



# Provider Bulletin

March / April 2005

Volume 9, Issue 2

## Good News at the Alliance

There is good news at the Alliance, on many fronts:

**2004 Risk Settlement.** The results are in, and \$5.4M in surplus payments will be distributed to local physicians and hospitals in the Alliance network. To support this result, the Alliance's board allocated reserve funds to offset Medi-Cal inflation that has not been funded by the State. Surplus checks will be distributed in April. The Alliance appreciates that local physicians have opened doors of access for our members, and the 2004 settlement says "thank you."

**Healthy Families Payments.** Surplus sharing in the Alliance's Healthy Families program was strong again in 2004, and the health plan continues to pay local, contracted physicians at 130% of Santa Clara County Medicare rates. We know our local county Medicare rates are too low, so we use the Santa Clara County rate base to account for local practice costs. The Alliance's Healthy Kids program in Santa Cruz County also uses these payment rates. Please prompt your Alliance HF/HK patients to stay enrolled, so their health care access and our payments will continue.

**New "Alliance Care IHSS" Plan.** The Alliance is now offering contract amendments to local health care providers to participate in this new program that will cover qualified home care workers in the In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program in Monterey County, starting in July. Santa Cruz County may implement this program at a later date. This program pays physicians at 110% of Santa Clara County Medicare rates, and will reduce the number of local uninsured while strengthening community based care.

**Quality Based Incentives.** The Alliance's board has approved new primary care incentives for access, preventive services, and chronic disease

management, to start in 2006. As part of this project, Alliance surplus sharing will also be budgeted, and therefore guaranteed, for local contracted specialists and hospitals. The Alliance seeks to promote quality of care and physician satisfaction through these changes to risk payment.

**New Santa Cruz Office.** The Alliance's lease is expiring at our office near Harvey West Park. We have purchased an office building at 1600 Green Hills Road in Scotts Valley. We expect to move this summer, and will provide you with contact information. This move will lower administrative cost for the Alliance, and add an appreciating asset to our balance sheet.

**DHS Quality Award.** I am very pleased to inform you that the Alliance, and our physician network, received a Silver Certificate Quality Award from the State Department of Health Services. Our rates of preventive care services were higher than those of thirty-four other Medi-Cal health plans across the State. We can all be proud that our local physicians lead the way in preventing illness in our region.

Best wishes for a prosperous and healthy 2005, from all of us at the Alliance.✂

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## Alliance Pharmacy Formulary

### Now Available on PDA

#### Epocrates Rx (available from

[www.epocrates.com](http://www.epocrates.com))

#### Free drug and formulary reference

Improve patient safety and satisfaction with the latest drug and prescribing information.

#### Key Features

- More than 3,300 brand and generic drugs including “on and off label” dosing, adverse reactions, contraindications, drug interactions, pricing, mechanism of action and more
- MultiCheck multiple-drug interaction checker
- [DocAlert messaging](#): relevant, timely clinical and specialty news
- MedMath medical calculators e.g. Body Mass Index, Creatinine Clearance
- Continually updated and expanded!

#### Additional free features and services available with this product

- [Integrated health insurance formularies](#) (continually updated)
- [Epocrates MedTools](#) e.g. hypertension guidelines, cardiac risk calculator, GFR calculator

#### Device Compatibility



Palm OS 3.5 or higher  
3.8MB available memory



Microsoft Pocket PC  
2002/2003  
3MB available memory



Win 98/2000/ME/XP  
Palm Desktop 3.1 or higher

✕

## State EDS POS

Do you need to contact the Helpline for the State EDS POS (Point of Service) Device? They have a new number for providers to use. It is:

**1-800-541-5555 or 1-800-427-1295**

Do you need to post a Share of Cost? You can also call: **1-800-541-5555**

If you have any questions, please contact Angelique Milhouse in the Provider Services Department at 831-457-3850, ext. 4425. ✕

375 Encinal St., Suite A, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 457-3850 [www.ccah-alliance.org](http://www.ccah-alliance.org)

## HEDIS Season 2005 Underway

You should have already received a letter from the Alliance Quality Improvement department describing this year’s Health Plan Employer Data Information Set (HEDIS<sup>®</sup>) measures. Just in case you missed the letter, here are some highlights.

This year, for the first time, the Alliance will be using **INService, Inc.** as our **HEDIS Quality Studies Agent** to collect and abstract charts according to the NCQA guidelines. Nine of the 17 measures mandated by the state require manual chart review (selected at random) to retrieve important information about the services you provide. **Not all practices will be required to submit copies of charts.**

INService has many years’ experience as a HEDIS Quality Studies Agent. Their trained technicians copy specific chart elements needed for each HEDIS measure. This method ensures minimal disruption to your office and reduces the time a record is out of circulation. Please rest assured that INService, acting as our contracted agent, will maintain the strict confidentiality of all medical records.

