

Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan is an independent Licensee of the Blue Shield Association

# San Diego Member Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

December 07, 2023, 01:30PM

## Council Members

Council Members	Committee Members Absent	Blues Shield Promise Health Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member A, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Member</li> <li>• Member B, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Member</li> <li>• Member C, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Member</li> <li>• Member D, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Member</li> <li>• Aidee Roman, SD 211</li> <li>• Leticia Zuno, Access to Independence</li> <li>• Jack Dailey, Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Inc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rick Ochocki, National Alliance Mental Illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Araceli Garcia- Program Manager, Senior Promise- Community and Provider Engagement</li> <li>• Jennifer Schirmer, Vice President, Medi-Cal Growth</li> <li>• Nairi Varteressian, Sr. Manager, Product Strategy, Consumer Product Management</li> <li>• Linda Fleischman, Sr. Manager Lifestyle</li> <li>• Paul Vota,</li> <li>• Sandra Rose, Sr. Director, Strategic Planning and Performance</li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Presenter	Action Items
<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b> Sandra called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and reviewed the agenda items with the committee.</p>	Sandra Rose	
<p><b>Blue Shield Promise Health Plan Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Shield welcomes Dr. Jennifer Nuovo as new Chief Medical Officer, bringing in 20 plus years of medical experience.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Specialization as an endocrinologist</li> <li>○ Responsibilities include developing and implementing programs to support health and well-being for medical members.</li> <li>○ Endorsement of doctor Nuovo's leadership qualities based on prior experience working with her and other health plans.</li> <li>○ Collaboration with chief Health Equity officer Valerie Martinez to advance the health equity strategy in 2024 and beyond.</li> <li>○ Announcement of Dr. Nuovo's participation in future meetings starting 2024</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Blue Shield Promise membership is ahead of plan by 54K.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recognition of the teams' collaborative efforts with providers and community partners in achieving medical redeterminations and overall membership growth.</li> <li>○ Exceeding the plan by an impressive 54,000 medical members.</li> <li>○ Total medical membership for the year reaching approximately 523,000 members across LA County and San Diego County.</li> <li>○ Highlight of retention efforts including over 100,000 outbound calls to support members resulting in successful navigation of redetermination processes and access to needed services.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Jennifer Schirmer expressed gratitude to the committee for their partnership feedback and individual contribution throughout the year.</p>	Jennifer Schirmer	

<p>Shared the Leading the Way Awards Dinner Event Video &amp; Photos.</p>		
<p><b>Re-Cap of Q3 2022 meeting</b></p> <p>Our focus topic was Health Plan Information Videos</p> <p><b>Health Plan Information Videos Progress:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed the ongoing development of health plan information videos based on feedback we received.</li> <li>• Acknowledged the suggestions from the previous meeting to use short videos.</li> <li>• Presented topics for videos in the last meeting: member ID cards and information about primary care providers.</li> <li>• Shared feedback was gathered, and revisions were made accordingly.</li> <li>• Scripts have been submitted to the Department of Health Care Services and LA Care Approval in October.</li> <li>• Awaiting feedback from the state to proceed and anticipate hearing back from them shortly.</li> <li>• Inform the attendees about upcoming video scripts based on their feedback from the last meeting.</li> <li>• Identified upcoming topics: explaining benefits, carved out benefits services managed by entities outside of Blue Shield Promise, and support/resources for members, well-being.</li> <li>• Insured ongoing work on these scripts and expressed the intention to seek feedback from the committee once the scripts and the videos are ready.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future Engagement and Feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasized the commitment to involving the committee in the video production process.</li> </ul>	<p>Sandra Rose</p>	

