capita cost over time. DHCS intends to work with the Administration, Legislature and our other partners on these proposals and recognizes the important need to discuss these issues and their prioritization within the state budget process. These are initial proposals whose implementation will ultimately depend on whether funding is available.

### Background and Overview

Medi-Cal has significantly expanded and changed over the last ten years, most predominantly because of changes brought by the Affordable Care Act and various federal regulations as well as state-level statutory and policy changes. During this time, the DHCS has also undertaken many initiatives and embarked on innovative demonstration projects to improve the beneficiary experience. In particular, DHCS has increased the number of beneficiaries receiving the majority of their physical health care through Medi-Cal managed care plans. These plans are able to offer more complete care coordination and care management than is possible through a fee-for-service system. They can also provide a broader array of services aimed at stabilizing and supporting the lives of Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

Depending on the needs of the beneficiary, some may need to access six or more separate delivery systems (managed care, fee-for-service, mental health, substance use disorder, dental, developmental, In Home Supportive Services, etc.). As one would expect, need for care coordination increases with greater system fragmentation, greater clinical complexity, and/or decreased patient capacity for coordinating their own care. Therefore, in order to meet the behavioral, developmental, physical, and oral health needs of all members in an integrated, patient centered, whole person fashion, DHCS is seeking to integrate our delivery systems and

align funding, data reporting, quality and infrastructure to mobilize and incentivize towards common goals.

To achieve such outcome, the proposals offer the solutions to ensure the stability of Medi-Cal program and allows the critical successes of waiver demonstrations such as Whole Person Care, the Coordinated Care Initiative, public hospital system delivery transformation, and the coordination and delivery of quality care to continue and be expanded to all Medi-Cal enrollees. The initiative seeks to build upon past successes and improve the entire continuum of care across Medi-Cal, ensuring the system more appropriately manages patients over time through a comprehensive array of health and social services spanning all levels of intensity of care, from birth to end of life. To do this, we must change the expectations for our managed care and behavioral health systems. Holding our delivery system partners accountable for a set of programmatic and administrative expectations is no longer enough. We must provide a wider array of services and supports for complex, high need patients whose health outcomes are in part driven by unmet social needs and make system changes necessary to close the gap in transitions between delivery systems, opportunities for appropriate step-down care and mitigate social determinants of health, all hindering the ability to improve health outcomes and morbidity.

## Guiding Principles

In 2018, the Care Coordination Advisory Committee developed a core set of guiding principles. For the purposes of the initiative DHCS built off and refined those principles to guide the work we intended to pursue.

- Improve the member experience.
- Deliver person-centered care that meets the behavioral, developmental, physical, and oral health needs of all members.
- Work to align funding, data reporting, quality and infrastructure to mobilize and incentivize towards common goals.
- Build a data-driven population health management strategy to achieve full system alignment.
- Identify and mitigate social determinants of health and reduce disparities or inequities.
- Drive system transformation that focuses on value and outcomes.
- Eliminate or reduce variation across counties and plans, while recognizing the importance of local innovation.
- Support community activation and engagement.
- Improve plan and provider experience by reducing administrative burden when possible.
- Reduce the per-capita cost over time through iterative system transformation.

## Key Goals

To achieve such principles, the initiative has three primary goals:

- Identify and manage member risk and need through Whole Person Care Approaches and addressing Social Determinants of Health;
- Move Medi-Cal to a more consistent and seamless system by reducing complexity and increasing flexibility; and

- Improve quality outcomes and drive delivery system transformation through value-based initiatives, modernization of systems and payment reform.

The reforms are comprehensive and critical to the success of the delivery system transformation necessary to improve the quality of life for Medi-Cal members as well as long-term cost savings/avoidance that will not be possible to achieve absent these initiatives. Furthermore, these reforms are interdependent and build off one another; without one, the others are not either possible or powerful. Below is an overview of the various proposals and recommendations that make up Medi-Cal Healthier California for All.

### **Identify and Manage Member Risk and Need through Whole Person Care Approaches and Addressing Social Determinants of Health**

California continues to strengthen integration within the State's health care delivery system aimed at achieving better care, better health and reduced expenditures in Medi-Cal programs. In line with these objectives, DHCS is proposing reforms that would better identify and manage member risk and need for beneficiaries who may be challenged with medical and behavioral conditions, access to care issues, as well as chronic illnesses and disabilities, and require multidisciplinary care to regain health and function.

