



December 29, 2023

THIS LETTER SENT VIA EMAIL

Emily Duran, Chief Executive Officer
Kern Health Systems
2900 Buck Owens Blvd.
Bakersfield, CA 93308

**NOTICE OF IMPOSITION OF MONETARY SANCTIONS FOR FAILURE TO MEET
MINIMUM PERFORMANCE LEVELS FOR MEDI-CAL MANAGED CARE
ACCOUNTABILITY SET PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Dear Emily Duran,

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) sends this notice of imposition of monetary sanctions on Kern Health Systems for failure to meet required minimum performance levels (MPLs) for measurement year (MY) 2022 Medi-Cal Managed Care Accountability Set (MCAS) performance measures.

Under the contract with DHCS, Kern Health Systems is required to meet the DHCS established MPLs for each Health Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) measure and all other required MCAS performance measures (Exhibit A, Attachment 4, Quality Improvement System, section 9 External Quality Review Requirements, A).

Successful administration of the Medi-Cal program requires a collaborative partnership between DHCS and Medi-Cal managed care plans (MCPs). This collaboration includes the expectation that MCPs will meet their contractual and programmatic requirements on an ongoing basis. Kern Health Systems and DHCS regularly collaborated on strategies for improving the Plan's MCAS performance measures required to meet MPLs. On July 20, 2023, DHCS received validated MCAS measure rates from the External Quality Review Organization and confirmed that Kern Health Systems has 10 plan-wide measures below MPL across 3 domains for MY 2022. See Table 2 for enforcement tier designation triggers.

Under Welfare and Institutions Code (W&I) section 14197.7 and the MCP contract, DHCS has the authority to impose monetary sanctions for Kern Health Systems'

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Page 2

December 29, 2023

failure to meet its MPLs for all applicable MCAS performance measures (Exhibit E, Attachment 2, Program Terms and Conditions, section 17 Sanctions, B; W&I § 14197.7(f)(1)). As noted above, the MCP contract requires it to meet the DHCS established MPLs for each MCAS performance measure (Exhibit A, Attachment 4, Quality Improvement System, section 9 External Quality Review Requirements, A). Kern Health Systems confirming failure to meet the MPLs as outlined in the contract creates good cause for DHCS to impose monetary sanctions (Exhibit E, Attachment 2, Program Terms and Conditions, section 17 Sanctions, B; W&I § 14197.7(f)(1)).

DHCS is imposing monetary sanctions for Kern Health Systems' failure to comply with its obligations set forth in the contract. Under W&I section 14197.7(f), DHCS is authorized to impose a \$25,000 sanction per violation of Kern Health Systems' contractual obligation to meet MPLs for each MCAS performance measure.

The total sanction amount for Kern Health Systems is \$69,000 for the following 10 measures below the MPL for MY 2022:

| Reporting Unit | Measures* | Domains* | MCP Rates | MPL | Trending Difference from HEDIS MY 2021 | Population Impacted |
|----------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------|--|---------------------|
| Kern | FUA-30Day | BH | 15.74% | 21.24% | 10.96 | 1071 |
| | FUM-30Day | BH | 18.80% | 54.51% | -0.42 | 570 |
| | CIS-10 | CH | 27.98% | 34.79% | 0.49 | 4240 |
| | IMA-2 | CH | 29.68% | 35.04% | -1.22 | 4718 |
| | LSC | CH | 47.45% | 63.99% | 0 | 3104 |
| | W30-2 | CH | 55.12% | 65.83% | 4.11 | 2680 |
| | W30-6 | CH | 37.12% | 55.72% | 9.07 | 1955 |
| | WCV | CH | 40.64% | 48.93% | 2.68 | 75785 |
| | CCS | RC | 52.80% | 57.64% | 4.14 | 30761 |
| CHL-Tot | RC | 53.67% | 55.32% | -0.04 | 5141 | |

*Please see Table 1 for acronym definitions

Pursuant to W&I section 14197.7 and in accordance with the December 4, 2023, Quality Sanction Bulletin, DHCS has considered the factors set forth in W&I section 14197.7(f) and (g) in determining the sanction amount, including the following:

- Scope of the violations, which are determined by the number of eligible members impacted by the quality-of-care violation (i.e., the number of eligible members who did not receive the recommended preventive

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Page 3

December 29, 2023

service.) If an MCP’s failure to meet an MPL impacts more than 25,000 eligible members, then each impacted beneficiary will constitute a separate violation and the MCP may be sanctioned more than \$25,000 total, as provided by W&I sections 14197.7(f)(1) and (g)(1).

- In determining the nature, scope, and gravity of the violation under W&I section 14197.7(g)(1), DHCS will consider the degree to which the MCP is below the MPL for the measure at issue and will increase sanction amounts per violation based upon the severity of the violation. (Please see Table 3 for violation factors).
- DHCS will consider whether the MCP’s performance on the MPL at issue has improved or worsened over the previous MY under W&I section 14197.7(g)(6). If performance has gotten worse over the previous MY, the sanction amount will increase; if performance has improved, the sanction amount will decrease. (Please see Table 4 for trending factors).
- DHCS has reduced the total sanction amount for MCPs in counties with Healthy Places Index (HPI) scores under the 50th percentile, as determined by DHCS (Please see Table 5 for HPI percentile and impact factors). **This amount has already been accounted for in the sanction total above.**

| MCP by County | HPI Percentile | HPI Impact Factor |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Kern Health Systems | 0.0% | 50.0% |