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<p>Mentioned the plan to bring back completed videos and scripts for committee review and feedback.</p>		
<p><b>New Value-Added service GEDWorks</b></p> <p>What's a Value-Added Service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value Added Services are additional services outside of the Medi-Cal benefit package.</li> </ul> <p>Why Provide a Value-Added Service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value-Added Service are offered to help improve members' quality of life, health outcomes and address social determinants of health.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of Value-Added Services we currently offer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teladoc (Virtual Care Doctor)</li> <li>Wellvolution (Wellness App)</li> <li>Landmark (Home Visits for Care)</li> <li>Community Resource Centers</li> </ul> <p><b>What is GEDWorks?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GEDWorks is a start-to-finish program that includes all the necessary tools to help students pass the GED test (the high school equivalency exam).</li> <li>The GED® test covers 4 subjects: Math, Science, Social Studies, and Reasoning Through Language Arts. Students can take all 4 together or one at a time.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Included Tools:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to custom study plans</li> <li>Free online tutoring 24/7</li> <li>Online testing 24/7</li> <li>Practice tests</li> </ul>	<p>Nairi Varteressian</p>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal bilingual advisor</li> <li>• Access to Facebook support groups</li> </ul> <p><b>Who will be eligible?</b> Current Blue Shield Promise members who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 18 years old</li> <li>• Do not have a high school diploma or equivalent.</li> <li>• Are not currently enrolled in high school.</li> </ul> <p><b>Why offer this program?</b></p> <p>Education, a social determinant of health, has a direct impact on health and leads to longer, higher quality lives. "Education is one of the strongest predictors of health: the more schooling people have the better their health is likely to be."</p> <p><b>GEDWorks Member Journey</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Click "Get Started" at <a href="https://blueshieldca.com/promise/Medi-Cal/GEDWorks">blueshieldca.com/promise/Medi-Cal/GEDWorks</a>. Registration only takes a few minutes.</li> <li>2. Allow 2-3 business days for your application to be reviewed and approved.</li> <li>3. Congrats, you're a GED student. Login to your GED.com dashboard for your next steps.</li> <li>4. Take courses for Science, Social Studies, Language Arts and Math</li> <li>5. Take GED Tests. Each subject requires a separate test. You don't have to take them all at once.</li> </ol> <p><b>How will we promote GEDWorks?</b></p>		
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<p>Marketing Touchpoints</p> <p><b>Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flyers at Community Resource Centers and Community Events</li> <li>• Promise Website (Benefit Section)</li> <li>• Social Media Ads</li> <li>• Spring Newsletter</li> <li>• Welcome Packet (Phase 2)</li> </ul> <p><b>Providers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPA Email Distribution</li> <li>• Provider Engagement team to discuss with Primary Care Physicians</li> </ul> <p><b>Internal Departments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Care</li> <li>• Social Services/Care Management</li> <li>• Community Health Workers</li> <li>• Community Advocates &amp; Connectors</li> <li>• Provider Engagement</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Based Organizations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with GEDWorks to develop list</li> <li>• Job Placement Companies/Job Fairs</li> </ul> <p><b>Press Release</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Communications</li> <li>• Press Release</li> <li>• LinkedIn</li> <li>• Spanish News Center</li> <li>• Conferences</li> <li>• Elected Officials</li> </ul>		