To achieve such goals, DHCS proposes the following recommendations that focus on a whole-person care approach that addresses the needs of our beneficiaries across the board – looking at physical and behavioral as well as social determinants of health, with the overarching goals of improving quality of life and reducing the overall costs for the Medi-Cal population.

- Require plans to submit local population health management plans.
- Implement new statewide enhanced care management benefit.
- Implement in lieu of services (e.g. housing navigation/supporting services, recuperative care, respite, sobering center, etc.).
- Implement incentive payments to drive plans and providers to invest in the necessary infrastructure, build appropriate enhanced care management and in lieu of services capacity statewide.
- Evaluate participation in Institutions for Mental Disease Serious Mental Illness/Serious Emotional Disturbance Section 1115 Expenditure Waiver.
- Require screening and enrollment for Medi-Cal prior to release from county jail.
- Pilot full integration of physical health, behavioral health, and oral health under one contracted entity in a county or region.
- Develop a long-term plan for improving health outcomes and delivery of health care for foster care children and youth.

### **Population Health Management**

Medi-Cal managed care plans shall develop and maintain a patient-centered population health strategy, which is a cohesive plan of action for addressing member needs across the continuum of care based on data driven risk stratification, predictive analytics, and standardized assessment processes. Each managed care plan shall include, at a minimum, a description of how it will:

- Keep all members healthy by focusing on preventive and wellness services;

- Identify and assess member risks and needs on an ongoing basis;
- Manage member safety and outcomes during transitions, across delivery systems or settings, through effective care coordination; and
- Identify and mitigate social determinants of health and reduce health disparities or inequities.

### Enhanced Care Management

DHCS proposes to establish a new, statewide enhanced care management benefit. An enhanced care management benefit would provide a whole-person approach to care that addresses the clinical and non-clinical needs of high-need Medi-Cal beneficiaries. Enhanced care management is a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to providing intensive and comprehensive care management services to individuals. The proposed benefit builds on the current Health Homes Program and Whole Person Care pilots, and transitions those pilots to this new statewide benefit to provide a broader platform to build on positive outcomes from those programs.

Target populations include, but are not limited to:

- High utilizers with frequent hospital or emergency room visits/admissions;
- Individuals at risk for institutionalization with Serious Mental Illness, children with Serious Emotional Disturbance or Substance Use Disorder with co-occurring chronic health conditions;
- Individuals at risk for institutionalization, eligible for long-term care;
- Nursing facility residents who want to transition to the community;
- Children or youth with complex physical, behavioral, developmental and oral health needs (i.e. California Children Services, foster care, youth with Clinical High Risk syndrome or first episode of psychosis);
- Individuals transitioning from incarceration; and
- Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.

### In Lieu of Services & Incentive Payments

In order to build upon and transition the excellent work done under Whole Person Care, DHCS is proposing to implement in lieu of services, which are flexible wrap-around services that a managed care plan will integrate into its population health strategy. These services are provided as a substitute, or to avoid, other services such as a hospital or skilled nursing facility admission or a discharge delay. In lieu of services would be integrated with Case or Care Management for members at high levels of risk and may fill gaps in state plan benefits to address medical or social determinants of health needs. Examples of in lieu of services include but are not limited to: housing transition and sustaining services, recuperative care, respite, home and community based wrap around services for beneficiaries to transition or reside safely in their home or community, and sobering centers.

The use of in lieu of services are voluntary, but the combination of enhanced care management and in lieu of services allows for a number of integration opportunities, including an incentive for building an integrated managed long-term services and supports (MLTSS) managed care program by 2026 and building the necessary clinically-linked housing continuum for our homeless population. In order to be equipped with the required MLTSS and housing infrastructure, the State must use its ability to provide our Medi-Cal managed care plans with financial incentive payments established to drive plans and providers to invest in the necessary

delivery and systems infrastructure, build appropriate care management and in lieu of services capacity, and achieve improvements in quality performance and measurement reporting that can inform future policy decisions.

### Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) Expenditure Waiver

Currently, federal Medicaid funding cannot be used for institutional services provided to individuals with serious mental illness or severe emotional disturbance (known as the IMD exclusion). However, the federal government has developed an opportunity for states to seek the ability to receive federal funding for institutional services provided to these populations. Through extensive stakeholder engagement, DHCS will assess state and county interest in pursuing the IMD expenditure waiver, as well as readiness of our systems to achieve the required goals and outcomes. Such a proposal must be budget neutral and would allow counties to “opt-in.” The main elements of any proposed waiver would include:

- Ensuring quality of care in psychiatric hospitals and residential settings, including required audits;
- Improving care coordination and transitions to community based care;
- Increasing access to a full continuum of care including crisis stabilization and other clinically enriched forms of housing in the community with robust support services; and
- Earlier identification and engagement in treatment including through increased integration.

In pursuing this waiver opportunity, counties that “opt in” should be prepared to build out a robust continuum so individuals who begin at a higher level of institutional care can be stepped down to a less restrictive, community-based, residential setting.

### Mandatory Medi-Cal Application Process upon Release from Jail

Justice involved individuals often receive both medical and behavioral health services while incarcerated. Upon release from jail, proper coordination is needed to ensure the medical and behavioral health needs of an individual continue to be met, and additionally ensure critical non-clinical needs are met like housing, transportation and overall integration back into the community. Studies have shown, such coordination activities reduce unnecessary emergency room and inpatient stays, as well as improve treatment and medication adherence upon release from jail. In an effort to ensure all county inmates receive timely access to Medi-Cal services upon release from incarceration, DHCS proposes that California mandate the county inmate pre-release Medi-Cal application process by January 2022. Additionally, DHCS is proposing to mandate all counties implement warm-handoffs from county jail release to county behavioral health departments when the inmate was receiving behavioral health services while incarcerated to allow for continuation of behavioral health treatment in the community.

### Full Integration Plans

DHCS would like to test the effectiveness of full integration of physical health, behavioral health, and oral health under one contracted entity. Due to the complexity of the policy considerations around this concept, DHCS will need to conduct extensive stakeholder engagement around eligibility criteria for entities, administrative requirements across delivery systems, provider network requirements, quality and reporting requirements, as well as complex financial

considerations due to realignment and Prop 30 implications. Given the complexity of this proposal, DHCS assumes the selected plans would not go live until 2024, as DHCS and our managed care plans and county partners work together to develop the most appropriate delivery systems for this purpose.

### Develop a Long-Term Plan for Foster Care

In 2020, DHCS would like to form a group of stakeholders to weigh in on a long-term plan and strategy for improving health outcomes and the delivery of fully-integrated health care services for foster care children and youth. Based on the recommendations from such workgroup, DHCS, California Department of Social Services, and other sister departments would work to implement such changes based on timelines developed in the stakeholder process.

### Moving Medi-Cal to a More Consistent and Seamless System by Reducing Complexity and Increasing Flexibility

Medi-Cal provides services to some of California's most vulnerable and medically complex beneficiaries, but many of the services are different depending on the county one lives in. DHCS is proposing to standardize and reduce complexity by implementing administrative and financial efficiencies across the state and delivery systems to provide more predictability and reduce county-to-county differences. These reforms stretch across managed care, behavioral health, dental and other county based services.

To achieve such goals, DHCS proposes the following recommendations.

#### Managed Care

- Standardize managed care enrollment statewide
- Standardize managed care benefits statewide
- Transition to statewide managed long term services and supports
- Require Medi-Cal managed care plans be National Committee for Quality Assurance accredited
- Implement annual Medi-Cal health plan open enrollment
- Implement regional rates for Medi-Cal managed care plans

#### Behavioral Health

- Behavioral health payment reform
- Revisions to behavioral health inpatient and outpatient medical necessity criteria for children and adults
- Administrative behavioral health integration statewide
- Regional contracting
- Substance use disorder managed care program renewal and policy improvements

#### Dental

- New benefit: Caries Risk Assessment Bundle and Silver Diamine Fluoride for young children
- Pay for Performance for adult and children preventive services and continuity of care through a Dental Home

