

**SAN FRANCISCO  
HEALTH PLAN™**



*Here for you*

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[www.sfhp.org](http://www.sfhp.org)

## Key Information for Medi-Cal Providers

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Revised 04/2023

This document highlights some of San Francisco Health Plan's (SFHP) programs and requirements and meets the new provider training requirements set forth by the Department of Healthcare Services (DHCS). **This document is for training purposes only, and does not replace or change contractual obligations between Providers and SFHP.** More details are available in the SFHP Provider Manual and on the SFHP web site [www.sfhp.org/providers](http://www.sfhp.org/providers). Should you find any discrepancies between this document and the Provider Manual, please follow the Manual's specifications. SFHP also has specific policies and procedures for each subject highlighted in this document. If you have any questions regarding the information following, please contact SFHP's Provider Relations Department at 415-547-7818 ext. 7084.

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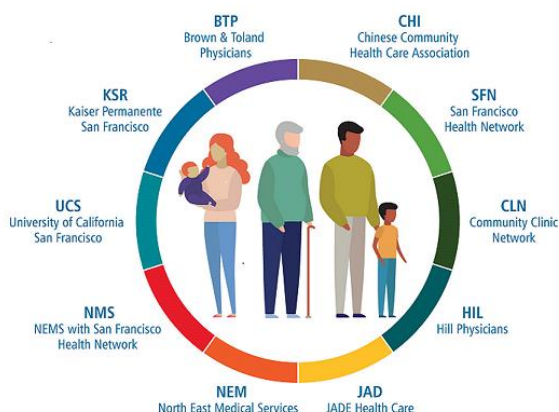
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## Welcome to the SFHP Provider Network!

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San Francisco Health Plan (SFHP) is a local, not-for-profit, Knox-Keene licensed health plan providing affordable health care coverage to low income residents of San Francisco. The SFHP network includes several independent medical groups and their affiliated hospitals. Most of the utilization management, credentialing, and claims processing functions are delegated to these contracted groups.

Providers must promptly notify their medical group of any changes in their practice location, hours of operation, or if they plan to terminate their relationship with their medical group or SFHP. It is especially important for a Primary Care Provider (PCP) to provide at least 30 calendar days' notice of termination to their medical group, as the medical group and SFHP are required by law to re-assign patients to another PCP and to provide 30-day advance notification to members of this transition.



Effective January 1, 2023, SFHP also has members assigned to SFHP Direct Network (SDN). SDN is a patient network specifically for two kinds of SFHP Member:

- Dual-eligible Medicare and Medi-Cal beneficiaries (“medi-medi”) who join SFHP after January 1, 2023
- All members in long-term care (LTC) who are residents of skilled nursing facilities (SNFs)

## Contact Information

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### Provider Network Operations Department

Please contact the Provider Network Operations department for any questions or concerns about provider issues, network and contracting, credentialing, payment disputes, etc.

Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm

Telephone: 1(415) 547-7818 ext. 7084

Email: [provider.relations@sfhp.org](mailto:provider.relations@sfhp.org)

### Customer Service Department

The Customer Service Department is available to assist with any general questions about member benefits, eligibility, covered services, claims payments, etc.

Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm.

Customer Service Telephone: 1(415) 547-7800 or 1(800) 288-5555 or 1(415) 547-7830 TTY/TDD

### Claims Department

Providers in the Brown and Toland, CCHCA, Hill, Jade, Kaiser, and NEMS networks may contact their medical group for assistance with any questions related to claims and reimbursement.

Providers in the UCSF, SFHN, and CLN networks and independent clinics and providers may contact SFHP for assistance with any questions related to claims and reimbursement.

SFHP Claims Contact Information:  
Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm

SFHP Claims Telephone: 1(415) 547-7818 ext. 7115

## Utilization Management Department

Providers in the Brown and Toland, CCHCA, Hill, Jade, Kaiser, and NEMS networks may contact their medical group for questions about prior authorizations and inpatient concurrent review.

Providers in the UCSF, SFHN, and CLN networks and independent clinics and providers may contact SFHP for questions about prior authorizations and inpatient concurrent review.

SFHP Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm

SFHP UM Telephone: 1(415) 547-7818 ext. 7080

SFHP UM Email: [authorizations@sfhp.org](mailto:authorizations@sfhp.org)

## Telemedicine

Primary Care Providers (PCPs) and clinics are always the first point of contact for our members' routine and urgent care. However, when members can't see you or get to you, they can receive care from a doctor from anywhere using their phone, smartphone app, or computer with our FREE telemedicine service, Teladoc.

Teladoc physicians are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, year-round. The average wait time for a Teladoc appointment is under 10 minutes. Teladoc physicians can prescribe medications, but will not prescribe controlled substances.

After the consultation, Teladoc will fax a summary of the visit (Clinical Consult Report) to the member's PCP/clinic.

To access services, members can go to [teladoc.com/sfhp](http://teladoc.com/sfhp), call 1(800) 835-2362, or download the Teladoc smartphone app.

## Our Programs

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**Medi-Cal:** provides free and low-cost health care coverage services that are funded by State and Federal dollars. These services are available to individuals with low-income or limited resources. The Medi-Cal Program offers health services ranging from limited scope coverage to full scope coverage (inclusive of vision and dental for children). All SFHP members are enrolled in Managed Medi-Cal receiving full-coverage benefits at no cost. Managed Medi-Cal beneficiaries are required to choose a managed care health plan (Anthem Blue Cross or SFHP). Most Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, receiving services under Managed Medi-Cal are also required to choose a health plan. There are no premiums or co-pays for beneficiaries enrolled in Managed Medi-Cal. Eligibility is determined by the eligibility workers at the local Department of California Human Services Agency (HSA) or linked by other social services programs, such as CalWORKs, TANF, and SSI.

**Healthy Workers HMO (HW) Program:** is a health coverage program partly administered by SFHP. It is offered to individuals providing In-Home Support Services (IHSS) and a select category of temporary, exempt as-needed employees of the City and County of San Francisco. HW members have access to medical services through the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH). Eligibility is determined through the IHSS Authority or the Department of Human Resources and is based on length of time employed and hours worked.

