

Hearthbeat

**Featured Story:
Dr. Phillip Chong**

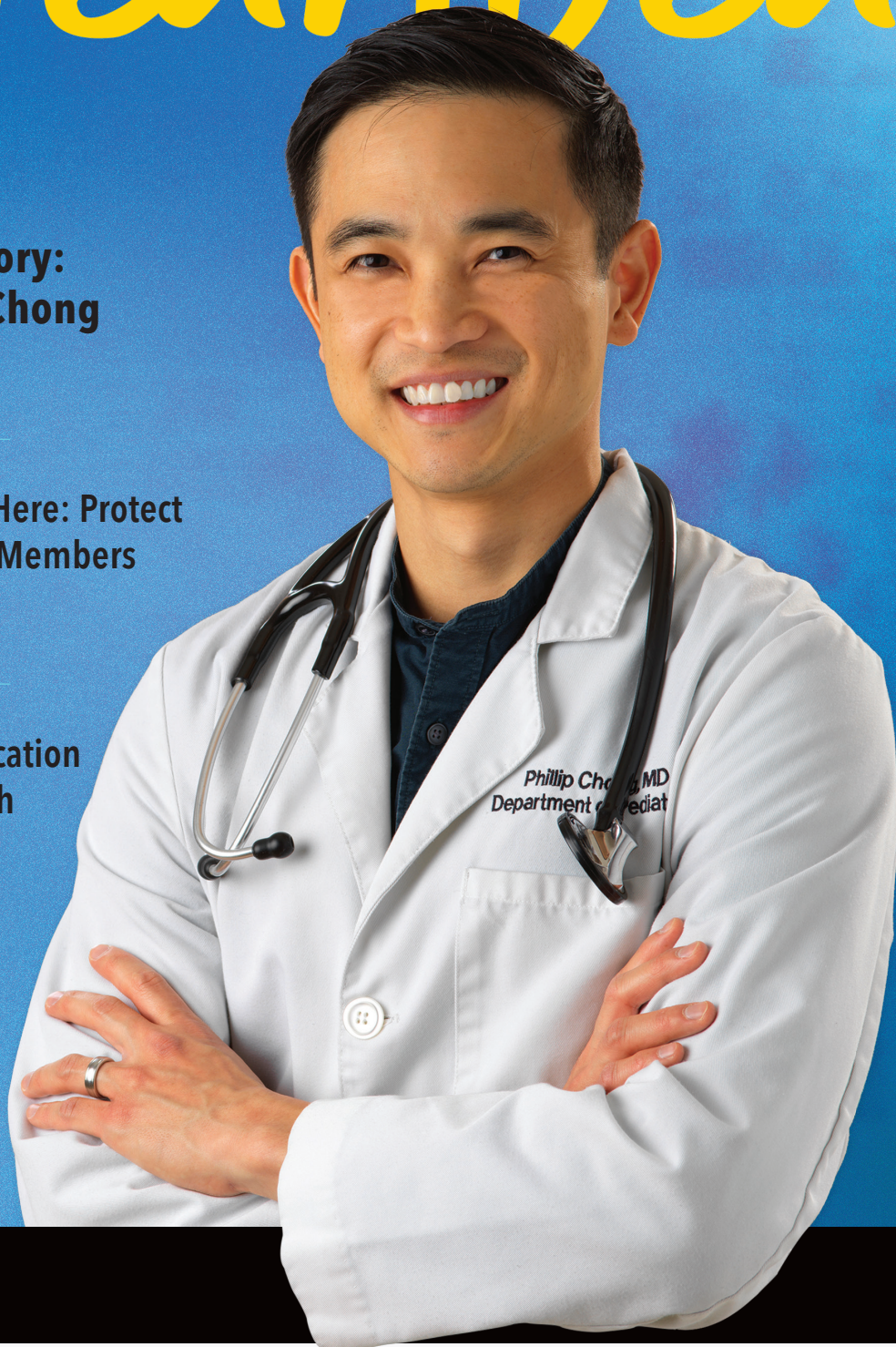
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**Flu Season Is Here: Protect
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If you have any questions, contact the
IEHP Provider Call Center at **866-223-IEHP (4347)**
or email providerservices@iehp.org