## County Based Services

- Enhance oversight and monitoring of Medi-Cal Eligibility
- Enhance oversight and monitoring of California Children's Services and the Child Health and Disability Prevention program
- Improving beneficiary contract and demographic information

## Managed Care

### *Managed Care Enrollment*

By January 2021, DHCS proposes requiring all non-dual eligible Medi-Cal beneficiaries and by January 2023 requiring all dual beneficiaries, statewide to be enrolled mandatorily in a managed care plan, with the exception of those for whom managed care enrollment does not make sense due to limited scope of benefits or limited time enrolled. This will eliminate variation of managed care enrollment practices that currently vary by aid code, population, or geographical location.

### *Standardize Managed Care Benefit*

By January 2021, DHCS proposes to standardize managed care plans benefits, so that all Medi-Cal managed care plans provide the same benefit package. Some of the most significant changes are the carving-in of institutional long-term care and major organ transplants into managed care statewide and, per [Executive Order](#), the carving out of pharmacy.

### *Transition to Statewide Managed Long-Term Services and Supports*

In order to achieve a more standardized approach to comprehensive care coordination for all populations, DHCS is proposing to discontinue the Cal MediConnect pilot program at the end of calendar year 2022. DHCS proposes to transition from the pilot approach of the Coordinated Care Initiative to standardized mandatory enrollment of dual eligibles into a Medi-Cal managed care plan for Medi-Cal benefits and integration of long-term care into managed care for all Medi-Cal populations statewide. This will be done in two phases:

**January 2021:** The Coordinated Care Initiative proceeds as today, however Multipurpose Senior Services Programs will be carved out and all institutional long-term care services will be carved into managed care for all populations enrolled in plans around the state. DHCS will also implement the voluntary in lieu of services benefit at this time.

**January 2023:** Full transition of the Coordinated Care Initiative to mandatory managed care enrollment of dual eligibles into managed care in all counties/plan models. In addition, require Medi-Cal managed care plans to operate Medicare Dual-Special Needs Plans, in order to offer dual eligible members the ability to have coordinated managed care plans for both their Medi-Cal and Medicare benefits.

The purpose of these transitions and phases is to target a long-term goal of implementing managed long term services and supports (MLTSS) statewide in Medi-Cal managed care beginning in 2026 by providing enough time and incentive to develop the needed infrastructure. This will allow beneficiaries to receive needed MLTSS and home and community based services statewide through their managed care plan, instead of a variety of 1915(c) waivers that currently have capped enrollment and are not statewide.

### *NCQA Accreditation of Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans*

In order to streamline Medi-Cal managed care plan oversight and to increase standardization across plans, DHCS recommends requiring all Medi-Cal managed care plans and their subcontractors (delegated entities) to be National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) accredited by 2025. DHCS would use NCQA findings to certify or deem that Medi-Cal managed care plans meet certain State and federal Medicaid requirements.

### *Annual Medi-Cal Health Plan Open Enrollment*

Effective for plan enrollment as of January 1, 2022, DHCS proposes to implement an Annual Health Plan Open Enrollment process for all managed care plan enrollees. Enrollees would generally only be allowed to change their managed care plan during the Annual Health Plan Open Enrollment period which is consistent with health care industry practice. The Annual Health Plan Open Enrollment period would first begin in November 2021. However in recognition of the concerns previously raised by stakeholders, DHCS has developed this proposal to include a consumer-friendly exemption process that will allow members who have a real need to change plans mid-year to do so in a streamlined way. Enrollment into Medi-Cal coverage would still be allowed throughout the year. This proposal provides the stability required to do effective care and case management of the plan members, while still allowing a simplified process to allow a plan change when it is needed.

### *Regional Rates*

DHCS proposes to shift the development of Medi-Cal managed care plan rates from a county-based model to a regional rate model, this also coincides with a shift of the rating period from the state fiscal year to the calendar year beginning in 2020. The proposal to move to regional rates has two main benefits. The first benefit is a decreased number of distinct actuarial rating cells that are required and submitted to CMS for review and approval. The reduction in rating cells will simplify the presentation of rates to CMS with goal of allowing DHCS to pursue/implement financing advancements and innovations utilizing a more flexible rate model. The second benefit of regional rates will allow cost averaging across all plans. This will continue to incentivize plan cost efficiencies, as plan rates will be inclusive of the costs within the multi-county region. This shift will produce a larger base for the averaging rather than just the experience of plans within the county. This change is fundamental to the ability of DHCS to implement the other changes proposed in the initiative.

