

Quality Improvement Health Equity Committee

Quarter 2, 2024 Summary Report

Background

The purpose of this report is to summarize Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan (BSCPHP, BSC Promise, or Blue Shield Promise) Quality Improvement Health Equity Committee (QIHEC) activities, findings, recommendations, and actions that is prepared after each meeting and submitted to the Board Quality Improvement Committee (BQIC). In addition, for the remainder of 2024, the QIHEC will report to the Medi-Cal Committee who reports to the Blue Shield of California Board of Directors via consent agenda, and to DHCS upon request. A written summary of the QIHEC activities will be made available publicly on the Plan's website at least on a quarterly basis.

Summary of QIHEC Activities

The Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan QIHEC meeting was called to order on Thursday, June 20, 2024, by the Chairperson, Dr. Jennifer Nuovo, Chief Medical Officer via telephone conference. Dr. Nuovo welcomed committee members and previewed the agenda.

Introductions and Welcome

Dr. Jennifer Nuovo welcomed committee members, called the meeting to order, and previewed the meeting agenda.

Old Business

Brigitte Lamberson, Health Equity Principal Program Manager, Blue Shield Promise Medi-Cal Health Equity Office, reviewed old business and provided an update on the action item follow-up from last quarter's committee meeting regarding Violet Health. Violet Health was invited to present at today's Quarter 2, 2024 meeting.



Promise Health Plan

Document Review and Approval (Pre-reads)

The Quality Improvement and Health Equity Transformation Program (QIHETP) program documents were circulated to voting committee members for review and approval via email prior to the QIHEC Quarter (Q), 2, meeting. The following documents were approved by voting committee members:

- BSC Promise QIHEC Meeting Minutes Q1 2024
- 2024 BSC Promise QIHEC Work Plan
- QIHETP Annual Evaluation Report Year (RY) 2024
- Health Equity Advancements Resulting in Transformation (HEART) measure set.

Health Equity Dashboard

Brigitte Lamberson presented the Health Equity dashboard listing the goals, objectives, and activities demonstrating the progress made for the Quality Improvement Health Equity Transformation Program (QIHETP), and work completed.

QIHETP Annual Evaluation Report Year (RY) 2024 Summary

Brigitte Lamberson presented the QIHETP Annual Evaluation Highlights stating that the report will address the Plan's initial Action Plan Goals and Objectives as outlined in the 2023-2024 QIHET Program Description. Brigitte reviewed highlights and key findings identified including:

- Progress towards obtaining Health Equity Accreditation.
- Plan and implement Health Equity Oversight Committee for integrated health equity strategy across Blue Shield of California for all products.
- Conduct additional comprehensive health equity assessments periodically throughout the year to evaluate utilization of services, outcomes, and experiences to identify gaps in service delivery and opportunities to increase utilization, design or improve program activities, increase inclusivity, expand access, and establish collaborative partnerships.
- Conduct Health Equity Assessments preparing recommendations and interventions.
- HEART Measure Set and automation and integration culminating in health equity dashboard for improved tracking and trending.



Promise Health Plan

- Focus efforts on vulnerable priority populations, in alignment with DHCS bold goals (including maternal health, child health, justice-involvement, homelessness, LGBTQ+, members with open care gaps, member experience as indicated by the CAHPS[®] survey, and utilization management over- and under-utilization of services)

Regulatory Updates

Brigitte Lamberson provided regulatory updates regarding the following topics:

- DHCS DEI Training Program and Requirements, work in progress and completed to date toward meeting compliance of All Plan Letter (APL) 23-025.
- DMHC Health Equity updates related to the Health Equity Quality Measure Set (HEQMS) and reporting process, and Senate Bill (SB) 923 Gender Affirming Care, draft All Plan Letter for comment released to all managed care health plans.
- NCQA update reviewing the Accreditation timeline and activities completed through March 2024.

Violet Health

Dr. Nina Birnbaum, Medical Director, Innovation Acceleration, Blue Shield of California, provided a brief overview of the Violet Health pilot program for committee feedback regarding the platform. The proposed Violet Health pilot program targeting San Diego County Medi-Cal Providers. The pilot would include the following activities:

- Clinician Training to upskill providers in cultural competency offering extensive Continuing Education (CE) curriculum opportunities.
- Provider data collection to improve payor insight into network composition and representation
- Inclusivity Score and potential to add to Find a Doctor (FaD) feature.

DHCS Bold Goals 50x2025 Overview

Amie Eng, Program Manager, Principal, Blue Shield Promise Medi-Cal Quality Improvement, provided an overview of the DHCS Bold Goals and Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan progress. This initiative is part of DHCS' Comprehensive Quality Strategy and supports DHCS' goal of Keeping Families and



Promise Health Plan

Communities Healthy via Prevention. The initiative focuses on three priority areas including Children’s preventive care, Maternity/ reproductive health & Behavioral health integration. Each Bold Goal is evaluated by a collection of individual quality measures. Measures are in the Medi-Cal Managed Care Accountability Sets (MCAS) of quality metrics that we report on annually. The Bold Goal strategies require cross-functional collaboration. One pillar includes stratifying and reviewing quantifiable measures by race, ethnicity and SDOH. Amie reviewed the timeline to include the baseline measurement period, current period (MY) 2024 and (MY) 2025 and reporting year 2026. Each bold goal has a workgroup and reoccurring meeting to meet each goal.

HEART Measure Set Monitoring Data Report

Brigitte Lamberson presented the HEART Measure set stating that our contract requirement requires we maintain a Health Equity Transformation Program (HETP) which includes at a minimum integration of health equity activities across a wide range of functional areas such as utilization management, marketing, network, health education, grievances and appeals, and medical services such as case management, PHM, Maternal Health, Health Education and Cultural and Linguistics, and Quality.

