



**Merced County Health Care Consortium**

**Affordable Care Act Readiness Project  
Thursday, February 27, 2014  
Meeting Summary**

**Attendees:**

Representatives from Member Agencies: Jennifer Mockus & Melissa Kelly-Ortega, Central California Alliance for Health; Nellie McGarry, Office of Senator Anthony Canella; Christine Bobbitt & Corrina Brown, Merced County Human Services Agency; Desirre Herrera, Planned Parenthood; Jacqueline Medina, Erika Gomez & Griselda Vazquez, Livingston Medical Group; Mary-Michal Rawling, Griselda Villa & Elsa Alvarez, Golden Valley Health Centers; Tracy Yoder, Merced Community Action Agency; Claudia Corchado, Isai Palma, and Lupe Delgado, United Way of Merced County; Lucy Allen, Faith in Community; May Ly, Richard Health Assoc./Covered California; Stacie Bradford, Marilyn Mochel & Don Ramsey, Community Members; Crissy Gallardo, Merced Organizing Project; Candice Adam-Medefind, Healthy House; Stephanie Dietz, Merced County Executive Office; Michael Johnson, Jane MacLean, Timothy Livermore and Kathleen Grassi, Merced County Department of Public Health.

Guests: Alejandra Tovar, Oday Guerrero & Noe Paramo, California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation

Consultants and Project Staff: Karl Stahlhut, and Sarah Baker, Department of Public Health.

Agenda Items	Discussion Summary	Resources / Action Items
<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>Kathleen Grassi Merced County Department of Public Health</p>	<p>Kathleen Grassi welcomed all and facilitated introductions.</p> <p>Kathleen - the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Readiness Project is funded by The California Endowment and the Blue Shield of California Foundation. ACA Readiness Project is supporting the community to identify opportunities and challenges around the ACA. Since March 2013, the ACA Readiness Project has convened an expanded Merced County Health Care Consortium for monthly meetings to discuss ACA and how our community can best take advantage of expanded health care access opportunities.</p>	
<p><b>ACA Updates</b></p> <p>Kathleen Grassi</p> <p>Corrina Brown Merced County Human Services Agency</p>	<p><u>Statewide Covered California and Medi-Cal Updates - Kathleen Grassi</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of January 31, 2014, 1.2 million people have signed up for Covered California and 728,000, have been enrolled in a Covered California plan. Of those, 626,000 are eligible for subsidies. 80% of individuals who are enrolled have paid the 1<sup>st</sup> month premium. So far into February, another 100,000 have started the enrollment process with Covered California.</li> <li>As of January 31, 2014, 1,529,000 have signed up for Medi-Cal. Of those who have signed up, 877,000 or 57% are likely eligible for Medi-Cal. Another 652,000 individuals, or 43%, have been transitioned into Medi-Cal from the Low Income Health Program (LIHP) that many counties implemented in 2012.</li> <li>Latino enrollment in Covered California plans has increased from 18% of all enrollees in the October-December period to 28% in January. Additionally Latino enrollment in Medi-Cal statewide has increased from 32% in December to 38% in January.</li> <li>Young adults, who have been identified as being critical to balancing the risk pool, are 26% of Covered California enrollees to-date.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Materials Provided:</b></p> <p><i>ACA Updates Power Point</i></p> <p><i>Ready, Set, Enroll, February 2014 – Pacific Health Consulting Group</i></p>



In neighborhoods, in schools and with prevention.



Department of Public Health

- 62% of Covered California enrollees have chosen the “Silver Plans”.
- Of the leading Covered California plans, Blue Cross has the most enrollments, then Blue Shield, Kaiser then Health Net. These four health insurance plans have 92% of all enrollments in Covered California to-date.
- 571 small businesses have signed up for the Small Business Options Program in Covered California representing some 5,000 employees.
- The Health Benefits Exchange is closing enrollment at the end of March until October 2014. The last day to choose a plan is March 15<sup>th</sup> for coverage beginning in April. The last day to submit the first premium is March 26<sup>th</sup>. For those who have initiated an application by March 31<sup>st</sup>, the last date to select a plan for coverage beginning in May is April 15<sup>th</sup>.