Some sites, with fewer than 10 chart requests, may be asked to fax or mail specific documentation back to INService. For such requests, INService will provide a toll-free/secure fax # and a document checklist detailing the limited documentation needed within the review period.

INService will begin contacting physicians’ offices to make arrangements to obtain charts in March. Our intent is to make this process as minimally intrusive to you and your staff as possible. More detail, including patient lists, authorization letters, and the like, will be provided by INService. Thank you for extending them the same courtesy you have always shown us.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this process, please feel free to call Ted Hadley, Quality Improvement Manager, at 831-466-4341. We look forward to another successful HEDIS season that will allow us to demonstrate the high quality of care that you provide to Alliance members. Thanks again in advance for your flexibility and cooperation!

## Your Provider Service Representatives



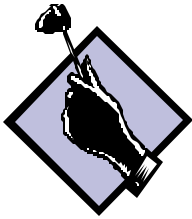
Left to Right: Vanessa Killpatrick, Theresa Garcia, Laurie Hester, Gabriella Calderon

**Gabriella Calderon** refined her skills in customer service while working as an Alliance Member Services Representative for three years. Gabriella transferred to the Provider Services Department in 2003 where she sees every challenge as an “opportunity for growth.” Gabriella has her sights set on obtaining a Business Management degree from Bethany College in the future. She is a native of Watsonville, where she and her husband are raising an eight year old son. Gabriella is the Provider Service Representative for South Monterey County and Salinas. **She can be reached by calling 457-3850 extension 6763.**

**Theresa Garcia** began with the Alliance in 1998 as a Member Services Administrative Assistant, and later transferred to the Provider Services Department. Theresa has called Santa Cruz County “home” for twenty-seven years where she and her husband have raised two children, and are currently foster parents to a five year old boy. Theresa brings strong customer service skills to the Alliance based on her eighteen year career with AT&T as a store manager. Theresa is the Provider Service Representative for the Monterey Peninsula, South Santa Cruz County, and the Clinic De Salud De Salinas sites. **She can be reached by calling 831-457-3850 extension 6770.**

**Laurie Hester** joined The Alliance’s Provider Services department in December, 2004. A native of Mississippi, Laurie made the Central Coast her home in 1981. Raised with a southern hospitality attitude, Laurie is a “natural” when it comes to providing customer service. She is a graduate of San Jose State University with a B.S. degree in Nutrition Science, and worked as the Santa Cruz County Head Start Health and Nutrition Specialist for ten years. Laurie is the Provider Service Representative for North and Mid Santa Cruz County. **You can reach Laurie by calling 457-3850 extension 4422.**

**Vanessa Killpatrick** joined the Alliance Provider Services department in February of this year. Originally from Southern California, Vanessa just recently returned from a six month stint in Anchorage Alaska. Vanessa received her B.S. degree in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix, and worked thirteen years in the healthcare field in a variety of areas including, medical billing, contract negotiation, patient care, and pharmaceutical sales. Vanessa provides back up support to the other Provider Service Representatives, in addition to representing our “out-of-area” providers. **Vanessa can be reached by calling 457-3850 extension 4427.**✘



## PCP Corner

### Referring Members to a Specialist

Whenever possible, please try to stay within the Alliance network of providers. In most cases, out-of-network services are not covered benefits.

If you need a current copy of the Provider Directory, please contact your Provider Services Representative, as listed below.

#### Monterey Peninsula/Watsonville Area Providers

Theresa Garcia 831-755-8220, ext. 6770

#### Salinas and South Monterey County Providers

Gabriella Calderon 831-755-8220, ext. 6763

#### Santa Cruz County Providers

Laurie Hester 831-457-3850, ext. 4422

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### Changing your address, Medi-Cal # or Tax ID #?

*Please let us know as soon as possible to prevent a delay in payment. If your Tax ID changes, please submit a completed W-9 to the Provider Services Department.*

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## Alliance Holiday Office Hours

Central Coast Alliance for Health will be closed to observe the following Holidays:

Memorial Day - May 30, 2005

Independence Day - July 4, 2005

### Upcoming Meetings

#### Managed Care Commission Meeting

April 23

All Managed Care Commission meetings are open to the public. For specific times and locations please call Dominique Blake at (831) 466-4351

#### Physician's Advisory Group

May 4, Green Valley Grill, 6:30-8:30 pm

#### Santa Cruz County Member Services Advisory Group

May 23, Watsonville Community Hospital, 10:00 am-Noon

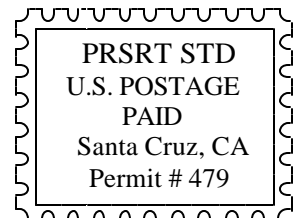
#### Monterey County Member Services Advisory Group

May 24, CCAH Salinas Office; Noon-1:30 pm



375 ENCINAL ST. SUITE A

SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060



Mailing Address Line 1  
Mailing Address Line 2  
Mailing Address Line 3  
Mailing Address Line 4  
Mailing Address Line 5



CENTRAL COAST  
**ALLIANCE**  
FOR HEALTH

# Health Programs Update

March / April 2005

## Adolescent Health

### Promoting Adolescent Well-Care

The American Academy of Pediatrics and American Academy of Family Practice recommend that adolescents through age 20 have a well-care visit every year. The Alliance has been promoting adolescent well-care since 2001. We still have a long way to go, however. Our most recent HEDIS study found that only 30% of our teens received well-care in 2003.