## **Behavioral Health**

### *Behavioral Health Payment Reform*

The state, in partnership with counties, must take serious steps forward to invest in and improve access to mental health and substance use disorder services for Medi-Cal beneficiaries. Behavioral health transformation is a critical priority for the Governor, the California Health and Human Services Agency, and for DHCS, and we recognize that the full needs of the Medi-Cal population are not being met, particularly with respect to improving services and access for children and other vulnerable populations. In order to achieve true reform, DHCS believes that an important first step is undergoing behavioral health payment reform, where DHCS will



transition counties from a cost-based reimbursement methodology to a structure more consistent with incentivizing outcomes and quality over volume and cost. Such a shift is being designed in conjunction with our county partners and will enable counties to participate in broader delivery system transformation and engage in value-based payment arrangements with their health plan partners in order to support better coordination and integration between physical and behavioral health. This shift will be done thoughtfully with a key focus on ensuring no disruption of services or financial challenges for our county partners.

Behavioral health payment reform is an essential step to other opportunities for the counties around behavioral health integration, regional contracting and delivery system investments needed to further build a high quality continuum of care for mental health and substance use disorder services in the community.

#### *Revisions to Behavioral Health Medical Necessity*

The medical necessity criteria for specialty mental health services is outdated, lacks clarity, and should be re-evaluated. This issue creates confusion, misinterpretation, and could affect beneficiary access to services as well as result in disallowances of claims for specialty mental health and substance use disorder services. DHCS is proposing to modify the medical necessity criteria in order to align with state/federal requirements and more clearly delineate and standardize the benefit statewide.

#### *Administrative Behavioral Health Integration Statewide*

Research indicates that approximately 50% of individuals who have a serious mental illness have a co-occurring substance use disorder and that those individuals benefit from integrated treatment. The State provides Medi-Cal covered substance use disorder and specialty mental health services through two separate county-operated delivery systems, which makes it difficult for counties to provide integrated treatment to individuals who have co-occurring disorders. For example, counties participating in mental health and substance use disorder managed care are subject to two separate annual quality assessments, two separate post payment chart audits, and two separate reimbursement and cost reporting methods. In order to comply with these separate processes, counties providing integrated treatment to a Medi-Cal beneficiary must document the substance use disorder service separately from the specialty mental health service. The purpose of this proposal is to make necessary state and county changes that would provide substance use disorder and specialty mental health services through one delivery system.

#### *Behavioral Health Regional Contracting*

DHCS recognizes that some counties have resource limitations often due simply to their size and the number of beneficiaries residing in their county. Therefore, DHCS encourages counties to develop regional approaches to administer and deliver specialty mental health and substance use disorder services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries. There are a variety of options available to counties, including a Joint Powers Authority to operate such services for a multi-county region (e.g., Sutter/Yuba). Counties could also pool resources to contract with an administrative services organization/third-party administrator or other entity, such as the County Medical Services Program, to create administrative efficiencies across multiple counties. Small counties, rural/frontier counties, and counties with shared population centers or complementary resources

should consider opportunities for regional partnership. Furthermore, DHCS is interested in discussing how counties not currently seeking substance use disorder managed care participation may be more interested in doing so through a regional approach and/or how services provided under substance use disorder fee-for-service might also be provided through a regional approach. DHCS is committed to working with counties to offer technical assistance and support to help develop regional contracts and establish innovative partnerships.

### *Substance Use Disorder Managed Care Program Renewal and Policy Improvements*

DHCS proposes to incorporate the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (also known as substance use disorder managed care) into a comprehensive Section 1915(b) waiver that would include the Medi-Cal managed care plans, mental health managed care plans, and substance use disorder managed care plans. The expenditure authority for residential treatment provided in an Institution for Mental Disease will continue to be authorized through Section 1115 waiver authority. DHCS also intends to provide counties with another opportunity to opt-in to participate in the substance use disorder managed care program in hopes of promoting statewide. Finally, DHCS is exploring opportunities to improve the substance use disorder managed care program based on experience from the first several years of implementation. Accordingly, DHCS proposes clarifying or changing policies to support the goal of improved beneficiary care and administrative efficiency.