Merced County Medi-Cal Update - Corrina Brown

- At the end of January, 3,385 individuals in Merced County completed Medi-Cal coverage. Another 4,336 are pending eligibility and 427 are conditionally eligible. As of yesterday, over 6,680 referrals were received electronically from Covered California.
- The “Express Lane” allows those who are active CalFresh participants, between the ages of 0-64, and not receiving Medicare, to qualify for Medi-Cal using a streamlined process of opting in. As of February 26, 2014, 2,200 have enrolled through the Express Lane. There are no forms required to add these participants to Medi-Cal.
- ACA provides for inmate outreach and the Human Services Agency (HSA) is working with the Sheriff’s Department to enroll the pre-release population. Thirty days before inmates are released HSA will take their application and initiate enrollment which is effective upon release.
- May Ly – what is the turnaround time from when the enrollment entity enters an application to when the County receives the application and it is assigned to an eligibility worker? Corrina - it depends on the way the information is received by Covered California. If the application is submitted electronically, then Covered California runs a batch on Tuesdays and Fridays and submits the information to HSA for follow up. If it is a paper application, it varies; once HSA receives an application, they have 45 days to respond.
- Jennifer Mockus - what is the percentage of pending applications that won’t be eligible? Corrina - most of the applications HSA receives will be eligible; some aren’t eligible because they are Medicare participants.
- Stephanie Dietz – what is the status on enrollment of the Medical Assistance Program (MAP) participants. Corrina - of 1665 MAP clients, 697 applications were received and 642 are eligible. There are 20 that are pending verification follow-up, six that are conditionally eligible, 21 that are eligible for a Covered California plan, and eight that are not eligible at all.
- Griselda Vazquez – who should “Express Lane” clients contact to find out Medi-Cal status? Corrina – they should contact their CalFresh worker.



In neighborhoods, in schools and with prevention.



Department of Public Health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reverend Ramsey – what does it mean that someone is “ineligible”? Corrina - they are ineligible due to income for financial assistance but they could obtain insurance at the full price.</li> </ul> <p><u>Hospital Presumptive Eligibility Program – Kathleen Grassi</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hospital Presumptive Eligibility Program (Hospital PE) is just rolling out and is a streamlined process that provides for full scope Medi-Cal coverage for in-patient hospital services for up to two months one time a year. There is a simple five question screening process to determine presumptive eligibility. None are regarding citizenship.</li> <li>• The individual, while receiving coverage for two months, must still go through the entire enrollment process and have an application approved by HSA to continue coverage.</li> <li>• Hospital PE is handled as fee-for-service Medi-Cal; once a Medi-Cal application is approved for ongoing coverage, the participant will have a Medi-Cal managed care program.</li> <li>• Those eligible for Hospital PE include children 0-18, parents and caregivers of children, pregnant women, expanded adult population 18-64, and former foster care youth 18-26.</li> </ul> <p><u>Remaining Uninsured (State Senate Bill 1005) – Kathleen Grassi</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senate Bill 1005 (Lara) proposes to create a California Health Exchange Program for all Californians, effective 2016 with passage, to provide coverage to all Californians regardless of citizenship status.</li> <li>• This bill would create the California Health Trust Fund. The fund would be supported in part by an assessment of health plans operating in the state.</li> <li>• The two options, if approved and implemented, Exchange health plan opportunities for individuals with subsidies, or full scope state-only Medi-Cal if income eligible.</li> </ul> <p><u>Upcoming Funding Opportunities – Kathleen Grassi</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AB 82 is administered by the state Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) with funding from The California Endowment. It is for outreach and enrollment activities for Medi-Cal eligibles within identified hard to reach populations. All California counties who submitted an application received funding on a per capita basis including Merced County.</li> <li>• DHCS is still putting the program together; details are slow in coming to the counties. The funding must be spent by June 2016 and requires that 50% of the funding be subcontracted to a community based organization(s) with reach into one or more of the identified populations.</li> <li>• Blue Shield of California Foundation has released two new grant proposals, due mid-March. One is focused on team-based primary care and may be of interest to clinics or other primary providers. The other is related to integration of primary care and behavioral health for the safety net population.</li> </ul>	
--	---	--



In neighborhoods, in schools and with prevention.