## *Eligibility*

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### **Eligibility and PCP Assignment**

Eligibility can change from month-to-month. Although SFHP members are issued ID cards, **providers are responsible for verifying member eligibility on the day of service and prior to providing care.**

SFHP providers have three options for verifying eligibility:

- SFHP Secure Provider Portal found on our web site at [www.sfhp.org/providers](http://www.sfhp.org/providers)
- Interactive Voice Response 415-547-7810
- Customer Service Department at 415-547-7800, Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:30pm

Questions regarding member's PCP assignment status can also be directed to Customer Services at (415) 547-7800 or 1-800-288-5555 between the hours of 8:30 am and 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

### **PCP Selection, Assignment, and Change**

At the time of enrollment, new members are encouraged to select a PCP. When this does not happen, SFHP will automatically assign a PCP following an assignment algorithm that takes into account the member's place of residence, primary spoken language, and other similar factors. SFHP members who are auto-assigned to a PCP may select another PCP at any time. All members may change PCP, to a PCP of their choosing and who is accepting new patients. In most cases, PCP changes will be effective on the first day of the following month. Changes are made through SFHP's Customer Service department.

### **Newborn Coverage**

For the Managed Medi-Cal program, newborns are covered for eligible services under their mother's membership during the month of birth and the month following. Healthy Workers HMO covers newborns for only 30 days following birth.

## Access to Care

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### Appointment Availability

The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) set forth access requirements for all health plans and their contracted providers which include maintaining availability standards for appointments.

APPOINTMENT TYPE	PROVIDER TYPE	STANDARD
Routine Care	PCP	10 business days
	Specialty	15 business days
	Ancillary	15 business days
	Mental Health	10 business days
Urgent Care	All Provider Types	48 hours 96 hours if Prior Authorization is needed
Prenatal Care	PCP	14 calendar days
Wait Time in Provider Office	All Provider Types	Not to exceed 30 min
Time to Answer Phone at Provider Office	All Provider Types	Not to exceed 10 min

### After-Hours Access to Care

All PCPs are required to have phone coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. After-hours access must include triage for emergency care and direction to call 9-1-1 for an emergency medical condition. A physician or mid-level provider must be available for contact after-hours, either in person or via telephone. All after-hours member calls must be documented in the member's permanent medical records. If a provider who is not the member's PCP treats the member, the treating provider must forward documentation of services received to the member's PCP.

Telephone Availability	All Provider Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Voice message must provide instructions to call 911 or the Emergency Room.</li><li>• Voice message call back not to exceed 30 min.</li><li>• Voice message must provide a call back number.</li></ul>
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### Emergency Services and Urgent Care

An "emergency medical condition" is defined as a medical condition manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) such that the member/enrollee reasonably believed that the absence of immediate medical attention could result in one of the following situations:

- Placing the health of the individual (or, in case of a pregnant woman, the health of the woman or her unborn child) in serious jeopardy,
- Serious impairment to bodily functions,
- Serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part,

A "psychiatric emergency medical condition" means a mental disorder that manifests itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity that it renders the patient as being either of the following:

- An immediate danger to himself or herself or to others,
- Immediately unable to provide for, or utilize, food, shelter, or clothing, due to the mental disorder.



Emergency services include medical screening, examination, and medical and psychiatric evaluation by a physician, or – to the extent permitted by applicable law – by other appropriate personnel under the supervision of a physician, and within the scope of his/her licensure and clinical privileges, to determine if an emergency medical condition or active labor exists and, if it does, the care, treatment, and surgery by a physician necessary to relieve or eliminate the emergency medical condition within the capability of the facility.

In all instances when a member presents at an emergency room for diagnosis and treatment of illness or injury, pre-established guidelines for hospitals require appropriate triage of the severity of illness/injury.

An authorization is not required for emergency situations as defined by the examining physician. The examining physician determines required treatment to stabilize the patient.

In routine and non-urgent situations, treatment authorization by the PCP is required after completing the medical screening exam and stabilizing the condition. If the PCP does not respond, the Emergency Room/Department will proceed with treatment. Documentation and proof of the Emergency Department's attempt to reach the PCP and medical group and failure of response within 30 minutes of the first contact attempt will be accepted as authorization to diagnose and treat.

SFHP benefits include the dispensing of a sufficient supply of medications to cover the member's treatment until the member can be reasonably expected to have a prescription filled.

## *Referrals, Prior Authorization, and Appeal to UM Decisions*

### **Referrals**

In most cases, PCPs must refer SFHP members to specialists within their medical group network. In some instances, a specific specialty may not be available within the medical group's network. When this occurs, contact your medical group to find an appropriate specialist. Your medical group should provide you with a list of contracted specialists and referral forms if required.

### **Prior Authorization**

All requests for Prior Authorization must be sent to your medical group. Contact your medical group for a current list of services requiring Prior Authorization. Requests for non-emergent services subject to prior authorization should be submitted at least 14 calendar days prior to the anticipated service date.

### **Prior Authorization Exceptions**

The following services do not require prior authorization:

- **Special Arrangement services** (see section below for more information).
- **Obstetrical and gynecological services**, including basic prenatal care and support services available through the member's medical group. The member will deliver in the hospital affiliated with her medical group. The member's obstetrical provider will request authorization for required testing.
- **Emergency care** (in or out of network).
- **Preventive care** (in network).

### **Appeal of UM Decisions**

Providers may assist members in appealing authorization denials for clinical services that do not meet administrative policy requirements, medical criteria, or other reason(s), and were denied by the SFHP or delegated medical group Medical Director or designated physician. Member appeals should be submitted in writing to SFHP's Grievance & Appeals department by fax, e-mail, or U.S. mail, and be accompanied by a completed Grievance Form. The Grievance Form is available on-line at [www.sfhp.org](http://www.sfhp.org) (click on "GRIEVANCE FORM").

Contracted and non-contracted providers disputing a NOA for the purposes of getting reimbursement for services already rendered may request review through the Provider Dispute Resolution Process. Please refer to the Provider Dispute Resolution section of the Claims Operations Manual.