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<p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think about GEDWorks and what suggestions do you have for us to promote this new value-added service?</li> <li>• Which of these extra services do you find most interesting or helpful, and how would you rank them in order of preference?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Free gym membership voucher</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Over the counter benefit for pain relief, first aid, cold and allergy medicine, dental care items, diapers, menstrual supplies, and more</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Amazon prime membership at discounted rate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 24 hours of free academic tutoring for students</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Job Training Programs and Resume Prep</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Care Package for new moms (Choice of a car seat or crib and diapers, breast feeding kit, or a safe sleep kit)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What other educational programs or services do you think would be valuable for us to explore as potential Value-Added Services?</li> </ul> <p>Member D suggests including assistance with daycare, job training, equipment and transportation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed transportation challenges faced by members, with suggestions for addressing these challenges.</li> <li>• Suggests promoting in newsletters to members and health clinics.</li> </ul> <p>Member A expressed concerns about accessibility of resources such as books, computers, and printers for individuals participating in the program.</p> <p>Nairi clarified the GEDWorks program is strictly to obtain a GED.</p>		<p><b>Action Item:</b> Nairi to explore considerations to meet the need of members without access to a computer.</p>
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<p>Nairi clarified that the GED program will be online, and all materials will be accessible through the computer however considerations need to be made for those who may not have access to a computer.</p> <p>Member D suggested utilizing YouTube as a platform for promoting the GED Works program, referencing a previous commercial for Blue Shield on YouTube.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlighted the efficiency of such pitches and suggested exploring other platforms and places like YouTube for increased visibility and promotion of the program.</li> </ul> <p>Leticia Zuno expressed enthusiasm about promoting the GEDWorks program through community-based organizations (CBOs) like Access to Independence which has targeted youth programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leticia suggested sharing program information on social media and proposed the idea of social media Flyers for wider dissemination.</li> <li>Additionally, she recommended utilizing the physical space of CBO's by suggesting the placement of lobby banners to attract walk in traffic.</li> <li>Expressed a keen interest actively participating in the promotion of the GEDWorks program within the San Diego community.</li> </ul> <p>Aidee Roman from San Diego to 211 highlighted their role in the information and referral line, emphasizing the potential to assist Blue Shield Promise recipients. She suggested considering listing their organization as a resource in the larger 211 database, which is accessible online. By doing so, individuals identifying as Blue Shield Promise recipients calling into 211 could be effectively directed to programs like the GEDWorks initiative.</p> <p>Member A proposed leaving pamphlets with customers and targeting students who may be struggling in school or at risk of not graduating.</p> <p>Member D suggested exploring collaborations with adult education classes for the GEDWorks program.</p>		<p><b>Action Item:</b> Naria to coordinate with CBOs for partnership in promoting the GEDWorks program.</p> <p><b>Action Item:</b> Nairi to connect with Aidee from SD 211 to add the GEDWorks to their resources list.</p> <p><b>Action Item:</b> Nairi to explore promoting GEDWorks program in school throughout the county.</p>
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- Recommended contacting adult education institutions and offering the program for Blue Shield Promise recipients.
- Member D envisioned the potential for broader reach by incorporating both Blue Shield Promise and non-Blue Shield Promise members into adult education classes.
- Highlighted the dual benefit of advertising the program to non-Blue Shield Promise members who might then consider Blue Shield Promise insurance due to the unique offerings.