Department of Public Health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Public Health and Mental Health and clinic, hospital and Medi-Cal Managed Care partners are collaborating on a proposal for the integration grant which will consider opportunities to coordinate services, referrals, data exchange, etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Resources Available – Kathleen Grassi</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll America has initiated a series of webinars for those interested in strategies for getting individuals enrolled in either Covered California and Medi-Cal. That series started on February 24<sup>th</sup>. More information at <a href="http://www.enrollamerica.org">www.enrollamerica.org</a></li> <li>• Blue Shield of California Foundation has also announced a webinar called “How to Build a Better Healthcare System for Californians”. This is offered from the consumer perspective. Go to the Foundation’s website for more information.</li> <li>• Pacific Health Consulting Group released a paper in February prepared for Blue Shield of California Foundation, entitled <i>Ready, Set, Enroll</i> which can be found on the Foundation’s website; copies were also provided at the sign in table.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Outreach and Enrollment</b></p> <p>Isai Palma Building Healthy Communities, Merced</p> <p>May Ly Richard Heath and Associates/Covered California</p>	<p><u>O &amp; E Subcommittee Report – Isai Palma</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Covered California enrollment system was down last week. This had an impact on the collaborative enrollment event in Planada. Many enrollment entities are relying on paper applications or having to reschedule appointments. However, the Planada event was successful with over 100 people attending and starting an application.</li> <li>• Healthy House is working on developing an event in Dos Palos. They will provide more information at a future date.</li> <li>• First 5 Merced has been pushing a lot of this information to preschools and child care centers in the county. They have had feedback that people are having trouble making a choice between paying for child care and paying for health insurance.</li> <li>• There is an enrollment event scheduled on March 8<sup>th</sup> at the Merced Senior Center. Door to door canvassing in parts of South Merced will be conducted to generate interest.</li> <li>• The O &amp; E Subcommittee will be discussing targeted communication strategies in particular for the Hispanic population.</li> <li>• Melissa Kelly-Ortega – is there a champion school that would do robocalls for the March 8<sup>th</sup> event? Isai - representatives from Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) are contacting the schools about robocalls. Communities for a New California (CNC), which is funded by The California Endowment, will be conducting robocalls on Wednesday and Saturday.</li> <li>• The O &amp; E Subcommittee discussed involvement of faith-based organizations. Reverend Ramsey has relationships with clergy in Merced and he will work with his contacts to get the word out.</li> </ul>	



In neighborhoods, in schools and with prevention.



Department of Public Health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cindy Valencia is working on getting a list of some of the remaining uninsured, through Enroll America, so that the subcommittee members can conduct robocalls.</li> </ul> <p><u>Covered California Updates for Outreach &amp; Enrollment Grantees - May Ly</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered California has many activities going to support Certified Enrollment Counselors (CEC) at local events.</li> <li>• CalHEERS had system issues so if there were any CECs that received delegation codes during that time, they weren't able to log in or create Covered California accounts. If they are having trouble, contact their enrollment assistance desk for help. CECs who accepted delegations will need to try to reconnect to consumers if they are missing from their dashboards.</li> <li>• If Certified Enrollment Entities (CEE) have CECs that are on their roster and have not received training, they will be deactivated after March 7<sup>th</sup>. After that time, if they want to try to become a CEC, they'd have to start the process over.</li> <li>• If CECs are moving between organizations, they will just need to be moved to the new organization's roster and receive a new delegation code, since that identification ties them to a specific organization.</li> <li>• CECs and CEEs should use their designated help lines when they have questions.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Immigrants and the Affordable Care Act</b></p> <p>Alejandra Tovar and Oday Guerrero, California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For immigration purposes, individuals are classified as United States Citizens, Legal Permanent Residents (LPR), Persons with Visas or other permits ("Persons Residing Under the Color of Law" (PRUCOL)), and the undocumented.</li> <li>• If a person was born in the U.S., Guam, Puerto Rico or Virgin Islands, or they went through the naturalization process; they are considered a U.S. Citizen and can apply for benefits through the ACA. If someone is a U.S. Citizen, and resides outside the U.S. for more than one year, they are not obligated to obtain medical coverage.</li> <li>• Legal Permanent Residents (LPR) with valid "green cards" are considered lawfully present and can obtain coverage through the ACA. However, LPR status means that they are residing inside the U.S. If a LPR spends more than six months outside the U.S., the immigration office will determine that they have abandoned their status and will no longer be eligible for benefits.</li> <li>• A person holding a Visa, or PRUCOL, may be able to apply for benefits if they fall into these categories:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Refugee</i> - is outside of the U.S. and is requesting a permit to enter the country because they fear persecution in their home country for political or religious beliefs or because they belong to a certain social group;</li> <li>○ <i>Asylee</i> - similar to a refugee but already residing within the U.S.;</li> <li>○ <i>Cuban or Haitian entrants</i> - have temporary protected status and are lawfully present in the U.S.;</li> <li>○ <i>U Visa</i> - victims of crime (exploitation, battered spouse or children, etc.) within the U.S.;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Materials Provided:</b></p> <p><i>Immigrants and the ACA PowerPoint</i></p>



In neighborhoods, in schools and with prevention.