Medi-Cal members have 60 calendar days from the date of the Notice of Action (NOA) to file an appeal with SFHP.

SFHP will send a Notice of Appeal Resolution to the member within 30 calendar days. If the appeal involves an imminent and serious threat to the health of the member, including, but not limited to, severe pain, potential loss of life, limb or major bodily function, a resolution will be provided within 72 hours.

If the member is dissatisfied with the appeal resolution, providers may assist members in seeking external review of the appeal by requesting a State Fair Hearing (for Medi-Cal members only) or applying for an Independent Medical Review (IMR) from the Department of Managed Health Care.

State Fair Hearing Forms are attached to Notice of Appeal Resolution letters for Medi-Cal members. Medi-Cal members can ask for a State Hearing by phone or in writing:

California Department of Social Services  
State Hearing Division  
P.O. Box 944243, MS 19-37  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2430  
Phone: 1(800) 952-5253 (Voice) or  
1(800) 952-8349 (TDD/TTY)  
Fax number: 1(916) 651-5210 or 1(916) 651-2789 (Attn: State Hearing Support)

Medi-Cal and Healthy Workers HMO members can request an IMR by calling DMHC's toll-free telephone number, 1(888) HMO-2219, or TDD line, 1(877) 688-9891, for the hearing and speech impaired. DMHC's website, <http://www.hmohelp.ca.gov>, has complaint forms, IMR application forms, and instructions. Consumer Complaint and IMR forms are available in multiple languages. SFHP also attaches IMR application forms to Notices of Appeal Resolution.

## Medical Group Prior Authorization and Claims

Almost half of SFHP members are assigned to delegated medical groups who process claims and make UM decisions on behalf of SFHP. These include:

- AAMG (formerly CCHCA)
- Brown and Toland Physicians (BTP)
- Hill Physicians
- Jade Health Care Medical Group
- Kaiser Permanente
- North East Medical Services (NEMS)

For delegated groups, the most up to date contact information on prior authorizations and claims is available in the Provider Manual and on the SFHP website.

### Pharmacy Benefits

For information about program-specific pharmacy benefits visit [www.sfhp.org](http://www.sfhp.org) or contact the SFHP Pharmacy Services Department at 1(415) 547-7818 x 7085.

#### For Medi-Cal Members:

Effective January 1, 2022, the pharmacy benefit for SFHP Medi-Cal members transitioned to a state-wide system used to administer pharmacy benefits, known as Medi-Cal Rx. SFHP will continue to manage inpatient medical and institutional care for Medi-Cal members, including medications administered in these settings.

#### Prior Authorization Submission Options for Medi-Cal Rx

Beginning January 1, 2022, Prior Authorization (PA) requests for prescription drugs and some medical supplies for Medi-Cal beneficiaries will be adjudicated by Medi-Cal Rx.

#### To submit a request, providers can:

- Fax requests for prior authorizations and attachments to 1(800) 869-4325
- Enter PA information on Medi-Cal Rx provider portal (registration required, please go to [www.Medi-CalRx.dhcs.ca.gov](http://www.Medi-CalRx.dhcs.ca.gov) for more information)
- Submit PA electronically through CoverMyMeds® (registration required, please go to [www.covermymeds.com](http://www.covermymeds.com) for more information)
- Mail PA requests to Medi-Cal Rx Customer Service Center, Attn: PA Request, PO Box 730, Sacramento CA 95741-0730.

**After January 1, 2022, providers can call 1(800) 977-2273 for assistance with SFHP Medi-Cal members.**

#### For Healthy Workers HMO:

For questions about the pharmacy network or for assistance with pharmacy claims processing for SFHP Healthy Workers, the Pharmacy Benefits Manager is Magellan RX and can be contacted at 1(800) 424-4331.

### Behavioral Health Services

San Francisco Health Plan covers outpatient mental health services for Medi-Cal members with mild to moderate conditions.

Carelon manages behavioral health services for all SFHP Medi-Cal members, including non-specialty (mild to moderate) mental health services, and behavioral health therapy (BHT) for members under age 21 diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. To refer a member for mental health services, call Carelon's toll-free Access Line at (855) 371-8117.

#### Mild to moderate mental health benefits include:

- Individual and group mental health evaluation and treatment (psychotherapy)
- Psychological testing, when clinically indicated to evaluate a mental health condition (prior authorization required)
- Outpatient services for the purpose of monitoring drug therapy
- Psychiatric consultation
- Outpatient laboratory, drugs, supplies, and supplements (continuation of current benefit)

## Chiropractic and Acupuncture

Chiropractic services are available through American Specialty Health (ASH) for Medi-Cal members age 18 and older, who do not have Medicare part B Coverage and for Spinal manipulation services for diagnoses of back and neck pain only. American Specialty Health is at 1(800) 678-9133 or 1(877) 710-2746 TDD/TTY, and at <https://www.ashlink.com/ash/sfhp>.

For Medi-Cal members, acupuncture benefits are available for treatment of chronic pain. Benefit limits apply for members 21 and over. There are no benefit limits for services obtained through EPSDT.

Healthy Workers HMO members do not have coverage for acupuncture or chiropractic care.

## Vision Benefits

Vision Service Plan (VSP) administers vision benefits for SFHP Medi-Cal and Healthy Workers HMO members. Optometry services are a vision benefit and are available every 24 months. Ophthalmology services are a medical benefit through SFHP and there is no age restriction for these services for any line of business.

Providers can refer a member to a participating VSP provider. For questions regarding vision benefits or to find a VSP provider, please contact VSP at 1-800-877-7195 or visit [www.vsp.com](http://www.vsp.com).

## Dental Services

For Medi-Cal members age 20 years and younger, dental services are provided by Denti-Cal. A pediatric Medi-Cal member can self-refer for dental services and should call 1-800-322-6384 for questions. A dental screening (by the PCP) is part of the Initial Health Assessment and CHDP check-ups.

Healthy Workers HMO members who are IHSS Independent Providers have dental coverage through Liberty Dental via IHSS/Public Authority. Refer IHSS Independent Providers to the IHSS/Public Authority if they have questions regarding their dental coverage or need to enroll in the dental plan. Healthy Workers HMO members currently enrolled with Liberty Dental can call 1-888-703-6999 to find a participating dental provider.

