

June 24, 2009

From: Kelly Pfeifer, MD

Subject: Medi-Cal Optional Benefits & Trigger Cuts – Impact on SFHP members

Dear SFHP Medical Group or Provider,

As you know, the state of California will not receive enough federal stimulus funding to prevent the trigger cuts that will be implemented on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, some benefits will not be covered by State Medi-Cal for beneficiaries ages 21 years old and older.

However, we are delighted to inform you that **San Francisco Health Plan will continue to provide payment for select services provided to our members ages 21 years old and older, when there is a medical need**, even though we may not receive payment from the State (pending State approval).

NOTE: Benefits will not change for Medi-Cal members less than 21 years old.

SFHP will <b><u>continue to provide payment for your services</u></b> to our SFHP Medi-Cal members when there is medical need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Audiology</li><li>▪ Incontinence creams and washes</li><li>▪ Podiatry</li><li>▪ Speech therapy</li></ul>
SFHP will <b><u>continue to pay for services provided</u></b> to our SFHP Medi-Cal members when there is medical need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Optometry benefits for members ages 21 years old and older:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ SFHP will cover annual vision exams only if the member has diabetes. Abnormal exams should be referred to an ophthalmologist for follow-up.</li><li>▪ Glasses or materials are not covered for members ages 21 years old and older.</li></ul></li><li>▪ Optometry benefits for members less than 21 year old remain the same</li><li>▪ Ophthalmology services are still available for members of all ages.</li></ul>
Medi-Cal Benefits that will be <b><u>cut effective July 1<sup>st</sup></u></b> for Medi-Cal beneficiaries 21 years old or older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Non-emergent dental services</li><li>▪ Acupuncture</li><li>▪ Chiropractic</li><li>▪ Psychology (Services from a psychologist are cut, but services from a LCSW or psychiatrist are still covered. San Francisco Community Behavioral Health Services will still be available for Medi-Cal patients after July 1<sup>st</sup>.)</li></ul>

Below this memo you will find a listing of frequently asked questions. These FAQs are designed to assist in answering any questions you or your patients may have.

Thank you for partnering with San Francisco Health Plan. If you have any questions about the Medi-Cal optional benefits and trigger cuts, please contact Provider Relations at (415) 547-7818 ext. 7084.

Membership Counts for San Francisco Health Plan as of 6/2009

Count of Medi-Cal members (0-20 y/o)	21,225
Count of Medi-Cal members (21 y/o and older)	13,261
Total Count of SFHP Members (all programs)	56,699

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)  
For Medi-Cal Optional Benefit Cuts  
For San Francisco Health Plan Providers and Partners**

**Medical Groups and Provider Sites**

1. Where can my patients go to get services?

<p><i>SFHP will continue to provide payment for your services to our SFHP Medi-Cal members when there is medical need</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Audiology</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Incontinence creams and washes</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Podiatry</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Speech therapy</i></li> </ul>
<p><i>SFHP will continue to pay for services provided to our SFHP Medi-Cal members when there is medical need</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Optometry benefits for members ages 21 years old and older:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>SFHP will cover annual vision exams only if the member has diabetes. Abnormal exams should be referred to an ophthalmologist for follow-up.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Glasses or materials are not covered for members ages 21 years old and older.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <i>Optometry benefits for members less than 21 year old remain the same</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Ophthalmology services are still available for members of all ages.</i></li> </ul>
<p><i>Medi-Cal Benefits that will be cut effective July 1st for Medi-Cal beneficiaries 21 years old or older</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Non-emergent dental services</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Acupuncture</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Chiropractic</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Psychology (Services from a psychologist are cut, but services from a LCSW or psychiatrist are still covered. San Francisco Community Behavioral Health Services will still be available for Medi-Cal patients after July 1st.)</i></li> </ul>

*We also have a list of community resources available, which may offer services on a sliding scale. Please contact SFHP Provider Relations at 415-547-7818 ext. 7084 for a copy of this list.*

2. Does this mean I can't provide audiology services? (If an audiologist)  
*Children up to age 21 on Medi-Cal will continue to receive all benefits.*

*See above table*

*Physicians can still provide the service.*

3. What do I tell my patients who are in need of these services?  
*Children up to age 21 on Medi-Cal will continue to receive all benefits.*

*SFHP will continue to provide podiatry, speech therapy, audiology services, incontinence supplies, and eye exams for diabetics. As a provider in the SFHP network, we will work with you to identify which services will continue to be covered. If you have further questions, I please call SFHP Provider Relations at 415-547-7818 ext. 7084.*

*For services we are not covering, there are community resources available, which may offer services on a sliding scale. Please contact SFHP Provider Relations at (415) 547-7818 ext. 7084 for a copy of this list.*

4. My patient is diabetic and she needs some of these services. Why are you telling me now that she's not eligible? Where do I send her for treatment?

*SFHP will continue to provide several services for adults on Medi-Cal, including podiatry and vision exams.*

*Ophthalmology services are not cut, so any patient who cannot see an optometrist can still see an ophthalmologist by referral.*

*Glasses and contact lenses are no longer covered. We have a resource list of low cost vision and dental services. If you have additional questions or would like a copy of the resource list contact SFHP Provider Relations at 415-547-7818 ext. 7084.*

5. I provided some services already. Are you still going to compensate me for their care?

*The benefit cuts take effect on July 1, 2009. Services before then are billable. Also, SFHP will continue to provide several services for adults on Medi-Cal, including speech therapy, audiology, podiatry, incontinence washes and vision exams for diabetics.*

6. I am a provider and I want to talk with someone about my patient not being covered. She's three months pregnant and will need coverage for the duration of her pregnancy.