Department of Public Health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>T Visa</i> - victims of human trafficking (labor, exploitation);</li> <li>○ <i>VAWA</i> - individuals (spouse, child, parent) related to a U.S. Citizen and who have been victims of a crime, typically domestic violence.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The undocumented do not qualify for ACA benefits and are not mandated to obtain health coverage.</li> <li>• California provides limited state-only emergency Medi-Cal benefits to the undocumented who can also seek care in hospital emergency rooms, community clinics and from safety net providers for no or low cost.</li> <li>• Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), implemented by President Obama in 2012, issues work permits to individuals who are undocumented but came to the U.S. at a young age.</li> <li>• Although DACA recipients are legally working in the U.S. and receiving deferred action, the policy states that they do not qualify for benefits under ACA.</li> <li>• In California, DACA recipients may be eligible for Medi-Cal if their income is below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and they are between 19-64 years old. DACA recipients may also get coverage through their employer or buy private health insurance.</li> <li>• Mixed-status families are families that have both lawfully present and undocumented members.</li> <li>• If parents are undocumented, but the children are legally present, the children must be enrolled in health coverage. Undocumented parents will not have to provide their information to enroll the children.</li> <li>• Recently, Immigration and Customs Enforcement sent out a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stating that they will not pursue individuals for deportation services with information that is gathered through the health insurance application process. Undocumented individuals applying for someone legally residing in the U.S. should not have to be concerned with being at risk for deportation.</li> <li>• Jennifer Mockus - Covered California signed this agreement saying they will not provide information about applicants. Alejandra - this agreement is on the USCIS webpage in English and Spanish. May Ly - Covered California's website has a link to the MOU.</li> <li>• There are barriers to mixed-status families obtaining coverage, including language barriers, understanding what is available to them, especially with immigration factors, and navigating the Covered California webpage.</li> <li>• Corrina - there are programs in Medi-Cal that provide for undocumented individuals; so, these individuals should allow the county to determine if they can qualify for programs that provide full scope Medi-Cal under PRUCOL without documentation as well as restrictive or emergency Medi-Cal programs.</li> <li>• Oday -many people are confused about the Federal Dream Act. The Federal Dream Act is a pathway to citizenship but the Act has not been passed Congress. DACA is a work permit program but persons who have been accepted into the program have to apply every two years.</li> </ul>	
--	---	--



In neighborhoods, in schools and with prevention.



Department of Public Health



<p><b>Other Business</b></p>	<p><b>Announcements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kathleen - The California Endowment recently granted a no-cost extension of the ACA Readiness Project through the end of October. This will allow for a community wide convening to be planned in September 2014 to generate awareness about the next open enrollment period for the Exchange in October.</li> <li>• Melissa Kelly-Ortega - On March 7<sup>th</sup>, at 8 a.m., the Chamber of Commerce will do a coffee on the ACA and small businesses at the Boys and Girls Club.</li> <li>• Claudia Corchado - the City of Merced will have a “Resource Efficiency Fair” Thursday, February 27, 2014 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at the Merced Senior Center. Topics include recycling, conserving water, and energy efficiency.</li> <li>• Noe Paramo - the State has declared an emergency because of the drought. AB79 and AB80 have been fast tracked through the State Assembly and the Senate for a total of \$687 million dollars for drought relief. Part of those funds will be for disproportionate communities, including \$25.3 million for general food assistance and \$2 million for employment training.</li> <li>• Stephanie Dietz – State representatives will be coming to Merced County on Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, for a meeting from 10am to 3:30pm at U.C. Merced, in the California Room, to speak to community members who will be impacted by the drought. It is opportunity to hear about how they plan on assisting the community.</li> <li>• Noe -there will also be water-related Assembly Committee Hearings about water bonds. There is a hearing in Stockton on March 6<sup>th</sup>. The Governor also plans to hold one in Merced as well.</li> <li>• Kathleen – On March 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, The International Conference on the Black Arts Movement and Legacies will be held at U.C. Merced. There is a gala Friday night at the Multicultural Arts Center and two days of exhibits and lectures at U.C. Merced on Saturday and Sunday documenting the history of black art and its influence on U.S. culture.</li> </ul> <p><b>Next Meeting:</b></p> <p>March 27, 2014 at the Public Health Department.</p>	
------------------------------	---	--



In neighborhoods, in schools and with prevention.



Department of Public Health