## Fluoride Varnish

Fluoride varnish is a form of topical fluoride that is now available to dentists, physicians, nurses and medical assistants to prevent tooth decay.

- Fluoride varnish may be applied during a routine office visit for San Francisco Health Plan Medi-Cal members under six years of age.
- It does not need refrigeration and has a shelf life of about two years.
- The application requires no special equipment and is easier and more conveniently applied using a prepackaged single use (unit dose) tube, which comes with a disposable applicator brush. It is swabbed directly onto the teeth in less than three minutes and sets within one minute of contact with saliva.

**Since many dentists are not willing to see children this young, medical providers offer the best hope for preventing and controlling tooth decay through the application of fluoride varnish.**

If you are a CHDP provider seeking provider/staff training, please contact the San Francisco CHDP office at 1(415) 575-5719. If you are not, inquire about becoming a certified CHDP provider or ask if they could make an exception.

## *Special Arrangement Services*

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Services listed below should be provided to Medi-Cal members without a referral or authorization in order to protect patient confidentiality and promote easy access. Special Arrangement Services include family planning, screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STI), HIV testing, and abortion. Medi-Cal members may go outside of their medical group network for these services, except for prenatal care. For Healthy Workers HMO, the member is encouraged to use family planning, HIV testing, and sexually transmitted disease services provided by their medical group, and referral or authorization may be required.

## Sterilization Services

California law requires that men or women who request sterilization (surgery that will end their ability to have children) complete a form (PM-330) attesting that they are giving informed consent for this procedure. These forms must be completed and signed prior to the surgery and filed in the medical record. Medi-Cal members may not waive the 30-day waiting period. A copy of the form must be attached to the claim when submitted for payment. Please consult your medical group or call SFHP for any clarification.

## Abortion

Abortion services are available to all SFHP members without referral or authorization. Outpatient abortion services are not subject to prior authorization, medical justification, or any other utilization management procedures. Inpatient hospitalization for the performance of an abortion requires prior authorization. Authorization for general anesthesia associated with abortion services is not required by SFHP; however, a medical group may require a prior authorization.

## Minor Consent Services

Members of any age have the right to access some services without parental consent. Medical records and/or information regarding medical treatment specific to these services will not be released to parents and guardians, without the minor's consent. These services include:

- Sexual assault, including rape
- Drug and alcohol abuse (note: methadone treatment requires guardian notification and consent)
- Pregnancy, including abortions
- Family planning services (note: sterilization requires guardian notification and consent)
- Sexually transmitted diseases

## Health Assessments

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### Initial Health Appointment (IHA)

An IHA is an initial comprehensive preventive clinical visit with a primary care practitioner. DHCS requires that PCP's complete an IHA with new SFHP members within 120 calendar days of enrollment for all ages. The IHA, at a minimum, includes a history of the member's physical and mental health, an identification of risks, an assessment of need for preventive screens or services, health education, and the diagnosis and plan for treatment of any diseases. It enables the member's PCP to assess and manage the acute, chronic, and preventative health needs of the member.

### Child Health and Disability Program (CHDP):

The Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) is a preventive program that delivers periodic health assessments and services to low income and uninsured children and youth under 21 years of age in California. CHDP provides care coordination to assist families with medical appointment scheduling, transportation, and access to diagnostic and treatment services. To provide these assessments, providers must enroll in the CHDP program. Health assessments are provided by enrolled private physicians, local health department clinics, community clinics, and some local school districts.

When billing for these Well Child exams, please refer to CHDP's crosswalk of HIPAA-compliant codes available on the DHCS website and submit claims according to the patient's medical group listed in the Claims Matrix above.

## Coordination of Care for Medi-Cal Members

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### **Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC)**

Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC) is a nonprofit private corporation that contracts with the State Department of Developmental Services to provide or coordinate services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

According to Title 17, Section 54000 of the California Code of Regulations, a “Developmental Disability” is defined as a disability that is attributable to:

- o Intellectual disability
- o Cerebral palsy
- o Epilepsy
- o Autism or
- o Disabling conditions found to be closely related to intellectual disability or to require treatment similar to that required for individuals with intellectual disability
- o Additionally, individuals at risk of having a child with a developmental disability may be eligible for referral for genetic diagnosis, counseling and other prevention services.

To be eligible for services, a person must have a disability that begins before the person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, be expected to continue indefinitely and present “a substantial disability” as defined in Title 17, Section 54001 of the California Code of Regulations. Eligibility is established through diagnosis and assessment performed by regional centers.

GGRC provides services for developmentally disabled/delayed persons and their families, including:

- o Living skills training
- o Family support & training
- o Respite care
- o Day care
- o Supportive living services and housing placement (residential care, or assisted living)
- o Advocacy for the protection of legal, civil and service rights
- o Lifelong individualized planning and service coordination
- o Supportive employment/vocational programs

San Francisco Health Plan is not financially responsible for the GGRC services provided to its members. A SFHP member who is eligible for GGRC services remains enrolled with SFHP, and the medical group and PCP maintain responsibility for coordination of services and for continued medical care.

Medical group physicians and case managers may refer members by contacting Golden Gate Regional Center’s Intake Unit via phone, fax or email:

Phone: 1(888) 339-3305

Fax: 1(888) 339-3306

Email: [intake@ggrc.org](mailto:intake@ggrc.org)

Medical group physicians and case managers may contact the San Francisco County’s Golden Gate Regional Center office at:

1355 Market Street, Suite 220

San Francisco, CA 94103

Phone: 1(415) 546-9222

For additional information and referral forms, you can visit the GGRC website at [www.ggrc.org](http://www.ggrc.org).

## Early Start Program (ES)

Infants and children, up to 36 months of age, who have a developmental delay or disability or an established risk condition with a high probability of resulting in a delay may be eligible to receive early intervention, or "Early Start", services through GGRC. For a list of Early Start services, please visit Golden Gate Regional Center at [www.ggrc.org](http://www.ggrc.org).