Our Tune-Up program offers teens a gift-card incentive when they complete an annual well-care visit. The Alliance also sends providers a monthly list of their linked patients age 12 to 18 years who have not had a well-care visit in the last 12 months.

To increase the number of teens getting well-care, the Tune-Up program will include an extra incentive this year. Thanks to funds donated by Plantronics, we will be giving away **one mountain bike with helmet every two months** starting in March. All teens age 12 to 18 who complete a well-visit this year will be eligible for the drawings.

Please support teens by scheduling well-care visits and signing their Tune-Up form! Watch for notice of a staff reward for the provider office with the best participation.

For more information on Alliance adolescent well-care programs, please call at 831-466-4334.

### Member Health Education Line

Bilingual English and Spanish  
1-800-700-3874 x4441

### Build Your Adolescent Medicine Skills

Many providers report a lack of experience and resources for counseling teens on sensitive adolescent health issues. Providers may feel uncomfortable addressing risk behaviors or have questions about confidentiality laws.

Dr. Janet Shalwitz and the Adolescent Health Working Group (AHWG) offer practical toolkits for California medical providers. Titles include: Adolescent Health Care 101, Confidentiality & Minor Consent, and Sexual Health. Download the toolkits at [www.ahwg.net](http://www.ahwg.net), or look for the link on the Alliance website under Provider Education.

Dr. Shalwitz' team received rave reviews at our 2004 continuing medical education events. We hope to sponsor another event in 2005.

### Well-Care Reimbursement

Unlike the CHDP program, the Alliance will reimburse for one well-care visit for each adolescent each year. For Alliance Medi-Cal members, the claim must be on the PM-160 form. For Healthy Families and Healthy Kids members, use HCFA-1500. Well-care must include all three components:

- Health and developmental history
- Physical exam
- Age-appropriate anticipatory guidance

Alliance preventive care recommendations are detailed at [www.ccah-alliance.org](http://www.ccah-alliance.org). See the Clinical Guidelines page under the Health Services menu.

# Cultural Crossroads

*Tips and resources to help you communicate better with Alliance members*

## Five Tips to Use Interpreters Effectively

Language Line Services, the Alliance's vendor for telephone interpreting, provides these five tips to help you better serve your limited English-proficient (LEP) clients in whatever languages they speak.

1. **Brief the interpreter** - Introduce yourself. Take a few moments to brief the interpreter with key background information. The interpreter can be more efficient when he or she knows what you expect.
2. **Speak directly to your client** - You and your client can communicate directly as if the interpreter were not there. Talk directly to the client, not to the interpreter. Speak naturally (not louder), speak at your normal pace (not slower), and in relatively short segments. It's not necessary to add "tell him" or "ask her" to the message.
3. **Ask if the LEP client understands** - Keep vocabulary and sentences simple. Ask often if the client has any questions.
4. **Avoid jargon or technical terms** - Clarify unique vocabulary. Provide examples if they are needed to explain a term. Your explanation will help the interpreter translate your meaning in terms your patient can understand.
5. **Please be patient** - Working with an interpreter does take more time. By knowing what to expect from this new situation, you can make the interaction flow smoothly for yourself and your client.



By following these tips, you will serve your clients effectively and shorten the average time of your interpreter calls - saving you staff-time and money.

*Adapted with permission from In Other Words, June 2004 ©Copyright 2004 Language Line Services, [www.language.com](http://www.language.com).*

## Avoid Using Untrained Interpreters

Good health care requires good communication. Federal and state laws require medical providers to offer qualified interpreters when needed.

Using an untrained interpreter may result in miscommunication of medical information and compromise quality of care. It may also cause embarrassment if a member's friend or child must deliver sensitive or confidential information. Some patients say they omit vital facts in the absence of privacy.

Do not rely on untrained bilingual staff or family members or friends of the patient to interpret. Instead, access the Language Line or other interpreter services provided by the Alliance.

Per State requirements and for your own protection, please document members' language in the medical record and **document if the member declines interpreter services.**

Ask your Provider Services Representative for a copy of the Alliance Interpreter Services Quick Reference Guide, or contact the Alliance Transportation and Language Coordinator at 1-800-700-3874 x4877.

*For more information about Alliance cultural and linguistic services, call 831-466-4311.*