Figure 1.

HEART Measure Set: Emerging Trends
Pending statistical analysis

Interpreter Service Utilization				
LA & San Diego	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Q1 2024
Total	1,122	620	477	544
American Sign Language	19.20% (216)	30.16% (187)	38.99% (186)	34.38% (187)
Spanish	24.59% (276)	21.94% (136)	16.35% (78)	21.88% (119)
Russian	13.72% (154)	15.81% (98)	16.14% (77)	0.00% (0)

Call Center Number of Internal Bilingual Calls by Member's Preferred Language				
LA & San Diego	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Q1 2024
Total Calls	31,286	46,759	64,721	82,787
English	81.11% (25,384)	81.00% (37,875)	81.60% (52,810)	78.75% (65,194)
Spanish	17.59% (5,502)	17.56% (8,212)	16.9% (10,939)	21.25% (17,593)

Childhood Immunizations							
	SD Q2 2023	LA Q3 2023	SD Q3 2023	LA Q4 2023	SD Q4 2023	LA Q1 2024	SD Q1 2024
Screening by Race	28.64%	20.97%	29.60%	22.05%	31.33%	14.69%	17.34%
Black or African American	22.2% (54)	7.92% (202)	23.08% (52)	9.47% (190)	24.00% (50)	6.61% (22)	13.86% (14)
White	23.64% (330)	10.40% (173)	24.76% (319)	10.92% (174)	26.10% (318)	7.08% (29)	13.78% (62)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	36.17% (47)	21.43% (14)	36.96% (46)	35.71% (14)	39.53% (43)	16.06% (35)	22.68% (22)

Depression Screening Follow-Up						
	SD Q2 2023	SD Q3 2023	LA Q4 2023	SD Q4 2023	LA Q1 2024	SD Q1 2024
Follow up by Race	79.31%	78.26%	45.45%	77.66%	Pending	Pending
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	75.00% (16)	78.57% (14)	0.00% (2)	75.86% (29)	Pending	Pending
Other Race	68.55% (159)	67.1% (155)	42.86% (84)	100.00% (1)	Pending	Pending
Asian	80% (5)	75.00% (4)	100.00% (4)	90.00% (10)	Pending	Pending
Black or African American	82.61% (23)	81.82% (22)	66.67% (6)	84.38% (32)	Pending	Pending
White	89.53% (86)	89.87% (79)	57.14% (7)	84.24% (165)	Pending	Pending
Native	100.00% (1)	100.00% (1)	0% (1)	100.00% (2)	Pending	Pending



Promise Health Plan

Findings and Recommendations

Brigitte Lamberson reviewed initial opportunities that have led to recommendations per metric, including planned or current activities. For example, the Quality team is leading SDOH incentives for Providers. For Childhood Immunization Status, we need to assess the root causes for why our measures are low among African American and White populations, could it be vaccine hesitancy vs. access issues. For the DSF measure, we would like to continue to track the next 6 months' worth of data to confirm the geographical variance trend. Regarding the bilingual calls managed by call center, our initial observation is to ensure call center agents can meet the need of our Spanish-speaking members. We did reach out to Call Center leadership who confirmed they are prioritizing recruitment of bilingual Call Center staff; 21 of 29 recent hires are bilingual. For interpreter service utilization, we saw a higher request service for ASL utilization when compared to other languages. We have requested membership data to identify people with disabilities, and ASL category across all HEART measures to assess health outcomes for people with disabilities, specifically among our hard of hearing members.

Two status updates, including the SDOH Incentives for Providers program were approved. It was confirmed through membership enrollment data that there are a total of 56 members whose preferred language is ASL in our Medi-Cal services areas: 10 members in LA county and 46 members in SD county.

Additionally, there is work in progress to look closely into member level data. The Health Equity Office will continue to monitor data, track, trend analysis and follow through the recommendations as depicted in Figure 2. Opportunities/Next Steps.



Figure 2. Opportunities/Next Steps

Domain	Metric	Observation	Recommendation
Equitable Social Interventions	SDOH Reporting	1% of members with Social Determinants of Health reported	SDOH Incentives for Providers pending DHCS approval
Equitable High-Quality Clinical Care	Childhood Immunization Status	Low Childhood Immunizations among African American (24%) and White (26%)	Assess root causes (vaccine hesitancy vs. access)
Overall Well-Being	Depression Screening follow-up	Geographical variance	Track next 6 months to confirm trend
Equitable Structures of Care	Bilingual calls managed by Call Center	Assess if Call Center agents can meet need of Spanish-speaking members	Call Center Leadership to prioritize recruitment of bilingual Call Center staff 21 of 29 recent hires are bilingual
Equitable Access to Care	Interpreter service utilization	American Sign Language highest utilization of onsite interpreter service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request membership data to identify hard of hearing members 2. ASL category across all HEART measures to assess health outcomes for hard of hearing members

Health Equity Spotlight: Emergency Response in San Diego

Jesse Brennan-Cooke, Director, Clinical Access Programs, Blue Shield Promise Office of the CMO, provided a Health Equity Spotlight Report highlighting Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan’s Emergency Response in San Diego County due to Flooding. The Clinical Access Programs team conducted outreach calls to our Seniors and Persons with Disabilities (SPD) members, resulting in 3,000 Wellness Check Calls and \$70,000 donations to community organizations who were directly supporting those affected by the flooding.

Actions

No action was taken. The committee will continue to present QIHETP Workplan updates, present HEART Measure Set Monitoring Report rates and disparity analysis and identify quarterly Health Equity Spotlight reports.

Closing and Adjournment

Dr. Jennifer Nuovo thanked the committee for their time and feedback. The next QIHEC meeting will be held September 19, 2024.