The medical group and primary care physicians are responsible for coordination of services with the Early Start Program.

A SFHP member who is eligible for Early Start services remains enrolled with SFHP, and the medical group and PCP maintain responsibility for coordination of services and for continued medical care.

Medical group physicians and case managers may refer to Early Start by contacting Golden Gate Regional Center's Intake Unit via phone, fax or email:

Phone: 1(888) 339-3305

Fax: 1(888) 339-3306

Email: [intake@ggrc.org](mailto:intake@ggrc.org)

Providers can download the Early Start Referral Form at: <http://www.ggrc.org/services/applying-for-services>

Golden Gate Regional Center office can be contacted at:

1355 Market Street, Suite 220

San Francisco, CA 94103

Phone: 1(415) 546-9222

Additional information about the Early Start Program can be found at [www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart](http://www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart)

## Women, Infants, Children Program (WIC)

WIC is a nutrition/food program that helps pregnant, breastfeeding or postpartum women, and children less than 5 years of age to eat well and stay healthy. WIC eligibility is determined by federal income guidelines. Medi-Cal members are eligible. Services include free food vouchers, nutrition education, and breast-feeding support.

Medical group physicians can refer to WIC in a number of ways:

- By calling 1(888) WIC-WORKS or 1(888) 942-9675 for an appointment, or in San Francisco 1(415) 575-5788
- By visiting their website at [sfdph.org/dph/comupg/oprograms/NutritionSvcs/WIC/default.asp](http://sfdph.org/dph/comupg/oprograms/NutritionSvcs/WIC/default.asp)
- By referring members to any WIC Center; current locations can be found here: <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/comupg/oprograms/NutritionSvcs/WIC/WIClocations.asp>

All WIC referral forms can be found on the website: [sfdph.org/dph/comupg/oprograms/NutritionSvcs/WIC/WICRefForms.asp](http://sfdph.org/dph/comupg/oprograms/NutritionSvcs/WIC/WICRefForms.asp)

## California Children's Services (CCS)

CCS provides diagnostic and treatment services, medical case management, and physical and occupational therapy services for children age 21 years and younger who have CCS-eligible physical disabilities and complex medical conditions. Services provided under the CCS program are reimbursed through the CCS program. SFHP is not financially responsible for the CCS services provided to its members. A SFHP member who is eligible for CCS services remains enrolled with SFHP, and the PCP coordinates and continues to provide care for all needs unrelated to the CCS condition.

Physicians and medical group staff are responsible for identification, referral, and case management of members with CCS eligible conditions. Until eligibility is established with the CCS program, the PCP and medical group continue to provide medically necessary covered services related to the CCS eligible condition. The member's PCP

is responsible for all primary care and other services unrelated to the CCS-eligible condition and for coordinating care with CCS program staff and specialists.

Some eligible conditions include physical disabilities and complex medical conditions such as sickle cell anemia, cancer, diabetes, HIV, and major complications of prematurity.

Send the member's clinical information and the CCS referral form to:

California Children's Services  
30 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 210  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Telephone: 415-575-5700  
Fax: 415-575-5790  
[www.dhcs.ca.gov](http://www.dhcs.ca.gov)

Once a member is referred to CCS, eligibility status with CCS can be checked by contacting CCS at 1(415) 575-5700.

### **Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program (CPSP)**

The Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program (CPSP) is a Medi-Cal reimbursement program that funds a wide range of services for pregnant women, from conception through 60 days postpartum. Medi-Cal providers may apply to become approved CPSP providers. In addition to standard obstetric services, women receive enhanced services in the areas of nutrition, psychosocial and health education from approved CPSP providers. This approach has shown to reduce both low birth weight rates and health care costs in women and infants.

For more information, call the San Francisco Department of Public Health, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health, Perinatal Services Coordinator at 1(415) 558-4040. You can also go to the website for more information [cdph.ca.gov/CPSP](http://cdph.ca.gov/CPSP)

### **Local Education Agency (LEA)**

The San Francisco Unified School District's Local Education Agency (LEA) provides services in San Francisco schools for low-income children starting at age three, school-age children in grades K-12, and transition services for eligible students up to age 22 with one or more of the following conditions:

- Vision or Hearing Impairment
- Orthopedically Challenged
- Developmentally Delayed

Children who have received the Early Start (ES) or Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC) services are assessed between 2–3 years of age for referral to the San Francisco Unified School District Special Intake Unit for continued assistance.

Medical group physicians and the ES or GGRC must obtain written consent from the parents prior to referral and to release any clinical information.

Services provided during the school year, under the LEA program, are reimbursed by the San Francisco Unified School District. San Francisco Health Plan is not financially responsible for the LEA services provided to its members.

A SFHP member who is eligible for LEA services remains enrolled with SFHP, and the medical group and PCP maintain responsibility for coordination of services and for continued medical care. As LEA provides services during the school year only, SFHP and its medical groups authorize and provide medically necessary services during the summer months.



LEA services include:

- Nutritional assessment and non-classroom nutritional education
- Education and psychosocial assessments
- Developmental assessments
- Speech services
- Audiology services
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Medical transportation
- School health aides

Local Education Agency, Special Education Services can be reached at: 1(415) 759-2222.

## *DHCS Waiver Programs*

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**HIV/AIDS Waiver Program** provides Medi-Cal recipients with a written diagnosis of symptomatic HIV or AIDS with case management, in-home skilled nursing care, home-delivered meals, and non-emergency transportation. Qualified persons *cannot* be simultaneously enrolled in either the Medi-Cal hospice or the AIDS Case Management Program. For more information, call West Side Community Services at 1(415) 355-0311, Option 8 or [www.westside-health.org](http://www.westside-health.org).

**Home and Community-Based Services for the Developmentally Disabled (HCBS-DD)** provides in-home care and support to persons with disabilities. Services provided include: homemakers for chores, home health aides and/or nurses, family training, vehicle adaptation, respite care, day habitation, transportation and more. For referral and eligibility review contact Golden Gate Regional Center at (415) 546-9222. For more information visit [www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ltc/Pages/DD.aspx](http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ltc/Pages/DD.aspx).