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE



FEATURE STORY














ARTICLE



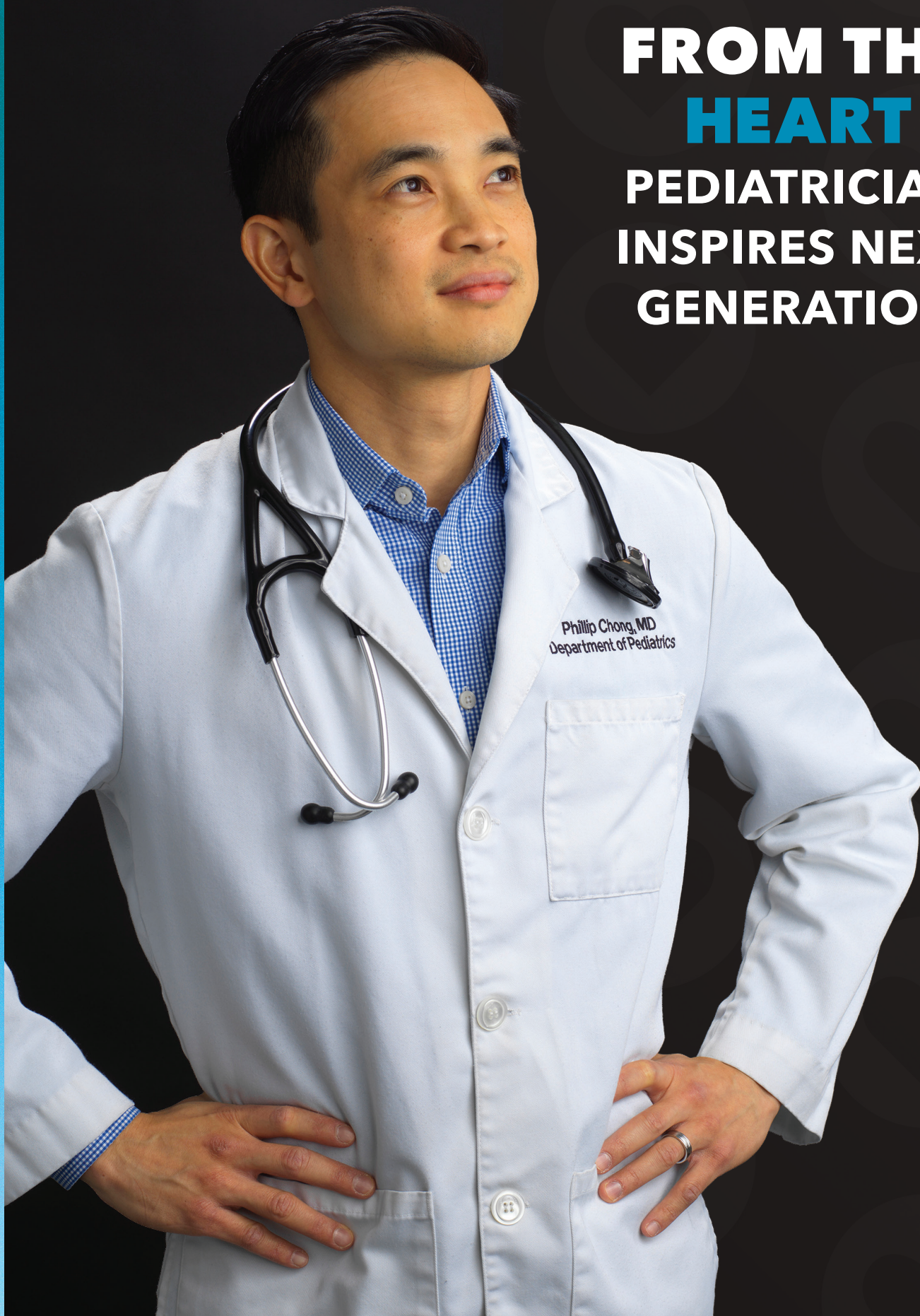
EDUCATION



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FROM THE **HEART** PEDIATRICIAN INSPIRES NEXT GENERATION



FOR PHILLIP CHONG, MD, A DOCTOR'S OFFICE REPRESENTS MORE THAN A PLACE TO RECEIVE HEALTH CARE.

The interaction with an engaged provider can shape someone's future, or perhaps even set a young person on a career path to help others.