## **Dental**

The Department has set an initial goal to achieve at least a 60 percent dental utilization rate for eligible Medi-Cal children. In order to progress towards achieving that goal, and based on our lessons learned from the Dental Transformation Initiative, DHCS proposes the following reforms for Medi-Cal dental be made statewide:

- Add new Dental Benefits based on the outcomes and successes from the Dental Transformation Initiative that will provide better care and align with national dental care standards. The proposed new benefits include a Caries Risk Assessment Bundle for young children and Silver Diamine Fluoride for young children and specified high risk and institutional populations; and
- Continue and expand Pay for Performance Initiatives initiated under the Dental Transformation Initiative that reward increasing the use of preventive services and establishing/maintaining continuity of care through a Dental Home. These expanded initiatives would be available statewide for children and adult enrollees.

## **County Partners**

### *Enhancing County Oversight and Monitoring: Eligibility*

This proposal will help to improve DHCS' oversight and monitoring of various aspects of Medi-Cal eligibility and enrollment and the activities of its contracted partners. This includes implementing additional county oversight activities to increase the integrity of the administration of the Medi-Cal program, as well as implementing the recommendations of the California State Auditor's Office as identified in a recent audit. This proposal will also ensure that DHCS is compliant with federal and State requirements. These enhancement will be done in direct collaboration with our county partners.

### *Enhancing County Oversight and Monitoring: CCS and CHDP*

There are several programs – including California Children’s Services, the Medical Therapy Program, and the Child Health and Disability Prevention program – that provide services to over 750,000 child beneficiaries. The State delegates certain responsibilities for these high-risk children to California’s 58 counties. The State needs to enhance the oversight of counties to ensure they comply with legislation, regulations, and State issued guidance. Enhancing monitoring and oversight will eliminate disparities in care and reduce vulnerabilities to the State, thereby preserving and improving the overall health and well-being of California’s vulnerable populations.

### *Improving Beneficiary Contact and Demographic Information*

DHCS intends to convene a workgroup of interested stakeholders to provide feedback and recommendations on ways in which contact and demographic information can be updated by other entities and the means to accomplish this while maintaining compliance with all applicable State and federal privacy laws. The goal of the workgroup will be to determine the best pathway for ensuring that reported updated data is accurate and can be used in eligibility and enrollment systems/databases without creating unintended consequences for other social services programs, Medi-Cal beneficiaries, managed care plans, and the provider community.

*For more detailed descriptions of the Medi-Cal Healthier California for All proposals please refer to the full proposal document located on the [DHCS website](#).*

### **Advancing Key Priorities**

These reforms are interdependent and build off one another; without one, the others are neither possible or powerful.

As DHCS has assessed the changes proposed under the initiative, it has become apparent that these proposals are critically dependent upon each other. These reforms are fundamental to achieve the overall goals of improving the system and outcomes for Medi-Cal beneficiaries as well as providing long-term fiscal and programmatic sustainability to the Medi-Cal program and delivery system. In developing these recommendations, DHCS has recognized that individual proposals are significantly less likely to be achievable and successful if other key proposals are not pursued. For example, absent the proposed financing changes with respect to both the regional rate setting for Medi-Cal managed care and the structural changes to Medi-Cal behavioral health financing, the ability of our partnered plan and county entities to institute the changes focused on value based and integrated delivery of care are significantly harder and potentially impossible to achieve. These fundamental financing changes themselves would not be possible without the elimination of differences across counties with respect to the delivery systems through which Medi-Cal benefits are delivered. Therefore, carving out prescription drugs from managed care (Medi-Cal Rx) and the other carve-in/carve-outs detailed in the Medi-Cal managed care proposals are necessary and serve as the foundation for DHCS to institute the concepts around not only regional rate setting, but also nearly every other proposal contained within the initiative (such as enhanced care management, in lieu of services, and incentive

payments, as well as the possibility of future full integration pilots). The Medi-Cal program has evolved over the multiple decades since inception and has relied upon ever-increasing system and fiscal complexity in order to operate and serve the Californians who rely upon it. The initiative offers DHCS and the entire State of California an opportunity to take a step back to better assess what Medi-Cal beneficiaries need and alter the delivery systems accordingly, while at the same time working to be the most effective with respect to the funding utilized to most efficiently operate the program.

