

# Understanding Health Plans' Role in Pharmacy Benefit Delivery



Prescription drug benefits are an integral part of Medi-Cal managed care. Integrating the pharmacy benefit alongside medical care, behavioral health, and other services allows Medi-Cal plans to provide a comprehensive person-centered approach – which allows plans to work with providers to emphasize clinically effective, evidence-based treatments that provide an important window into all the care elements that impact a person's health. Knowing a person's prescription drug history is critically important in order to avoid harmful drug interactions and medication related errors.

## The Medi-Cal Managed Care Pharmacy Benefit A Comprehensive Approach to Care



### QUALITY

- High quality and efficiency standards
- Regular review of drug formularies by clinical experts to promote safe & effective use of medications
- Rigorous quality improvement and compliance programs



### ACCESS

- Access to a network of thousands of retail and community pharmacies and a single point of customer care.
- 24 hour call centers and processing units



### CHOICE

- Medi-Cal managed care plans oversee a large list of prescription drugs, known as a formulary, which allows them to offer an extensive variety of treatments and therapies.



### CARE COORDINATION

- **Care teams** of community physicians and pharmacists with expertise in determining the best care for Medi-Cal populations so prescription history is known to:
  - Avoid harmful drug interactions and medication-related errors.
  - Monitor opioid prescriptions to help prevent opioid misuse.
  - Avoid unnecessary use of emergency departments and hospitalizations.
  - Ensure that patients take their medications for chronic medical conditions according to how they were prescribed.
  - Reconcile medications by comparing what has been prescribed to what a member is already taking at home
- **Real time pharmacy data** – used to understand the needs of members enrolled in care coordination programs and develop drug therapies to complement:
  - **Chronic disease management** for conditions such as Diabetes, Asthma, Cardiac illness, Alzheimers, HIV/AIDS and many other complex health conditions.
  - **Whole Person Care and Health Homes** which target fragile populations experiencing homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse disorder.

# The Medi-Cal Managed Care Pharmacy Benefit

## Real-World Stories



### Health Plan Access to Pharmacy Data Critical in Times of Crisis

In a county served by a Medi-Cal managed care plan, a recent flashflood displaced residents from a local homeless shelter and contaminated their medications. Real-time pharmacy data enabled the plan to identify displaced members who were at risk of being unable to take their daily prescriptions and who faced potential medical crises as a result. This in turn informed where and how the health plan was able to dispatch caseworkers to locate and help these members gain access to their life-saving medications.



### Whole Person Care Program Pharmacy Benefit Helping the Homeless, Saving Lives

One county in California with a “Whole Person Care (WPC) Program” partners with health plans and focuses in part on providing care to the homeless. When a health plan nurse with the WPC program discovered a 67-year-old man who was living in his car she found he was storing dozens of medications that were prescribed in the emergency room where he went routinely for care. WPC staff examined and interviewed him and worked with his newly established doctor who determined that although he had been prescribed 40 medications, he only needed less than 15 to treat his multiple illnesses which included congestive heart failure, COPD, and diabetes. The Whole Person Care program, which is only available through Medi-Cal managed care, likely saved this man’s life.

## The Medi-Cal Managed Care Pharmacy Benefit Saves Taxpayer Dollars



### MEDI-CAL MANAGED CARE PLANS:

- Overseeing the pharmacy benefit are proven to outperform traditional fee-for-service programs when it comes to the total cost of care, patient experience, and health outcomes.
- Promote the use of therapeutically equivalent generic drugs and equally effective lower cost alternatives to ensure the pharmacy benefit and Medi-Cal program are affordable for the State of California.
- Promote the use of generic drugs which helps to reduce overall pharmacy costs when compared to brand named drugs.