



MEETING OF BLUE SHIELD OF CALIFORNIA PROMISE HEALTH PLAN
SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

Date/Time:	Thursday, September 11, 2025 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
Location:	Hybrid (Virtual and in-person: 3131 Camino Del Rio, North Suite 1300, San Diego, CA 92108)
Attendance:	Committee Members present: 1. Member A, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan 2. Member B, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan 3. Member C, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan 4. Member F, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan 5. Member G, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan 6. Member I, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan 7. Chris Almeida, San Diego American Indian Health Center 8. Jack Dailey, Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy, Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Inc. 9. Eygiel Limbo, Promise2Kids 10. Rick Ochocki, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) 11. Aidee Roman, San Diego 211 12. Leticia Zuno, Access to Independence Committee Members absent: 1. Member D, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan 2. Member E, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan 3. Member H, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Representatives present: 1. Jill Chapman, Director, Member Marketing and Creative Account Management 2. Araceli Garcia, Program Manager, Consultant 3. Rosa Hernandez, Sr. Manager, Lifestyle Medicine 4. Jennifer Nuovo, M.D., Chief Medical Officer 5. Sandra Rose, Senior Director, Community Programs 6. Jennifer Schirmer, Vice President, Medi-Cal Growth
Agenda	I. Blue Shield Promise Health Plan Updates II. Re-cap of Q2-2025 Meeting III. Appeals and Grievance Report IV. Relay Network V. Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Updates VI. Ombudsman Report VII. Open Discussion/Closing Remarks

Introductions and Welcome

- Araceli Garcia began the meeting with roll call and went over meeting logistics.
- Sandra Rose welcomed the committee and reviewed the agenda.

I. Blue Shield Promise Health Plan Update

- Jennifer Schrimmer provided the following health plan updates:
 - **New Moms and Newborn Value-Added Benefit:** Blue Shield Promise received approval from the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to offer a comprehensive array of essential products for newborns and Members post-delivery as a new value-added benefit.
 - The new value-added benefit includes a kit with diapers, baby wipes, nursing pads, pacifiers, a thermometer, and more.
 - Members can earn up to four \$100 Amazon vouchers to get additional supplies by completing a series of newborn health check-ups.
 - The program will launch in San Diego County this year and in Los Angeles County in 2026.
 - This value-added benefit was developed based on feedback from the Community Advisory Committee.
 - Member G asked via chat if any steps are required for Members to receive the newborn kit. Sandra explained that Members enroll in the program by contacting Blue Shield Promise Customer Service Department.
 - **New Boys & Girls Club Membership Value-Added Benefit:** Blue Shield Promise also received approval from DHCS to offer annual membership to the Boys and Girls Club of Greater San Diego at no-cost to Members between the ages of 5 to 14 who live in San Diego County as a new value-added benefit.
 - Members will be able to take advantage of all the Boys and Girls Club programs and activities which focus on education, career, life skills, fitness, sports, recreation and leadership development.

- This new value-added benefit reflects Blue Shield Promise's belief that supporting youth development and after school programs can have an exponential positive impact on young people's health and well-being.
- **Workforce Development:** Blue Shield Promise is proud to announce it is underwriting scholarships to the Laura Rodriguez Medical Assistant Institute in San Diego to support workforce development.
 - Through the scholarship fund, Blue Shield Promise will help 10 or more applicants become certified medical assistants over the next year.
 - This is also an opportunity for Blue Shield Promise Members who earned their GED through the GEDWorks Program and are interested in pursuing a career as a medical assistant.
- **Leading the Way Awards:** There is an annual event where Blue Shield Promise recognizes the outstanding achievements and quality performance of healthcare professionals/groups, non-profit organizations, and community leaders who serve the Medi-Cal population in San Diego.
 - The event is on Thursday, November 13 at The Prado in Balboa Park. Araceli will send the invitation to committee.

II. Recap of Q2-2025 Meeting

- Sandra reviewed the topics covered in the Q2-2025 meeting, which was about Customer Service, with a focus on how to request language services and an introduction to the new moms & newborn value-added benefit.

III. Discussion: Appeals and Grievance Report

- Dr. Nuovo introduced the appeals and grievances report by defining the terms and explaining how Members can submit an appeal or grievance.
- Dr. Nuovo presented trends in San Diego, noting a rise in grievances in early 2025, mainly related to changes in the transportation benefit. She summarized the main grievance categories:
 1. Access to care
 2. Customer service
 3. Billing and financial

- Dr. Nuovo noted a drop in appeals in early 2025 compared to 2024 and outlined the key appeal categories:
 1. Medical necessity
 2. Non-covered services
 3. Billing and financial
- Sandra reiterated the rights of Members to file a grievance or appeal and explained the standard and expedited response times.
- The committee discussed the following:
 - Member I asked how Blue Shield Promise informs Members about the grievance and appeal process.
 - Dr. Nuovo explained that this information is provided in the welcome packet, initial welcome call, plan website, member portal, member handbook, and provider office guidance. The denial letter Notice of Action also explains how to file an appeal.
 - Member B shared an experience with the grievance and appeals process.
 - Member A suggested adding a feature to track the status of grievances or appeals to the Member portal and/or the Blue Shield Promise Member app, with indicators such as "received," "in progress," and "resolved."
 - Dr. Nuovo noted that this functionality is currently unavailable today but is a strong suggestion to explore.
- Action items:
 - Araceli will contact Member B to discuss their grievance case.
 - Member A's suggestion will be shared with the team responsible for the Blue Shield Promise Member portal and Member app.