Furthermore, the initiative aligns with and advances several key priorities of the Administration. At its core, the initiative recognizes the impact of Medi-Cal on the lives of its beneficiaries well beyond just accessing health services in traditional delivery settings. The initiative establishes a foundation where investments and programs within Medicaid can easily integrate, complement and catalyze the Administration's plan to impact the State's homelessness crisis, support reforms of our justice systems for youth and adults who have significant health issues, build a platform for vastly more integrated systems of care and move toward a level of standardization and streamlined administration required as we explore single payer principles through the Healthy California for All Commission. Furthermore, the initiative will advance a number of existing Medi-Cal efforts such as Whole Person Care and the Health Homes Program, the prescription drug Executive Order, improving screenings for kids, proliferating the use of value-based payments across our system, including in behavioral health and long-term care. The initiative will also support the ongoing need to increase oversight and monitoring of all county-based services including specialty mental health and substance use disorder services, Medi-Cal eligibility, and other key children's programs currently administered by our county partners.

Below is an overview of the impact the initiative could have on certain populations, if enacted and funded as proposed:

**Health for All:** In addition to focusing on preventive and wellness services, the initiative will identify patients with high and emerging risk/need and improve the entire continuum of care across Medi-Cal, ensuring the system more appropriately manages patients over time, through a comprehensive array of health and social services spanning all levels of intensity of care, from birth and early childhood to end of life.

**High Utilizers (top 5%):** It is well documented that the highest utilizers represent a majority of the costs in Medi-Cal. The initiative proposes enhanced care management and in lieu of services benefits (such as housing transitions, respite and sobering centers) that address the clinical and non-clinical needs of high-cost Medi-Cal beneficiaries, through a collaborative and interdisciplinary whole person care approach to providing intensive and comprehensive care management services to improve health and mitigate social determinants of health.

**Behavioral Health:** The initiative's behavioral health proposals would initiate a fundamental shift in how Californians (adults and children) will access specialty mental health and substance use disorder services. It aligns the financing structure of behavioral health with that of physical health, which provides financial flexibility to innovate, and enter into value-based payment arrangements that improve quality and access to care. Similarly, the reforms in the initiative simplify administration of, eligibility for, and access to integrated behavioral health care.

**Vulnerable Children:** The initiative would provide access to enhanced care management for medically complex children to ensure they get their physical, behavioral, developmental and oral

health needs met. It aims to identify innovative solutions for providing low-barrier, comprehensive care for children and youth in foster care and furthers the efforts already underway to improve preventive services for children including identifying the complex impacts of trauma, toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences by, among other things, a reexamination of the existing behavioral health medical necessity definition.

**Homelessness and Housing:** The addition of in lieu of services would build capacity to clinically linked housing continuum via in lieu of services for our homeless population, including housing transitions/navigation services, housing deposits, housing tenancy and sustaining services, short-term post hospitalization housing, recuperative care for inpatient transitions and day habilitation programs.

**Justice Involved:** The Medi-Cal pre-release application mandate, enhanced care management and in lieu of services would provide the opportunity to better coordinate medical, behavioral health and non-clinical social services for justice-involved individuals prior to and upon release from county jails. These efforts will support scaling of diversion and reentry efforts aimed at keeping some of the most acute and vulnerable individuals with serious medical or behavioral health conditions out of jail/prison and in their communities, further aligning with other state hospital efforts to better support care for felons incompetent to stand trial and other forensic state-responsible populations.

**Aging Population:** In lieu of services would allow the state to build infrastructure over time to provide Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) statewide by 2026. MLTSS will provide appropriate services and infrastructure for home and community-based services to meet the needs of aging beneficiaries and individuals at risk of institutionalization and should be a critical component on the State's Master Plan on Aging.