After all, that's exactly what happened to a young boy of Chinese immigrants, who split his time between the country of Panama and Miami, Florida.

"I was very fortunate to have a great pediatrician, Dr. Mercado, who piqued my interest in health care," said Dr. Chong, an Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) network pediatrician at West Point Medical Group Pediatrics in Fontana. "Later on, as an adolescent, I served on several local and international mission trips ... and I felt encouraged to one day be part of a system that bridges the gap in health disparities at a local or global level."

Dr. Chong also credited the positive influence of a high school guidance counselor and the opportunity to witness the importance of care access and early intervention, especially for people who lack resources. He remains grateful that combining his keen interest in science and a committed heart for children led him to pediatrics.

THE PARENTHOOD FACTOR

Dr. Chong and his wife, Michelle, moved to the Inland Empire in 2017. They have two sons, Simon, 3, and Micah, 1.

As expected, entering parenthood absolutely affected Dr. Chong's work.

"I definitely empathized and felt better equipped to help," he said. "Knowing firsthand about the sleepless nights and distractions, I make sure to provide handouts to reference later regarding their child's condition as well as give any helpful tips from my personal experience."

Dr. Chong also creates educational opportunities for families, building firm roots in basic health practices to grow and thrive, he said.

"I want my patients to be inspired to set their own healthy agendas, such as enjoying home-cooked meals and taking a walk together," Dr. Chong added.

WHOLE-CHILD CARE

Dr. Chong aims to provide whole-child care. In communities as culturally and socioeconomically diverse as those in the IE, that includes connecting

parents to non-medical resources like local food banks or communicating in their preferred language.

"Every family has their own unique circumstances," he said. "As a pediatrician, I want to establish connections and deliver more culturally sensitive care."

For instance, with modern medicine and rapidly changing technologies, Dr. Chong looks to build trust with his patients about new treatments as well as established care such as immunizations.

"So, I consider it a win when I can meet vaccine-hesitant parents where they are, to eliminate the hesitancy and start allowing their children to receive these lifesaving vaccines," he said.

HEARTFELT SUPPORT

Dr. Chong emphasized that working collaboratively with IEHP sets him and his patients up for success.

"The heart behind IEHP, the support of an extensive network of contracted pediatric specialists, and member incentives for patients have been of great assistance," he said.

And when Dr. Chong needs extra motivation to practice medicine, he finds it in the sons who love to make pizza and explore their community's hidden gems with him.

"My two boys, born and raised in the IE, are keeping things fresh, reminding me every day why I love being a pediatrician and an advocate for my patients," he said. "My patients deserve to thrive physically and emotionally ... I am committed to making them feel valued throughout their formative years."

Because, just as Dr. Chong's career path showed, a provider visit can offer more than meets the eye.

"Yes, the doctor's office is a place to heal the sick and educate about maintaining healthy lifestyles, but it is also a place to inspire the next generation of community leaders," he said. "Seeing these children develop and grow is such a fun and rewarding experience!"

NAME	Phillip Chong, MD, FAAP
PRACTICE	West Point Medical Group Pediatrics
RESIDENCY	UTHealth McGovern Medical School (UT-Houston)
BOARD CERTIFICATION	American Board of Pediatrics

FLU SEASON IS HERE: PROTECT OUR PREGNANT MEMBERS



Flu season is here and pregnancy heightens the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases, making timely immunization essential for mothers and babies. Recent data reveals a troubling drop in flu vaccination rates among pregnant members, with only 17% of patients who gave birth in 2024 having received the flu vaccine.

ACTION STEPS FOR PROVIDERS:

- Prioritize immunizations for expectant patients, aiming for both Tdap and flu vaccines.
- Provider recommendations significantly increase vaccination likelihood and confidence in vaccine safety.
- Administering the flu vaccine at any pregnancy stage or during preconception visits.
- Offering the flu vaccine early in the season.

- Promoting flu vaccination during Tdap visits.
- Educating patients about vaccines and referring them to their PCP or local pharmacy if vaccines are not available on-site.

REMINDER: CALIFORNIA IMMUNIZATION REGISTRY (CAIR2)

Providers must enter immunization data into CAIR2, which aids in tracking and public health efforts. Utilizing CAIR2 enhances provider performance on vaccine quality measures through improved data accuracy and accessibility.