**Multi-Purpose Senior Services Program (MSSP)** provides in-home care to members as an alternative to placing them in an institution. The County's Department of Aging administers the program. Services are available to physically disabled or aged members over 65 years of age who would otherwise require care at skilled nursing facility (SNF) or intermediate care facility (ICF) level.

The PCP or specialist submits appropriate medical records and the MSSP referral to:

Institute on Aging for MSSP and Adult Day Health Care

3626 Geary Boulevard, Second

Floor San Francisco, CA 94118

1(415) 750-4150 or 1(415) 750-5330

[www.ioaging.org](http://www.ioaging.org)

San Francisco Adult Day Services Network

1(415) 808-7371

[www.sfadultday.org](http://www.sfadultday.org)

**Nursing Facility Waiver** services are provided to Medi-Cal recipients of any age who need in-home assistance with activities of daily living, protective supervision, private duty nursing, environmental adaptation, and case management.

For more information, call 1(916) 552-9400 or visit their website at [www.dhs.ca.gov/mcs/mcpd/rdb/HCBWU](http://www.dhs.ca.gov/mcs/mcpd/rdb/HCBWU)

**Genetically Handicapped Persons Program** is a state-funded program that may provide additional care coordination and services for eligible persons age 21 years old or older with genetically-transmitted diseases such as hemophilia, cystic fibrosis, and sickle cell disease, as well as metabolic disorders such as Phenylketonuria (PKU). More information on how to apply for GHPP services and eligibility can be found at <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ghpp/Pages/default.aspx>

## Health Education

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SFHP members must be provided with health education services at no cost. Health education services include but are not limited to primary and obstetrical care, clinical preventive services, education and counseling, and patient education and clinical counseling.

These services can be provided through:

- Individual classes
- Group classes
- Workshops
- Support groups
- Peer education programs
- Disease management programs
- Educational materials

Health education services may include:

- Educational interventions designed to help members to access appropriate care
- Educational interventions that cover behaviors such as:
  - Tobacco use and cessation
  - Alcohol and drug use
  - Injury prevention
  - HIV/STI prevention
  - Family planning
  - Immunizations
  - Dental care
  - Nutrition
  - Weight control and physical activity
  - Parenting
- Educational interventions designed to assist members to follow self-care regimens and treatment therapies for existing medical conditions, chronic disease, or health conditions including:
  - Pregnancy
  - Asthma
  - Diabetes
  - Substance abuse
  - Tuberculosis
  - Hypertension

Visit SFHP's website at [www.sfhp.org](http://www.sfhp.org) to access SFHP's Health Education Library. Health education resources are available in SFHP's threshold languages (English, Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese). If you would like more information about health education, please contact SFHP Population Health Program Manager at 415-615-5149 or email [HealthEducation@sfhp.org](mailto:HealthEducation@sfhp.org).

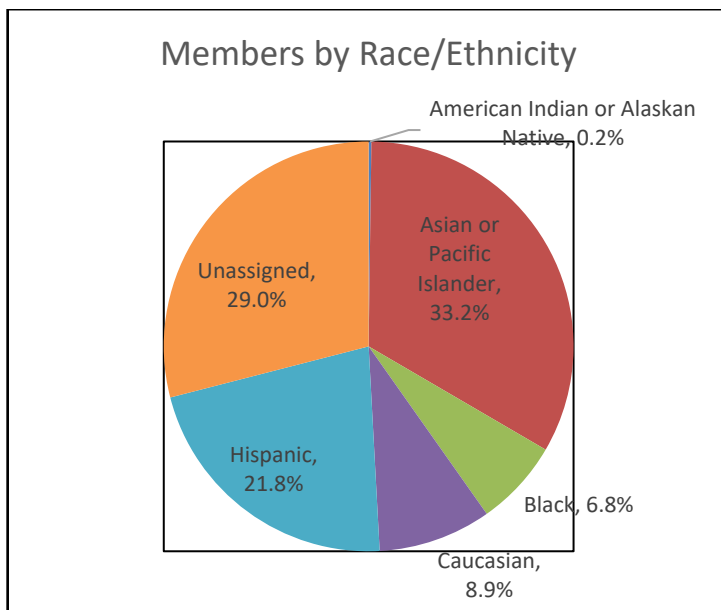
## Cultural and Linguistics Training

Professional interpreter services for medical encounters must be offered to SFHP non-English speaking or limited English proficient Medi-Cal members. Members have the right to receive oral interpreter services on a 24-hour basis at no cost to them. Interpreter services may be provided through an in-person interpreter or telephone language service.

Your medical group is required to provide this service to SFHP Medi-Cal members. You must document a member's preferred language (if other than English) in the medical record. You must document the request and refusal of language/interpretation services in the member's medical record. You should discourage members from using friends, family and minors as interpreters.

### About SFHP Membership Demographics

- SFHP members come from many racial/ethnic groups!
- Nearly Half of SFHP members have Limited English Proficiency (LEP)



Written Language	% of Members
English	48%
Chinese	26%
Spanish	20%
Vietnamese	2%
Others	2%
Russian	1%

### Linguistic Services Terms

- **Limited English Proficient (LEP):** When an individual cannot speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that permits him or her to interact effectively with clinical or non-clinical staff in a healthcare setting.
- **Language Access Services:** Language access services is the collective name for any service that helps an LEP patient obtain the same access to and understanding of health care as an English speaker would have. This can include the use of bilingual staff and interpreters. It also includes the provision of translated documents.
- **Interpretation:** The process of understanding and analyzing a spoken or signed message and re-expressing that message faithfully, accurately and objectively in another language, taking the cultural and social context into account.
- **Translation:** The conversion of a written text into a corresponding written text in a different language.