Kern Health Systems is also required to submit a revised comprehensive quality strategy on or before January 31, 2024, that includes new interventions designed to meet or exceed the required 2024 milestones and details how it intends to devote adequate resources and staff to quality improvement.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Sarah Lahidji
 Division Chief, Quality and Health Equity
 Quality and Population Health Management
 Department of Health Care Services



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Page 4
December 29, 2023

CC

Michelle Baass
Director
Department of Health Care Services

Lindy Harrington
Interim Chief Deputy Director, Health Care Programs
Department of Health Care Services

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Department of Health Care Services

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Page 5

December 29, 2023

Enclosure

| TABLE 1: DOMAIN, MEASURE, & ACRONYM | | |
|---|--|----------------|
| Domain | Measure | Acronym |
| Children's Health (CH) | Child and Adolescent Well-Care Visits | WCV |
| | Childhood Immunization Status: Combination 10 | CIS-10 |
| | Immunizations for Adolescents: Combination 2 | IMA-2 |
| | Lead Screening in Children | LSC |
| | Well-Child Visits in the First 30 Months of Life – Well-Child Visits in the First 15 Months – Six or More Visits | W30-6 |
| | Well-Child Visits in the First 30 Months of Life – Well-Child Visits for Age 15 Months to 30 Months – Two or More Visits | W30-2 |
| Reproductive Health and Cancer Prevention (RC) | Breast Cancer Screening | BCS |
| | Cervical Cancer Screening | CCS |
| | Chlamydia Screening in Women | CHL |
| | Prenatal and Postpartum Care: Postpartum Care | PPC-Post |
| | Prenatal and Postpartum Care: Timeliness of Prenatal Care | PPC-Pre |
| Chronic Disease Management (CD) | Comprehensive Diabetes Care: HbA1c Poor Control (>9.0%)* | HBD-H9* |
| | Controlling High Blood Pressure | CBP |
| Behavioral Health (BH) | Follow-up After Emergency Department Visit for Mental Illness – 30-day Follow-Up | FUM-30Day |
| | Follow-up After Emergency Department Visit for Substance Use – 30-day Follow-Up | FUA-30Day |

*A lower rate is better for this measure

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Page 6

December 29, 2023

| TABLE 2: QUALITY ENFORCEMENT TIER DESIGNATION TRIGGERS | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Enforcement Tiers | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 |
| Triggers | One (1) measure below the MPL in any one (1) domain | Two (2) or more measures below the MPL in any one (1) domain | Three (3) or more measures below the MPL in two (2) or more domains |
| Enforcement Action | Not subject to monetary sanction | Subject to monetary sanction | Subject to monetary sanction |

| TABLE 3: VIOLATION AND BENEFICIARY IMPACT (W&I section 14197.7(g)(1)) | | |
|--|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Severity/Beneficiary Impact | Violation per Measure | Severity Violation Factor |
| Minimal Violation | <1.00% below MPL | 1.0 |
| Minor violation | 1.00% - 5.99% below MPL | 1.2 |
| Moderate Violation | 6.00% - 10.99% below MPL | 1.4 |
| Moderately severe violation | 11.00% - 15.99% below MPL | 1.6 |
| Severe Violation | 16.00% - 20.99% below MPL | 1.8 |
| Extremely severe violation | ≥21.00% below the MPL | 2.0 |

| TABLE 4: TRENDING FACTOR (W&I section 14197.7(g)(6)) | | |
|---|--|------------------------|
| Degrees of Improvement | Trending Difference per Measure | Trending Factor |
| Significant Worsening | ≤(-)15.01% | 2.0 |
| Moderately Significant Worsening | (-)15.00% - (-)11.01% | 1.8 |
| Moderate Worsening | (-)11.00% - (-)7.01% | 1.6 |
| Minimal Worsening | (-)7.00% - (-)4.01% | 1.4 |
| Slight worsening | (-)4.00% - (-)0.01% | 1.2 |
| No Improvement | 0.00 - 1.00% | 1.0 |
| Slight Improvement | 1.01% - 4.00% | 0.8 |
| Minimal Improvement | 4.01% - 7.00% | 0.6 |
| Moderate Improvement | 7.01% - 11.00% | 0.4 |
| Moderately Significant Improvement | 11.01% - 15.00% | 0.2 |
| Significant Improvement | ≥15.01% | 0.0 |

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Page 7

December 29, 2023

| TABLE 5: HPI IMPACT AND SANCTION REDUCTION | | |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| Severity (Impact) of HPI (per county and MCP) | HPI Percentile | HPI Impact Factor (Sanction Reduction) |
| Very High | 0-9%ile | 50% |
| High | 10-19%ile | 40% |
| Moderate | 20-29%ile | 30% |
| Low Moderate | 30-39%ile | 20% |
| Low | 40-49%ile | 10% |

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Page 8
December 29, 2023

NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Kern Health Systems has the right to request a hearing in connection with any sanctions within 15 business days after receipt of the notice to impose sanctions. DHCS will stay the imposition of sanctions upon receipt of the request for a hearing until the effective date of a final decision from the Office of Administrative Hearings and Appeals. Kern Health Systems may request a hearing by sending a letter so stating to the Office of Administrative Hearings and Appeals at the address below:

Chief Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings and Appeals
Department of Health Care Services
3831 N. Freeway Blvd., Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95834

A copy of the hearing request shall also be sent to:

Thomas Mahoney
Quality and Health Equity Measurement Monitoring Section Chief
Quality and Population Health Management
Department of Health Care Services
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P.O. Box 997413
Sacramento CA 95899-7413

Judith Recchio
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