

DMHC Health Equity and Quality Initiative

May 14, 2024

Mary Watanabe, Director
Nathan Nau, Deputy Director, Office of Plan Monitoring

DMHC Mission Statement

The California Department of Managed Health Care protects consumers' health care rights and ensures a stable health care delivery system.

Agenda

1. Background
2. Progress to Date
3. Challenges and Opportunities
4. Upcoming Developments and Next Steps
5. Transgender, Gender Diverse, or Intersex Working Group Recommendations

Background

- As required by Assembly Bill 133 (Committee on Budget, 2021) (Health and Safety Code section 1399.870 et seq.), the DMHC established the Health Equity and Quality Measure Set (HEQMS) and a benchmark standard for all DMHC-licensed health care service plans.

Background

- The DMHC's objective for the HEQMS and benchmark standard is to address health inequities and ensure equitable delivery of health care services across DMHC-licensed health plans in California.
- The DMHC will utilize health plan data as a tool to hold health plans accountable.

Progress to Date

- Convened the Health Equity and Quality Committee
- Established the HEQMS and benchmark
 - [APL 22-028](#) and revised [APL 23-029](#)
- Developed the health plan data submission process
- Issued guidance regarding National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) accreditation
- Begun drafting regulations

Challenges and Opportunities

- HEQMS stratification
- Health Plan demographic data metric
- HEQMS reporting adjustments for Exchange lines of business in Measurement Years 2023 and 2024
- Behavioral health plans with direct enrollment

Upcoming Developments and Next Steps

- Reconvene/Reconstitute Committee to make recommendations on behavioral health measures
- Health plan specific performance finding reports
- Corrective Action Plans
- Enforcement
- Annual Report

Transgender, Gender Diverse, or Intersex (TGI) Working Group

- Senate Bill 923 (Wiener) required formation of the Transgender, Gender Diverse, or Intersex (TGI) Health Care Quality Standards and Training Curriculum Working Group.

TGI Working Group Purpose

- Develop a quality standard for patient experience to measure cultural competency related to the TGI community.
- Recommend a trans-inclusive training curriculum to be used by health care plan staff who are in direct contact with enrollees in the delivery of health care services.

TGI Working Group Meetings

- Monthly Meetings: April 2023 to February 2024
- Statewide Listening Sessions: September/October 2023
 - Sacramento, Oakland, Los Angeles, Modesto
 - TGI Community
 - Health Care Provider Community

Barriers to Gender Affirming Care

- Difficulty with navigation to begin gender-affirming care.
- “Transgender broken arm syndrome”.
- Systemic discrimination and consistent misgendering of people seeking services.
- Doctors setting requirements before TGI individuals can receive gender affirming care that are more stringent or inconsistent with the current standards of care.

Barriers to Gender Affirming Care

- Enrollees are hesitant to seek services due to a history of high denial levels.
- Lack of insurance coverage of needed prescriptions and proper equipment.
- The assumptions of femininity and masculinity are reflected in denials of surgical procedures.
- Lack of adequate and competent in-network providers for referrals to care.

Training Curriculum Recommendations

- The Working Group recommended topics and information to be included in training for health plan staff.
- Included using real-life experiences and challenges of TGI individuals.
- Unique needs of sub-populations.

Quality Standard Recommendations

- Collection of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Characteristics (SOGIESC) data.
- Prioritize stratification of subset of HEQMS.
- Best practices and recommendations for collecting and reporting SOGIESC data.
- Conduct further research and develop TGI quality measures.

Best Practices for Collecting SOGIESC Data

- Explain why it is important to collect data.
- Identify the intent and how it will be used.
- Allow for self-attestation.
- Allow to check multiple boxes/categories and recognize the responses may change over time.
- Make clear that providing information is voluntary and will be kept confidential and protected.

Next Steps

- [TGI Working Group Recommendations](#)
- All Plan Letters:
 - Adopt Working Group Recommendations for the Training Curriculum
 - Implementation by March 1, 2025
 - Provider Directories
- Future stratification of HEQMS by SOGIESC.

Questions