## Why is Linguistic Access Important?

**Accurate communication between patient and health care provider is essential for proper diagnosis, treatment, and patient compliance.** It also:

- ☺ Helps reduce health disparities
- ☺ Helps improve quality of care and patient satisfaction
- ☺ Makes business sense
- ☺ Is important for compliance with federal and state requirements

**Linguistic Access Reduces Health Disparities.** Patients with language barriers:

- ☹ Experience more outpatient drug complications,
- ☹ Experience an increase in other medical problems and lower medication compliance,
- ☹ More likelihood of serious side effects
- ☹ More likelihood of unnecessary and invasive tests

**Business Value Linguistic Access**

- ☺ Reduce medical errors
- ☺ Increase patient satisfaction
- ☺ Increase compliance
- ☺ Decrease costs for diagnostic testing
- ☺ Reduce unnecessary admissions
- ☺ More efficient member interactions
- ☺ Better community relations



## Regulations Mandating the Use of Interpreters for LEP Patients

### Federal

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- EMTALA
- Hill-Burton Act
- Executive Order 13166
- CMS

### State

- DMHC, SB853
- DHCS (Medi-Cal)

## DHCS Medi-Cal Interpreter Services Requirements

- Interpreter services must be available 24/7 at no charge to patient
- The following should be documented in the medical record:
  - Patient's preferred language
  - Patient's refusal of interpreter services
- Discourage the use of friends, family members, or minors as interpreters (unless specifically requested by the member after being offered professional interpreter services at no charge)
- Patients have the right to file grievances or complaints if linguistic needs are not met
- Interpreters and bilingual staff should be qualified (assessed for language capacity)
- Train providers and office staff about linguistic access and cultural awareness

## Asking about Language Preference

How you ask a patient about his or her language will affect the response you receive:



“You won’t need an interpreter, will you?”

Asking the question this way discourages the patient, or the person who is making the appointment, from asking for the language assistance that he or she may need.



“What language do you speak at home?”

This question will get you information about the patient’s home language, but ignores the possibility that the patient may be bilingual in English as well.

“Will an interpreter be needed? In what language?”

Patients may say no because they believe they have to either bring their own interpreter or have a family member interpret.



**“In what language do you prefer to receive your health care?”**

Asking the question this way will provide you information on the language the patient feels he or she needs to speak in a health-related conversation.

If the answer is a language other than English, you can plan to have language assistance available for the patient, and you should add this information to the record.

## Best Practices for Providing Interpreter Services

### Working with Interpreters On-site

- Greet the patient first, not the interpreter.
- Face and talk to the patient directly.
- Speak at an even pace in relatively short segments.
- Speak in standard English and avoid medical terminology and jargon.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Avoid interrupting the interpretation.
- Don't make assumptions about the patient's education level. An inability to speak English does not necessarily indicate a lack of education.

### Working with Interpreters by Phone



#### Avoid using family, friends or minors as interpreters

- They may withhold information from patient from embarrassment, protection, emotional involvement
- May have their own agenda
- Children: parent disempowerment, role reversal
- Can cause guilt & trauma
- May not be familiar with medical vocabulary
- Serious mistakes can occur

### Documenting Language Preference

It is important to record information on interpreter needs and language preference in the patients' medical record.



**Basic:** Add a color or letter code to the patient's chart, noting that he or she needs an interpreter. Designate a code or color for each language.

**Better:** Add the information under "Notes" in a patient's entry in your patient database, so that when a receptionist calls up the patient's record to make an appointment, the information about the need for an interpreter and the language can be noted as well.



**BEST:** Add a question on your patient registration form or in your practice management system. Not only will you know when a patient is scheduled that he or she will need an interpreter, you will also be able to track how many patients you have who speak a particular language and how often they are seen.

- When working with an interpreter over the phone, many of the principles of on-site interpreting apply. The only additional thing to remember is that the interpreter is "blind" to the visual cues in the room.
- When the interpreter comes onto the line, let the interpreter know who you are, who else is in the room, what sort of office practice this is, what sort of appointment this is.
- For example, "Hello interpreter, this is Dr. Jameson. I have Mrs. Dominguez and her adult daughter here for Mrs. Dominguez' annual exam."
- Give the interpreter the opportunity to quickly introduce him/herself to the patient.
- If you point to a chart, a drawing, a body part or a piece of equipment, verbalize what you are pointing to as you do it.

### What is Culture?

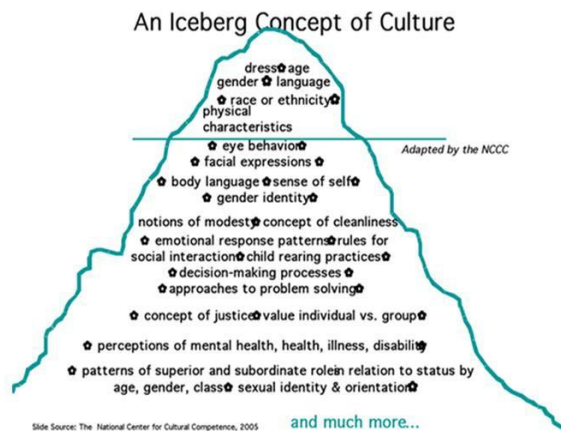
Culture consists of a body of learned beliefs, traditions, and guides for behaving and interpreting behavior that is shared among members of a particular group, and that group members use to interpret their experiences of the

world.



- **Cultural awareness** is being cognizant, observant, and conscious of similarities and differences among and between cultural groups.
- **Cultural and linguistic competence** is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that **enables effective work** in cross-cultural situations.
- **Cultural humility** is a commitment and active engagement in a **lifelong process** that individuals enter into on an ongoing basis with patients, communities, colleagues, and with themselves.

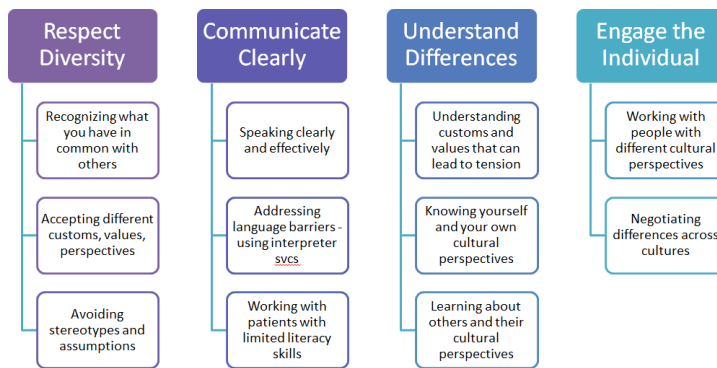
## Influences can be above or below the surface, seen and unseen



## What is Cultural Competence in Health Care?

- Recognition that people of different cultures have different ways of communicating, behaving, interpreting, and problem-solving.
- Recognition that cultural beliefs impact patient's health beliefs, help-seeking activities, interactions with health care professionals, health care practices, and health care outcomes, including adherence to prescribed regimens.