*Pregnant women will still be covered for services that are medically necessary, including full dental care. If you have additional questions please contact SFHP Provider Relations at 415-547-7818 ext. 7084.*

## Potential Questions from Members

1. I got a letter in the mail about losing Medi-Cal benefits. What does it mean?

*It does not mean that people are losing Medi-Cal. There are certain benefits that will no longer be covered by Medi-Cal after July 1<sup>st</sup>. The most commonly used services that will no longer be covered are adult preventive dental care, optometry (including glasses) and podiatry. The cuts happened because of the State's budget problems.*

*The Medi-Cal program will continue to provide the benefits to children under 21 years old and adults in certain skilled nursing facilities. There are also exceptions for pregnant women (pregnant women will be able to continue receiving complete dental care).*

<p><i>SFHP will continue to cover SFHP Medi-Cal members when there is medical need</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Audiology</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Incontinence creams and washes</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Podiatry</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Speech therapy</b></li> </ul>
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2. I got a letter from Medi-Cal and I tried to call the number on the letter, but all I could do was leave a message.

*Yes, the phone line listed on the State's letter may be busy. The State sent the letter to all people with Medi-Cal in California; so many people may be trying to call.*

3. Are my children losing their benefits?

*No, children under 21 years old will continue to receive all Medi-Cal benefits. Certain adults may still receive benefits, too (for example, those in nursing facilities, and pregnant women).*

*As a member of SFHP, we will work with you to identify which services will continue to be covered. Please call SFHP Member Services at 415-547-7800 if you have additional questions.*

4. Why is this happening?

*The State has a big budget deficit and is required to make budget cuts in all areas, including education, public health, social services and Medi-Cal.*

5. I am supposed to see the dentist next week, can I still go?

*The adult dental benefit will be cut starting on July 1, 2009. You can still use Denti-Cal until then. After July 1<sup>st</sup>, the State will continue to cover some emergency dental services. For example, Denti-Cal will cover tooth extraction (pulling teeth), re-cementing of crowns, and treatment of infections and injuries. Denti-Cal will no longer cover cleanings and other treatments such as root canals. If you have a need or questions, it is best to call Denti-Cal to find out what emergency dental services are going to be covered. Here is their number: **(800) 322-6384**.*

6. Will these benefits be coming back next year?

*At this time, the State has not said the benefits will be coming back.*

7. If I am going to lose my Denti-Cal benefits, where can I get my dental services? Can you provide resources?

*SFHP has a list of community resources. Please visit [www.sfhp.org](http://www.sfhp.org) to download a copy or call SFHP Member Services at 415-547-7800.*

8. Will I have to pay for these services, if I get them?

*There are community resources available, which may offer services on a sliding scale. Please request a copy of the list for more information.*

9. What is Healthy San Francisco? Can I get dental services there?

*Healthy San Francisco is a new program created by the City of San Francisco that makes health care services accessible and affordable for uninsured residents. The program offers a new way for San Francisco residents who do not have health insurance, to have basic and ongoing medical care. Dental services are not included, however.*

Is there another plan I can join?

*The State has made these cuts to the whole Medi-Cal program, not just SFHP. The cuts affect all plans, including other plans in San Francisco. Anthem Blue Cross is the other Medi-Cal managed care plan in San Francisco. Call Health Care Options for information about Anthem Blue Cross.*

*Health Care Options: 1-800-430-4263.*

10. It's wrong that I'm losing my benefits. How do I file a grievance? Do I have any legal protection?

*As a member of SFHP, we will work with you to identify which services will continue to be covered. If you have additional questions or would like to file a grievance please contact SFHP Member Services at 415-547-7800.*

11. Why is SFHP doing this?

*The State Medi-Cal program is making these cuts, not SFHP.*

12. The letter says I can still get benefits if I am pregnant. Is that true?

*Yes, you still will receive full dental services, and it is important to go to the dentist early in your pregnancy for care. The other services like podiatry and optometry are not covered. If you have questions, please call SFHP Member Services at 415-547-7800.*

13. Can I pay for the service?

*There are community resources available, which may offer services on a sliding scale. Please call SFHP Member Services at 415-547-7800 to request a copy of the list.*

14. It says psychology services are not covered. Can I still get counseling?

*The cuts are only for services from a psychologist, and they do not affect members who receive care in our County program, Community Behavioral Health Services. You still should be able to get any care you need. The number for SFCBHS is 888-246-3333.*

15. I have high blood pressure (or diabetes) and I'm worried about my eyesight. I still need these services.

*SFHP will continue to offer vision eye exams for adults with diabetes.*

*All members, whether or not they have diabetes, may still see an ophthalmologist (a medical doctor specializing in the eye). Please ask your primary care provider for a referral. If you have more questions, please call SFHP Member Services at 415-547-7800.*

16. I need chiropractic care (or acupuncture). What should I do?

*Unfortunately, this service will no longer be covered on Medi-Cal after July 1<sup>st</sup>. You always have the option to pay for the services.*

17. I need speech therapy (or audiology exams). What should I do?

*SFHP is committed to make sure you have the treatment you need to stay healthy. We will be continuing to cover speech therapy and audiology exams. Ask your primary care provider for a referral.*

18. I need incontinence supplies – are they going to be cut off?

*SFHP is committed to make sure you have the supplies you need to stay healthy. We will be continuing to cover incontinence supplies.*