For additional resources or assistance, contact your Provider Relations Manager via IEHP's Provider Call Center at (909) 890-2054 or email providerservices@iehp.org.

IEHP EATING DISORDER PROGRAM OVERVIEW



In collaboration with San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, IEHP has launched the Eating Disorder Program to assist members diagnosed with severe eating disorders or those who may have concerns regarding their eating habits.

UNDERSTANDING EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders are serious health conditions that affect both physical and mental well-being, influencing thoughts about food, eating behaviors, and body weight. They can lead to emotional challenges and hinder daily functioning.

Without proper treatment, these disorders can escalate into long-term issues and may even be life-threatening.

The most prevalent types include:

- Anorexia
- Bulimia
- Binge-eating disorder

These disorders often involve an unhealthy obsession with weight, body shape, and food, resulting in harmful behaviors that can severely affect nutrition and overall health. Eating disorders are frequently linked to mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety. However, with the right treatment, individuals

can cultivate healthier eating habits and improve their relationship with food and body image, potentially reversing some of the adverse health effects caused by the disorder.

REFERRING MEMBERS TO THE PROGRAM

To refer members, please complete the referral form through the Provider Portal by navigating to:

- Care Management > Care Plans and HRAs > IEHP Care Management Referral Form (PDF)

Once completed, send the referral forms via email to cmreferralteam@iehp.org, including "Member could benefit from the Eating Disorder Program" in the body of the email.

After a referral is submitted, our care management team will reach out to the member to:

- Assess their condition
- Schedule necessary medical appointments
- Discuss additional complementary programs that may be helpful

You can monitor referrals through the Provider Portal to confirm member participation in the program.

IMPROVE MEDICATION ADHERENCE WITH MAIL ORDER

IEHP DualChoice and IEHP Covered (CCA) members have access to **no-cost home delivery** of their medications through SortPak Pharmacy mail order pharmacy service. This convenient option helps patients stay on track with their treatment plans and improves overall health outcomes. Patients who use mail-order show up to 15% improvement in adherence.

Benefits of Mail Order:

- No-cost home delivery - saves time and gas
- Refill reminders to prevent missed doses
- Adherence Packaging

Submitting Prescriptions to SortPak is Easy:

Electronically	NCPDP/NABP: 0524733
Phone	1-877-570-7787 (TTY: 1-877-570-7787)
Fax	1-877-475-2382
Mail	SortPak Pharmacy 655 N. Central Ave., 22nd Floor Glendale, CA 91203

Together, we can help patients achieve better health outcomes through improved adherence. Thank you for your continued support!

If you have any questions, please reach out to the IEHP Pharmacy Quality Team at pharmacyacademicdetailing@iehp.org

We appreciate your partnership in continuously improving how we meet the needs of our members, making it easier for them to adhere to their medications and achieve optimal health.

D-SNP MEMBER TRANSITION: FORMULARY BENEFIT CHANGES



There are formulary changes to the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit for 2026. The member's current drug may have new requirements or have a new preferred equivalent drug. Below are some important highlights of these changes. For more details, please check the published [formulary](#).

2025 Formulary Drug Name	2026 Formulary Alternative
Basaglar Kwikpen U-100	Lantus
Insulin Lispro Kwikpen U-100	Insulin Aspart, Novolog
Steglatro	Farxiga, Jardiance
Invokana	Farxiga, Jardiancew
Insulin Lispro	Insulin Aspart, Novolog
Incruse Ellipta	Tiotropium, Spiriva, Atrovent
Humulin R	Novolin R
Aimovig Autoinjector	Ajovy, Emgality, Nurtec ODT, Qulipta

There will also be changes to medication copayments. To help members save time and money on out-of-pocket costs please consider the following:

1. Prescribe a 100-day supply instead of a one-month supply for their maintenance medications.
 - The member will pay the same amount for the 100-day supply, and they will not have to go to the pharmacy as often.
2. Remind the member to use the SortPak Pharmacy for no-cost delivery of their medications.
 - New prescriptions may be sent to SortPak electronically by using NCPDP/NABP: 0524733 or by faxing to 877-475-2382. You can call SortPak at 1-877-570-7787
3. Prescribe generic drugs for the member instead of brand-name drugs.
4. When possible, prescribe a combination drug instead of two or more separate medications.