## **From Medi-Cal 2020 to Medi-Cal Healthier California for All**

Through Medi-Cal Healthier California for All, DHCS is undertaking a more targeted approach to consolidating its Medi-Cal benefit package in an attempt to achieve better alignment across the system. While Section 1115 waiver authority has historically been the mechanism of choice for states interested in building and expanding managed care delivery systems, the use of the authority has evolved in recent years. The federal government no longer considers the "savings" generated from the shift from fee-for-service to managed care that occurred 15 years ago in Medicaid as relevant in calculating budget neutrality for waivers. CMS in recent guidance has also discontinued approval of traditional financing mechanisms in the Section 1115 context, namely the availability of federal funds for Designated State Health Programs and Safety Net Care Pools. In addition, given that California has significant learnings from our past 1115 Waivers, DHCS believes a primary shift to the use of other authorities is now appropriate to allow us to expand beyond limited pilots to more statewide initiatives. These factors, combined with new federal managed care regulations, has encouraged DHCS to shift its focus away from the Section 1115 waiver authority to instead leverage other available pathways for innovation in the Medi-Cal program.

The proposal outlines all elements of the Medi-Cal 2020 waiver and how they will be incorporated into the initiative. DHCS does not believe California is losing any critical funding or abilities to improve and advance the delivery systems and ultimately improve the beneficiary experience

and outcomes under this federal authority approach. In fact, the proposed shift will allow programs or pilots that have traditionally lived outside the core managed care system, where nearly 85% of all Medi-Cal beneficiaries receive care, to be brought into the main fold of managed care. We look forward to working in close partnership with our federal CMS colleagues and local partners to ensure that the Medi-Cal program continues to change in ways that ultimately further the goals of improved health and outcomes, as well as cost effectiveness, of the Medi-Cal/Medicaid program.

## Medi-Cal Healthier California for All Stakeholder Engagement

DHCS' intention in the release of these proposals is to garner important input from the many key stakeholders and partners that help us to improve upon these concepts and align them with the expertise and experience of our partners. As previously outlined, DHCS will be undertaking a significant stakeholder engagement effort that begins with the release of this document and continues through the initiative's workgroups scheduled for November through February, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) and Behavioral Health SAC meetings, Medi-Cal Health Advisory Panel (MCHAP) and other convenings. We recognize that the initiative contains many significant proposals and changes to the Medi-Cal program, aimed at ultimately improving the beneficiary experience and outcomes. However, these represent DHCS' initial proposals and thinking and we look forward to working to refine and modify these proposals relying on the expertise of our stakeholder partners through this engagement process. DHCS plans to finalize all proposals for submission to CMS in the May to July period of 2020 based on the input we will receive from our partners through this process, but also dependent on the funding availability through the state budget process

## Conclusion

Medi-Cal Healthier California for All is an ambitious but necessary proposal to positively impact our beneficiaries' quality of life by improving the entire continuum of care across Medi-Cal, ensuring the system more appropriately manages patients over time through a comprehensive set of health and social services spanning all levels of intensity of care, from birth to end of life.

Medi-Cal Healthier California for All:

- Keeps all beneficiaries healthy by focusing on preventive and wellness services, while also identifying and assessing member risk and need on an ongoing basis, during transitions in care, and across delivery systems, through effective care coordination.
- Creates a fundamental shift in how Californians (adults and children) will access mental health and substance use disorder services including administration of, eligibility for, and access to integrated behavioral health care.
- Provides access to enhanced care management for medically complex children and adults to ensure they get their physical, behavioral, developmental and oral health needs met.
- Builds capacity in clinically linked housing continuum via in lieu of services for our homeless population, including housing transitions/navigation services, housing deposits,

housing tenancy and sustaining services, short-term post hospitalization housing, recuperative care for inpatient transitions and day habilitation programs.

- Provides the opportunity to better coordinate clinical and non-clinical services for justice-involved individuals prior to and upon release from jail.
- Allows the state to build infrastructure over time to provide Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS) statewide. MLTSS will provide appropriate services and infrastructure for home and community-based services to meet the needs of aging beneficiaries and individuals at risk of institutionalization and will be a critical component on the State's Master Plan on Aging.