

**SLO Healthcare Workforce Partnership
Funding & Advocacy Meeting
June 19, 2024 via Zoom
Discussion Results**

Attendees: Michelle Shoresman (PH), Jessica Peckham (NP), Lisa Fraser (CFS), Susan McGraw (Coordinator)

Discussion Results:

- **Action item updates from last meeting:**
 - **HCAI Health Professions Shortage Area(HPSA)/MSSA Designations:** Michelle and Susan are meeting with the experts at the state tomorrow to get more information on this.
 - Question to add: How does this work across county boundaries? Some residents/military families are technically within Monterey County but access healthcare services in North County. Also true for SLO South County residents going to Santa Maria/SB County.
 - **Medi-Cal/Medicare Reimbursement Rates:**
 - **Medi-Cal Rates:** Jordan Turetsky, COO at CenCal Health and Partnership member, presented information at the June Partnership meeting.
 - Medi-Cal rates are determined at the state level and are consistent across the state. There are very few Medi-Cal recipients that are still on a “fee for service” basis. The vast majority are members of CenCal Health, the Managed Care Plan for primary healthcare. Some behavioral health and dental services are not provided by CenCal Health, but are provided by SLO County or a private dental plan.
 - CenCal Health negotiates rates with the providers in their Managed Care Plan, which are typically higher than the state reimbursement rates. CenCal Health then gets reimbursed from the state for the amounts paid to the providers. There may be a gap in the reimbursed amount because the reimbursement rates are paid by the state retroactively (2 years after the provider rates are set). CenCal Health maintains reserves to cover this gap, if necessary.
 - CenCal Health’s negotiated rates have to be relatively in line with other managed care plans throughout the state in order to get adequate reimbursement from the state.
 - **Medicare Rates** (set by CMS at the federal level, by vary by region based upon a formula):
 - Michelle and Susan met yesterday with Yessenia Echevarria (Congressman Salud Cabajal’s office/southern part of the county; Jimmy Panetta is representing north county). They are working on

researching the Medicare rate situation for SLO County. If they try to raise rural rates, it will increase all the rates across the country.

- We suggested that we should investigate the “urban” vs. “rural” designation for SLO County.
 - She will come and talk to the full Partnership about the issues associated with raising the Medicare rates and other bills related to healthcare access that we may want to support.
 - We also talked with her about the possibility of participating on a panel for the October Community Forum.
 - Seniors are a growing segment of the SLO County population. More seniors are selecting a Medicare Advantage Plan (managed care plan) due to the lower cost. Are the Medicare Advantage Plans reinvesting in the community like CenCal Health (20% of SLO population is Medi-Cal)?
 - Medicare population: has more than doubled.
 - CCPN is growing rapidly in SLO County.
 - This Committee could decide to put together a panel to discuss Medi-Cal, Medicare issues at the local, state, national level. If so, we would need to confirm the date/time in order to book speakers now,
- **MCO Tax:**
 - This is a tax on managed care plans (based on the numbers of members they have). The revenue generated is reinvested into the community by increasing the rate of reimbursement for Medi-Cal services to make them more comparable to Medicare fee-for-service reimbursement rates. This tax has been in place for 20 years, but has to be renewed every 2 years by the legislature.
 - An advocacy opportunity would be to influence legislators to have this be a permanent tax, rather than requiring it to be renewed every 2 years.
 - **Proposition 1:** For behavioral health (extra money or duplicate money?)
 - **CHW/Promotores Collaborative:** The Central Coast CHW Collaborative is meeting with HCAI on the status of the certification process for CHWs.
 - Lisa will keep up posted on this and identify any advocacy efforts that may be needed.
 - Central Coast CHW just received funding from SB Foundation, which may help offset any potential funding losses through HCAI.
- **Next Steps:**
 - **ACTION 1:**
 - **Medicare:** Need more research on “urban” vs. “rural” designation and the GPCI factors that determine the local reimbursement rate.
 - **ACTION 2:**
 - **October Forum:** Include discussions regarding Medi-Cal/Medicare, HPSA/MSSA designations on the agenda for October Community Event. If a panel is desired, confirm the date/time of the event and invite speakers soon.