COVERAGE FOLLOWING RAPE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT: (AB) 2843



Effective July 1, 2025, all in-network and out-of-network providers are required to cover emergency room medical care and subsequent health care treatment for a member who has been treated following a rape or sexual assault. This coverage will be provided without imposing any cost-sharing for the first nine months after the member begins treatment.

The Bill explicitly prohibits plans from requiring any of the following in order to provide the necessary coverage:

- ✓ A member to file a police report regarding the rape or sexual assault
- ✓ Charges to be pressed against an assailant
- ✓ An assailant to be convicted of rape or sexual assault

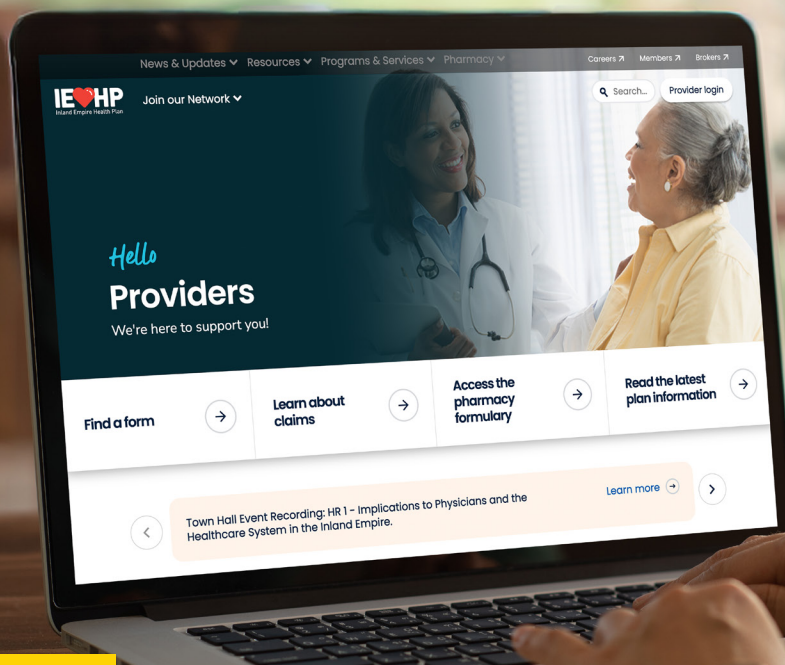
“Follow-up health care treatment” includes medical or surgical services aimed at diagnosing, preventing or treating medical conditions that arise from incidents of rape or sexual assault.

Note: Copays for these services are not to be collected

For more information, please refer to the Penal Code Sections 261, 261.6, 263, 263.1 & 286, 287, 288.7 for definitions of “rape” and “sexual assault”: www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov > California Law > Penal Code > Part 1. Of Crimes and Punishments

If you have any questions, please contact the IEHP Provider Call Center at **(909) 890-2054** or email providerservices@iehp.org.

UPDATE! ADDRESS GRIEVANCES THROUGH THE PROVIDER PORTAL



Providers can now address IEHP Direct grievances and access resolution letters via the Provider Portal.

The G&A roster now offers “More Options”, enabling users to set a default range of three years (1,095 days) or a custom date range. This feature provides an overview of Open and In Progress cases, with sortable columns and status alerts: New, In Progress, Cancelled, and Resolved. Overdue cases will be labeled as “In Progress.” To view case details, users can click on the magnifying glass or the blue Grievance ID.

Resolved or Cancelled grievances are available in “read-only” format but can still be viewed and downloaded.

Providers are required to respond to grievances within 14 days, or within 72 hours for expedited cases.

To support response to a Member's grievance, providers may attach any relevant documents, as needed:

Referral Log	Other documents as relevant
Referral	Diagnostic Testing
Office Policy	Front Office Sign-In Sheet
Progress Notes	Communication Log/ Call Notes
Rx History	Appointment Log

Once a grievance is resolved, the Resolution letter will be accessible under Correspondence.

While all correspondence regarding a Direct Member grievance can now take place in the Provider Portal, IEHP will continue to fax and email grievances and accept Provider responses via fax and email.