IV. Discussion: Relay Network

- Jill Chapman led a discussion about Relay Network, a web-based, mobile-optimized communication platform that does not require an application download. Jill explained:
 - The platform is HIPAA and Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) compliant, using opt-in consent. Members may reply STOP to opt out.

- Members 18 and older get a text from 21867 with a unique link to their health news feed.
- Onboarding messages are sent on days 1, 15, 30, and 45 over a 45-day period. Topics include preventive screening reminders, benefits information, health education, and disease management.
- Jill requested feedback from the committee regarding ways to enhance Member communications on the platform.
- Rick Ochocki reported a recent increase in spoofed text messages.
 - Jill will explore a pre-notice explainer (email/Relay post) that highlights the 21867 short code and how to save the contact card.
- Member A proposed improving access to mental health care by providing direct contact numbers to behavioral health providers, straightforward scheduling instructions, and details on nearby pharmacy and clinic locations.
- Overall, the committee was supportive of the new communication tool.

V. Discussion: Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Updates

- Rosa Hernandez led a discussion about Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) by first defining CLAS and explaining the type of activities that fall under CLAS such as:
 - Learning about our Members' needs (language, culture, disability)
 - Finding out if our doctors meet the needs of our Members
 - Tracking the use of interpreters and information that is translated
 - Tracking member complaints when we fall short in providing culturally and linguistically appropriate care
- Rosa reviewed the feedback we heard from Members about CLAS and explained the steps Blue Shield Promise has taken to respond to their input.
 - We heard:
 - Members want to feel understood by their doctor.
 - Members want information about interpreter services and how to access services in the form of flyers and short videos

- Actions taken:
 - Blue Shield Promise requires providers to complete training on providing culturally competent health care
 - Blue Shield Promise continues to promote interpreter services in the Member newsletter, website and Member Handbook
 - Blue Shield Promise is exploring the suggestion to create flyers and video
- Rosa explained why Blue Shield Promise would like to know about our Members' race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation and gender identity. This information will help us:
 - Create programs based on members' needs. and
 - Better understand if our contracted providers can meet the needs and preferences of our members. For example, are there enough Spanish-speaking heart doctors for our Spanish-speaking members?
- Rosa acknowledged some people may not feel comfortable answering questions about race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation and gender identity. She asked the committee:
 - How do you suggest we ask for this type of information?
 - Would it be helpful if we explained why we are asking for this information and how it will be kept private?
 - Would you prefer to add the information directly on a form or give the answers to a health plan representative, who would then enter it on your behalf?
- Member I suggested providing an explanation regarding the purpose of collecting this information to reassure members.
- Member A recommended using digital profiles to pre-fill this information, allowing providers to prepare for appointments.

VI. Ombudsman Report

- Jack Daily from the Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy led a discussion about the newly reinstated asset limits and other Medi-Cal program policy changes.
 - Medi-Cal Asset Limits Reinstated:
 - Jack reported Medi-Cal asset limits for Aged/Blind/Disabled (ABD) categories will return January 1, 2026.
 - ABD-linked Medi-Cal members have an individual limit of \$130,000, with an additional \$65,000 allowed for each extra household member.
 - Asset transfers made between January 2024 and December 31, 2025 are not subject to look-back provisions.
 - Asset-related questions will be incorporated into the annual redetermination process for ABD members beginning in 2026.
 - Medi-Cal/Medicaid Policy Changes:
 - Starting January 1, 2026, adults who do not have Satisfactory Immigration Status, and are not already enrolled in Medi-Cal, will no longer be able to enroll in full Medi-Cal.
 - Starting July 1, 2026, Medi-Cal dental benefits will no longer be available for Medi-Cal members who are 19 or older, not pregnant, and have Unsatisfactory Immigration Status. Emergency dental care (such as treatment for severe pain, infection, and pulling a tooth) will still be covered for everyone, no matter their immigration status. Children (ages 0–18) and people who are pregnant will still have dental care benefits, no matter their immigration status.
 - Beginning July 1, 2027, Medi-Cal members who are ages 19 to 59, not pregnant, and undocumented or have Unsatisfactory Immigration Status and remain in full coverage Medi-Cal will be required to pay a monthly \$30 premium to keep their Medi-Cal coverage.
 - Rick asked if the new premiums are automatic or require member action.
 - Jack stated these payments are submitted either through the state portal or by mail.

VII. Closing and Adjournment

- Sandra concluded the meeting by thanking the committee for their time and feedback and reminding the group to review the appendix materials.
 - Appendix A: Standing Reports
 - Summary of Membership & Interpreter Services Stats
 - Q2-2025 Summary of Grievances
 - Q2-2025 Summary of Appeals
 - Appendix B: Blue Shield Promise Contacts