Member D shared information about Amazon prime discount price available for EBT and Cal fresh recipients, which is approximately \$15 per month.

- Emphasized the importance of job training and resume preparation, especially for individuals lacking job experience.
- Highlighting a personal example, she discussed the challenges faced when applying for jobs without prior experience and the need for socialized training programs.
- Suggested including interview skills training as part of the program recognizing the significance of exhaling in interviews for job seekers.
- Post-employment assistance, such as providing safety equipment and tablets for courses, was also recommended to support individuals in their new roles.
- Acknowledging the importance of Internet access member D reference, the reliance on phones for Internet access, underscoring the need for accessible online programs.

Jack Dailey commented that OTC benefits coverage of traditionally uncovered medications and supplies is a very popular benefit in the Medicare Advantage world, and imagine it would be helpful in Medi-Cal. For example, Medi-Cal Rx does not cover (generally) fish oil supplements and vitamins (with exceptions). That would be very attractive to some beneficiaries.

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<p>Member C, currently in college, expressed support for the GEDWorks program, emphasizing its significance for individuals who may not have completed high school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She highlighted the program as a source of hope for people who may have lost confidence after dropping out of high school and are facing challenges in pursuing higher education.</li> <li>• Appreciated the program’s comprehensive nature and expressed approval for various aspects of the program.</li> <li>• She specifically mentioned her approval of including menstrual health, and first aid, and safety measures like car seats, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing children's safety.</li> </ul> <p>Member D highlighted the challenges individuals face with prescription coverage, stressed the importance of over-the-counter benefits, and recommended exploring additional items for coverage while expressing support for the proposed benefits.</p> <p>Aidee suggested including financial literacy, over the counter medication coverage, and Amazon prime membership at a discounted rate.</p> <p>Member B expressed her heartfelt appreciation for the positive contributions and efforts made by Blue Shield Promise, particularly in the realm of education for children.</p> <p>Member A sought out clarification on the eligibility criteria for the GED program, especially inquiring whether the program is exclusively for members like themselves or if they can also enroll family members, particularly kids, into the GD program.</p> <p>Nairi clarified that the GED program is currently for Blue Shield Promise members only.</p>		<p><b>Action Item:</b> Once the OTC benefits have been approved a comprehensive list of all potential services covered under the OTC benefit will be provided.</p> <p><b>Action Item:</b> Nairi to explore the inclusion of financial literacy as an additional benefit.</p>
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<p>Jack Dailey praised the suggested additional services, describing them as "great". He expressed confidence that these services would be attractive to consumers, indicating that the proposed offerings could have a positive impact and be well received.</p> <p>Sandra Rose acknowledged the collaborative effort, giving credit to Jenn Schirmer for the initial idea and praising Nairi for successfully transitioning the concept from an idea to implementation.</p>		
<p><b>Population Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>What is Population Needs Assessment (PNA)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blue Shield Promise Health Plan conducts a Population Needs Assessment (PNA) to ensure members' health education and cultural and linguistic needs are met.</li> <li>Results of the Population Needs Assessment will be used to develop an action plan to address the barriers to care gap in services.</li> </ul> <p>What is changing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By December 2023, San Diego County and the health plans will work collaboratively to develop targeted community and managed care plan specific interventions that improve the percentage of:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children aged 0 to 30 months who receive well-child visits to meet or maintain the DHCS 2023 MPL (Minimum proficiency level) benchmarks of 58.92% receiving six or more visits for ages 0 to 15 months and 66.76% receiving two or more visits for ages 15 to 30 months.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Sandra Rose acknowledged Linda's contribution to the discussion and highlighted the significance of the topic as it aligns with the requirements set by the DHCS for managed care plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She expressed appreciation for Linda's clarification on the population needs assessment and the upcoming collaboration with other managed care plans.</li> </ul>	<p>Linda Fleischman</p>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandra mentioned her enthusiasm for the plan’s initiatives, including health education programs, language programs, and specific efforts aimed at enhancing the well-being of young children, particularly toddlers aged 0 to 2 1/2 or three-year olds.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Ombudsman: What is trending?</b> The Consumer Center or “CCHEA”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our team is comprised of knowledgeable consumer health advocates and experienced health care attorneys.</li> <li>We help educate consumers about and navigate health systems.</li> <li>We advocate for consumers to obtain/maintain needed coverage and access needed services.</li> <li>We serve as the Dept. of Managed Health Care Consumer Outreach and Assistance (COAP) partners, and Covered California Consumer Assistance Program.</li> </ul> <p>DHCS Medicare Medi-Cal Ombudsman role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides education and advocacy to people with both Medicare and Medi-Cal, known as “dual eligibles.”</li> <li>The MMOP helps beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans, including Medicare Medi-Cal Plans (MMPs), Medicare Advantage Special Needs Plans (SNPs), and the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE).</li> <li>Also, any dual eligible beneficiary with an eligibility, coverage, or access to care barrier. The MMOP answers questions about coverage, enrollment, and obtaining care.</li> <li>Assist beneficiaries file complaints and appeals with their plan.</li> </ul> <p>Updates for Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes to Medi-Cal eligibility in 2024:</li> <li>Elimination of the asset limit for all Medi-Cal beneficiaries.</li> </ul>	<p>Jack Daily</p>	

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- Expansion of full scope Medi-Cal to those aged 26-49 without regards to immigration status.
- LASSD has a new Transitions of Care Advocacy Project (TCAP) – Helping advocate for patients that are facing barriers while they transition/discharge from hospitals to a facility or to the community.
- See the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) new fact sheet about [Dental Benefits for Patients Dually Eligible for Medicare and Medi-Cal](#).

**Questions for the MAC**

- We’ve discussed previously, the Medi-Cal renewal process which began in June and will continue through May of 2024. There are concerns about older adults and persons with disabilities being discontinued during the renewal process for “procedural” issues.
- Have MAC members or BS staff heard of challenges with the Medi-Cal renewal process? We’re interested in learning of any challenges and then working with the County and state to improve the process.

Member D mentioned her renewal packet, assuming that their longstanding involvement might exempt her from renewal requirements.

Jack assured that member D's situation might be due to their renewal month not yet arriving, with renewals being conducted through May of 2024. He explained that member ID could either receive a renewal notice or an automated renewal if there's significant information to confirm her ongoing eligibility.