We hope that the ability to respond to grievances through the Portal will streamline the response process and enhance efficiency. We value your partnership and the care you provide to our community.

For any questions, please reach out to the IEHP Provider Call Center at **(909) 890-2054** or email **providerservices@iehp.org**.



REVISION TO VACCINE AND PREVENTIVE CARE COVERAGE: CA ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 144

California Assembly Bill (AB) 144 revises vaccine and preventive care coverage, requiring Medi-Cal and private health plans to cover immunizations and services recommended by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) without cost-sharing, such as copays or deductibles.

KEY PROVISIONS

- **Expanded Medi-Cal Coverage:** Mandates coverage for vaccines recommended by key medical organizations and CDPH modifications.
- **Free Preventive Care:** Health plans must cover services with "A" or "B" ratings from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force without cost-sharing.
- **State Adaptation Authority:** CDPH can update recommendations, requiring health plans to adopt changes within 15 days.
- **Specific Vaccine Coverage:** Coverage for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV vaccines, even if not approved for all ages, based on CDPH recommendations.
- **Pharmacists' Role:** Pharmacists can administer specified vaccines per CDPH guidelines.
- **Provider Protection:** Aims to protect healthcare providers while ensuring access to immunizations.

The Department of Health Care Services confirms Medi-Cal coverage for vaccines, including COVID-19 for individuals 6 months and older. The CDPH has published the 2025-26 Respiratory Vaccine Recommendations online at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/publichealth4all/SB144CARV-ImmunizationRecommendations.aspx>

The full bill can be accessed on-line at <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/AB144/id/3270007> or by scanning the QR Code with a mobile device.



If you have any questions, please contact the IEHP Provider Call Center at (909) 890-2054 or email providerservices@iehp.org.

LIVING THE MISSION STAFF AWARD: CELEBRATING NANCY PEREZ



Nancy Perez has been the Office Manager at Trident Medical Group for nearly ten years. She has been instrumental in managing Dr. Nyra Khetarpal's primary care office in Apple Valley, CA.

Nancy's responsibilities include overseeing staff and patient schedules, collaborating with various departments and vendors to enhance patient care, and addressing any issues that may arise. Her dedication and passion for her role have earned her the Living the Mission Staff Award.

Nancy genuinely cares about patients and the healthcare system. She leads through her actions, embodying a positive attitude and a knack for problem-solving.

When asked about a time Nancy exceeded expectations, Goldie Medlock shared, "a patient lived in a remote area and needed hospice care. Nancy did research and called numerous hospice agencies until she found one that serviced the patient's location. She consistently follows up with patients to ensure their needs are met."

Although Nancy holds the title of office manager, she readily assists at any capacity. She is fair, reliable, and leads by example.

Nancy stays informed about local resources to assist with both medical and social needs. She proactively learned how to use continuous glucose monitors and developed an educational program for patients on their placement

and usage. Nancy considers the whole patient, including the social determinants of health.

Supervisor Janet James, shared, "Nancy demonstrates compassion and kindness for all patients and staff. She is someone you can count on to help find solutions or offer a shoulder to lean on. She will step into any role in the office to help when needed."

When she participates in a project, she strives to understand its significance, which enhances the outcomes of her contributions. A lifelong learner, Nancy actively engages with every department, taking an interest in clinical care, social work, IT, quality improvement, claims, billing, and human resources.

A busy mom to three teenagers, Nancy unwinds in the great outdoors, hitting hiking trails and kicking up dust on her ATV. She's also all about setting sail on cruises with her daughter, living the high seas life!

The Living the Mission Office Staff Award recognizes Provider team members who embody IEHP's Mission, Vision and Values by going the extra mile to serve members and support providers. To nominate a deserving team member who reflects these principles, simply scan the QR code with your mobile device and complete the questionnaire.



MDLIVE: VIRTUAL URGENT CARE SERVICES AVAILABLE NOW



To increase access to timely care, we've partnered with MDLive. MDLive offers **virtual urgent care services** to our Medi-Cal and DualChoice members, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year via both phone and video. Services include evaluation, treatment, advice, and prescriptions, all from the comfort of the member's home.

Please note that this service is not yet available to IEHP Covered (CCA) members but we are working on it.

