

# A Window of Opportunity

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DESPITE YEARS OF RECURRENT budget reductions, the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) created a window of opportunity for every county in California. The Low Income Health Program (LIHP) was created in the State Medicaid 1115 waiver known as California's Bridge to Reform (November 2010). This program allows the county to draw down federal reimbursement for health care expenditures to LIHP enrollees. Each county has the option to participate. This is a major transformation of services to low income childless adults historically served under Welfare and Institutions 17000, known as the medically indigent services program.

- **What is the LIHP?**

The LIHP offers health care coverage to low income childless adults (19-64 years of age) who are county residents and U.S. citizens, or who meet the federal definition of a qualified immigrant and must not be subject to the five-year bar on federal eligibility. Sacramento County has set the income requirements at zero-67 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

- **What are the covered health services?**

Physician services including specialty care, emergency care services, acute inpatient hospital services, prescription and limited non-prescription medications, physical therapy, podiatry, prosthetic and orthotic appliances and devices, radiology, laboratory services, medical equipment and supplies and a minimum core mental health benefit are all provided. Benefits largely mirror Medi-Cal Managed Care, and network adequacy requirements are also similar.

- **How is the LIHP designed?**

Sacramento County selected Molina Healthcare as the "LIHP Health Plan." In partnership, the county and Molina have created a network. Our vision for LIHP primary care medical homes includes Federal Qualified

Health Centers (FQHCs) and FQHC Look Alike Clinics: Health and Life Organization (HALO), Midtown Medical Center, Sacramento Native American Health Center, Sacramento County Clinic and The Effort. CARES, a licensed community clinic, will also participate along with Molina Medical Group, Sacramento Family Medical Center and Galt Medical Center. This provides a variety of primary care locations in several areas throughout the county.

For implementation, we will begin the network with Sutter Health and Dignity Health. Hospital systems voiced concerns about balancing the burden of safety net services. The county and Molina made a commitment to start the LIHP with two hospital systems in place. We are striving to involve all four systems and we estimate at least one more hospital system will join later in the project. This partnership among the county, Molina Healthcare, hospital systems, local FQHCs and medical groups is timely and unique.

- **The Bridge**

Client applications will be screened for LIHP eligibility beginning October 2012 with an effective date of November 2012. Services to enrollees begin in November. Sacramento County has a Geographic Managed Care (GMC) model of Medi-Cal Managed Care with four commercial health plans. Sacramento County is the only county in the state utilizing a Medi-Cal Managed Care Health Plan for the LIHP. This means enrolled LIHP beneficiaries will not have to change providers when the LIHP transitions to Medi-Cal in January 2014. Developing the LIHP forged new partnerships which we hope will continue to flourish and strengthen our safety net.

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