Sandra Rose emphasized the importance of updating addresses with the county, especially if members have moved in the last three years. This is crucial for communication regarding renewals or additional information. She encourages members to call the Call Center for assistance and offered personal appointments to review information.

<p>Member A asked for clarification on asset test limits.</p> <p>Jack provided information about income eligibility thresholds. In 2023 the threshold is \$130,000 for a household of one, \$195,000 for a household of two, and an additional \$65,000 for each additional member. He mentioned that the threshold was increased at the beginning of 2022 and is set to be eliminated in January.</p> <p><b>Contact information:</b> The Consumer Center for Health Education &amp; Advocacy Toll-Free: 1-877-734-3258 Fax: 619-471-2782 Key Managers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jack Dailey, HCA Coordinator/Director of Policy and Training - 619-471-2606 or <a href="mailto:JackD@lassd.org">JackD@lassd.org</a></li> <li>• Alexandria Forester, Senior Attorney – 619-471-2686, <a href="mailto:AlexandriaF@lassd.org">AlexandriaF@lassd.org</a>.</li> <li>• Carol Neidenberg, Program Manager - 619-471-2612 or <a href="mailto:CarolN@CCHEA.org">CarolN@CCHEA.org</a></li> <li>• Websites – <a href="http://www.lassd.org">www.lassd.org</a> and <a href="http://www.HealthConsumer.org">www.HealthConsumer.org</a></li> </ul>		<p><b>Action Item:</b> Sandra and Araceli to coordinate with Jack Daily to present at the next CIA Redetermination Partner meeting.</p>
<p><b>2024 Community Advisory Committee Updates:</b></p> <p><b>Term limits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new term limit is two years.</li> <li>• The new term for current committee members starts January 1, 2024.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recruitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Shield Promise must convene a selection committee to recruit additional committee members, including adolescents and/or parents/caregivers of children.</li> <li>• Member recruitment flyer and application were submitted for approval.</li> </ul>	<p>Sandra Rose</p>	

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<p><b>Quarterly Meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blue Shield Promise must make the regularly scheduled meetings open to the public, posting meeting information on the website 30 calendar days prior to the meeting and posting meeting minutes on the website no later than 45 calendar days after each meeting.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Appendix</b> Within our meeting presentation appendix, we shared the following reports for our committee members to review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>GEDWorks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member Flyer and Account Sign Up</li> <li>Create an Account</li> <li>Blue Shield Promise Verifies Eligibility</li> <li>Blue Shield Promise Monitors Program Indicators</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Standing Reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership &amp; Interpreter Services</li> <li>Grievances Q3 2023</li> <li>Appeals Q3 2023</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Key Contacts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Los Angeles Community Resource Centers</li> <li>Blue Shield Promise Contacts information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Araceli Garcia</p>	
<p><b>Closing Remarks and Adjournment</b></p> <p>Sandra Rose expressed gratitude to the committee members for their participation throughout 2023.</p>	<p>Sandra Rose</p>	

<p>Member A inquired about information he heard regarding Blue Shield losing CVS as a pharmacy provider. He is seeking clarification on whether this is accurate or if they will receive official notification about any such changes.</p> <p>Sandra is not familiar with any information about Blue Shield losing CVS as a pharmacy provider. She mentioned that the pharmacy benefit is managed by Medi-Cal RX and is separate from other services.</p> <p>Jack discusses a multi-year trend of big box pharmacies closing their shops, signing closures between 2018 and 2020 and an additional 900 closures since 2021. He expresses concern about the availability of pharmacies in certain communities and the potential impact on access to in person pharmacists. Jack mentions that this trend is being closely monitored, with consideration for potential challenges in access in some communities.</p> <p>Araceli Garcia expressed her gratitude to the committee, mentioning that it was nice seeing everyone and wishing everyone a happy holiday.</p> <p>Jenn thanked our Medi-Cal members for their time today and added that it's always a pleasure to see and hear from them. Their feedback is such an important gift!</p> <p>Sandra Rose thanked the committee and adjourned the meeting at 2:30pm.</p>		<p><b>Action Item:</b> Araceli to do research on whether CVS is no longer going to be contracted with Medi-Cal Rx and to follow up with Member A &amp; D on Pharmacy accessibility.</p>
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