We encourage members to establish and maintain a strong relationship with their primary care provider and other members of their care team. However, if your practice is unable to schedule a timely appointment, either in person or virtually, and you believe urgent care services are appropriate, you can refer the member to MDLive's virtual urgent care service for quick access to a board-certified physician.

Members have direct access to MDLive by calling toll-free at **1-888-673-1992 (TTY 711)** or by visiting MDLIVE to set up an account and schedule a virtual visit with an MDLive physician.

MDLive enhances the support provided by IEHP's Nurse Advice Line, which remains available to members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for consultation and triage. The Nurse Advice Line can be reached at **1-888-244-4347 (TTY 711)**.

For more details, visit www.iehp.org/telehealth or scan the QR code to view a complete list of covered medications and treatments, along with frequently asked questions. Together, we can help our members receive the care they need, when they need it, and where they need it.



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Attention: Physicians

MEDI-CAL ENROLLMENT & FUNDING CHANGES

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Session 1 - December 10, 2025

Overview & Current Landscape: How Can Physician Practices Get Prepared Now?

Thomas Pham, *Vice President, Strategy*

Shalaun Jones, *Director, Member Eligibility Strategy*

Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP)

Session 2 - January 14, 2026

Medi-Cal Enrollment & Physician Practices: Action Steps So You Don't Get Left Behind

Teresa Hasbrouck, *Branch Chief, Policy Development Branch, Medi-Cal Eligibility Division*

California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)

Session 3 - February 18, 2026

Medi-Cal Redeterminations, Work Requirements & Other Policy Changes: How Physicians/Staff Can Support Continued Patient Eligibility

Daniel G. Vejar, *Deputy Director*

Riverside County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

Session 4 - March 18, 2026

Federal & State Medi-Caid Enrollment Developments for Physician Practices

Janice Rocco, *Chief of Staff*

California Medical Association (CMA)

Session 5 - March 25, 2026

Demystifying the Process: Medi-Cal Enrollment Updates & Timelines for Patients & Community Members

James Locurto, *Director*

San Bernardino County Transitional Assistance Department (TAD)

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Jul 11	Amsterdam	EMBARKATION
Jul 12	Amsterdam	Amsterdam Canal Cruise
	Utrecht	Utrecht Walking Tour OR Utrecht Beer Tasting
Jul 13	Düsseldorf	Düsseldorf Walking Tour & Altbier OR Cologne Walking Tour OR Guided Bike Tour of Düsseldorf
Jul 14	Rüdesheim	Rüdesheim Gondola Ride & Wine Tasting OR Vineyard Hike OR Guided Bike Tour of the Rheingau Siegfried's Mechanical Music Cabinet OR Rüdesheimer Coffee
Jul 15	Ludwigshafen	"Romantic Heidelberg" Excursion OR "Secrets of Speyer" Tour OR Heidelberg Philosopher's Path Hike OR Ladenburg Bike Tour
Jul 16	Strasbourg	"The Gem of the Alsace" Tour OR Strasbourg Bike Tour
Jul 17	Breisach	Black Forest Hike OR Black Forest Hike OR Breisach Wine Country Bike Tour
Jul 18	Basel	DISEMBARKATION



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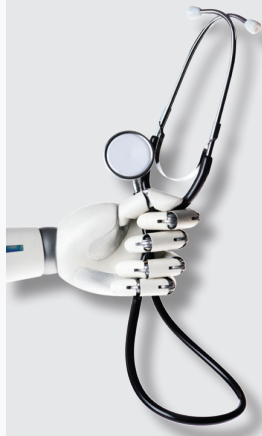
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3RD ANNUAL HEALTHCARE AI CONFERENCE

Don't miss our 3rd Annual Healthcare AI Conference, where healthcare leaders and AI innovators converge to share groundbreaking insights.

We're curating an exceptional lineup of speakers for 2026 you won't want to miss. Seats fill fast—register today to ensure your place at this must-attend event.



Friday, April 10, 2026
8:30 am to 3:30 pm



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2024 AND 2025 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS





**IS YOUR PRACTICE MOVING?
HAVE A NEW PHONE NUMBER?**

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Thank you for helping us keep your information up to date for our members

If you have any questions or need training,
contact the IEHP Provider Call Center at 909-890-2054
or email ProviderServices@iehp.org



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