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Section A: Introduction

A1: Welcome to CenCal Health

CenCal Health is a county organized health system that administers health insurance programs for Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County. We provide services to children, low-income families, seniors, and persons with disabilities. CenCal Health’s insurance programs are built on a foundation of comprehensive and coordinated patient-centered care through the collaboration of physicians, care managers, and other healthcare providers. Our aim is to help our members obtain quality healthcare.

CenCal Health recognizes the strength of our programs depends upon strong collaboration and communication with our provider partners and their staff. We look forward to working with each provider and their staff to provide our members with high quality, cost-effective care. CenCal Health is a (COHS) plan that manages programs funded by the State and federal governments, but operates independently. CenCal Health is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara County Boards of Supervisors, made up of members, providers, business leaders, and local government representatives.

A2: Intent of this Manual

The Provider Manual is intended as a tool that describes operational policies and procedures as a reference guide for CenCal Health’s providers and their staff. It contains basic information about how to work with CenCal Health.

CenCal Health uses State policies determined by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to administer Santa Barbara Health Initiative (SBHI) and San Luis Obispo Health Initiative (SLOHI). CenCal Health interprets and modifies the policies with the approval of our Board of Directors. This Provider Manual contains policy information for the SBHI and SLOHI programs. DXC Technology Services, LLC maintains the [Medi-Cal Provider Manuals](#) that offer specific guidelines for the State Medi-Cal program.

For additional information on CenCal Health, visit our website at www.cencalhealth.org.

Reference:

DHCS Medi-Cal Manual https://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/Manuals_menu.asp

A3: How to Use the Manual

CenCal Health drafted the manual as a tool to easily search via the Table of Contents page or through our website. Providers can search for particular topics by reviewing any line item or page number in the table of contents and go directly to the section you need. You may also search the Manual by keyword using CTRL + F.

Topics covered in this Manual include, but are not limited to: member eligibility, authorizations, referrals, covered services, services covered by other agencies, care management, cultural and linguistic services, utilization management, quality assurance and improvement, health assessment and screening, member grievances, billing, coordination of benefits, reporting, credentialing, and dispute resolution.

We encourage providers to become familiar with the contents of the Provider Manual and to refer to it frequently. Please contact the Provider Services Department with any suggestions for additions or improvements to this manual at (805) 562-1676.

A4: Overview of CenCal Health Programs

CenCal Health is the publicly-funded Medi-Cal Managed Care Health Plan for Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties for low-income residents. Once a resident is granted Medi-Cal, they are automatically inscribed (enrolled) into the CenCal Health Plan. New Members receive a Welcome Packet that provides a Member Handbook also known as an Evidence of Coverage that explains the benefits available to members along with a listing of doctors, specialty providers, hospitals, and pharmacies available to members of CenCal Health.

Medi-Cal ensures that children and adults with limited income and resources can receive physical and behavioral health services at little or no cost.

This low-income program includes:

- Families with children
- Foster care children
- Pregnant women
- Childless adults
- Seniors
- Persons with disabilities

Individuals and families apply for Medi-Cal through their county Department of Social Services and through Covered California. Applications may be completed in person, online, through the mail, or over the phone. Elderly and disabled individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) automatically receive Medi-Cal along with their SSI benefit.

Eligibility for Medi-Cal is month-to-month. Medi-Cal recipients must re-certify their eligibility periodically. It is not uncommon for individuals or families to lose Medi-Cal eligibility and then regain it at a later date. Please note that a member's eligibility must be verified before delivery of services and that the CenCal Health identification card alone is not a guarantee of eligibility. Please refer to [Section G](#) of the Provider Manual for further [eligibility information](#) or verify on CenCal Health's website.

Not all Medi-Cal beneficiaries are CenCal Health members. Those who are not CenCal Health members are eligible under the Medi-Cal Fee-For-Service system (FFS Medi-Cal). Providers seeing these beneficiaries would bill and be reimbursed directly for covered services by Affiliated Computer Services, the state Medi-Cal fiscal intermediary. Any necessary prior authorization for elective services (referred to as an "Authorized Referral Request," formerly known as "Treatment Authorization Request" or "TAR") for Medi-Cal beneficiaries not covered by CenCal Health should be submitted to the Medi-Cal field office, not to CenCal Health.

[A5: Glossary of Terms](#)

The [glossary of terms](#) contains definitions of commonly used terms at CenCal Health. The glossary was written to help give people the words and meanings for each acronym.

A6: Provider Bulletin

The [Provider Bulletin](#) is a monthly publication that provides information on changes to the Medi-Cal program, new programs, benefit changes, claims information, educational opportunities, and more. This newsletter contains information useful to front office, back office, and medical personnel. It is available in paper via the US Mail, as well as digitally via email and online.

Providers can also sign up to receive an electronic newsletter via email online.

Reference:

Current and Past Provider Bulletin Publications

<https://www.cencalhealth.org/providers/provider-bulletin/>

A7: CenCal Health Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission: To improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve by providing access to high quality health services, along with education and outreach, for our membership.

Vision: To be a nationally recognized model for publicly sponsored health care plans, facilitating excellence in care, service and efficiency, and be valued as a community resource.

Values

- Integrity in all of our actions
- Respect and compassion for our members
- Continuous pursuit of performance excellence
- Collaboration with our provider partners
- Responsible stewardship of resources
- Commitment to the community
- Importance of skilled and dedicated staff
- Adaptability to a changing environment

A8: CenCal Health Strategic Priorities

CenCal Health's strategic vision is to grow and expand our membership by serving new populations, improving our services, and remaining responsive to local needs. We believe that we can do so by focusing on the following areas:

Growing Our Mission by serving new populations and providing new services to existing members and providers.



Community Value through promoting our mission and the value CenCal Health adds to the community.

Innovation in reduction of costs, improvement in the quality of care, and strengthened member experience.

Culture of Excellence by developing people, processes, and technology for our future growth.

Financial Strength in being good stewards of public funds.