## Tips for Cross Cultural Communication



Source: QualityInteractions

## Caring for LGBTQ+ Communities

- SFHP’s members have diverse sexual orientations
  - *Identify your own LGBTQ+ perceptions and biases as a first step in providing the best quality care.*
  - *Many LGBTQ+ people do not disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity because they don’t feel comfortable or they fear receiving substandard care.*
- SFHP’s members have diverse gender identities
  - *Cisgender – people whose gender identity and gender expression align with their assigned sex at birth*
  - *Transgender – people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their assigned sex at birth (people may or may not choose to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically)*

Source: Fenway Health

## Tips for Working with Transgender Patients

- Treat transgender people as you would want to be treated.
- Always refer to transgender people by the name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity.
- If you are unsure about the person’s gender identity, ask:
  - *“How would you like to be addressed?”*
  - *“What name would you like to be called?”*
- Focus on care rather than indulging in questions out of curiosity.
- The presence of a transgender person in your treatment room is not an appropriate “training opportunity” for other health care providers.
- It is inappropriate to ask transgender patients about their genital status if it is unrelated to their care.
- Never disclose a person’s transgender status to anyone who does not explicitly need information for care.



Source: Transgender Law Center

## Caring for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities (SPDs)

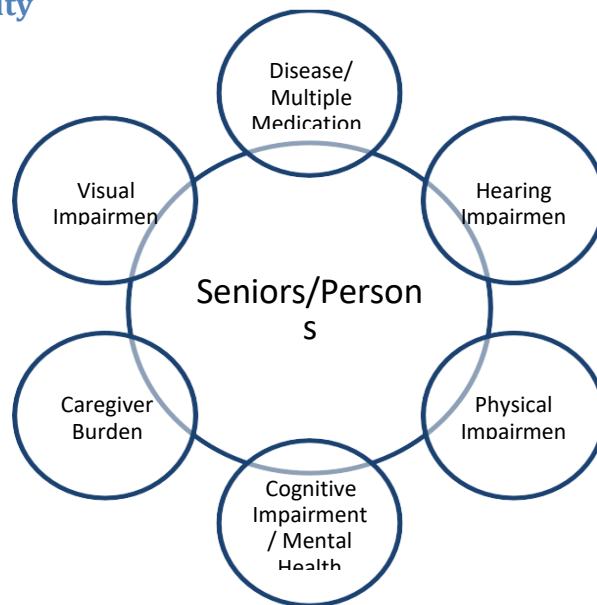
- Meeting the individual accommodation needs of SPDs to the extent possible ensures the following:
  - *The practice provides appropriate and effective care*
  - *Compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act.*
  - *The ADA and Section 504 require that healthcare services provide certain accommodations that ensure equitable and non-discriminatory access to care.*
  - *70% of SFHP members with disabilities live with 2+ chronic conditions and 16% of these members have diabetes (compared with 7% in gen. pop.)*
  - *About 25% have 4+ chronic conditions*
  - *30% of beneficiaries with disabilities receive treatment for mental health conditions annually*

## Accommodations: What Patients May Need



- Physical accessibility
- Effective communication
- Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, print materials in accessible formats
- Policy modification (for example, to allow more time for an office visit)
- Accessible medical equipment

## Dimensions of Disability



Source: US Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2007

## Examples of Preferred Terms



- He had polio
- A person who uses a wheelchair
- She has a disability
- A person with a spinal curvature



- He was stricken with or a victim of polio
- Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound
- She is crippled
- Hunchback, Humpback

## Interacting with Seniors

- Avoid ageist assumptions when providing information and recommendations about care.
- Offer information in a clear, direct, and simple manner.
- Don't assume limitations exist just based on age.
- Recognize the senior as the expert in their own life.

Quote from a senior activist: "As Seniors we know our capabilities and energy are diminishing, but want to retain the right to limit ourselves when the time comes, and not have young people put those limitations on us, to make them feel better."

## Interacting with People with Physical Disabilities

- Mobility and physical disabilities range from people who have mild to those with significant limitations.
- If shaking hands is appropriate, do so. People with limited hand use or who use prosthesis can usually shake hands. If people have no arms, lightly touch their shoulder.
- When speaking to a person using a wheelchair or scooter for more than a few minutes, try to find a seat or kneel so you are at the same eye level.
- Ask for permission before moving someone's cane, crutches, walker, or wheelchair.

### Interacting with People with Speech Disabilities

- Some (not all) people with limited speech have difficulty understanding what people say to them because of their disability, age, a hearing loss, cognitive difficulties and/or language differences.
- Don't raise your voice. People with speech disabilities can hear you.
- Always repeat what the person tells you to confirm that you understood.
- Ask questions one at a time. Give individuals extra time to respond.
- Pay attention to pointing, gestures, nods, sounds, eye gaze, and blinks.
- If you have trouble understanding a person's speech, it's ok to ask them to repeat what they are saying, even three or four times. It is better for them to know that you do not understand, than to make an error.



### Interacting with People with Cognitive, Intellectual, or Psychiatric Disabilities

- A cognitive, intellectual, or psychiatric disability can affect a person's understanding, memory, language, judgment, learning and related information processing and communication functions. These disabilities include individuals with intellectual disabilities, head injury, strokes, autism, Alzheimer's disease, and emotional disabilities.
- Offer information in a clear, concise, concrete, and simple manner.
- If you are not being understood, modify your method of communicating. Use common words and simple sentences.
- Allow time for people to process your words, respond slowly, or in their own way.
- Make sure the person understands your message.

### Interacting with People with Visual Disabilities

- People can have a range of visual disabilities, from having no vision to people who have low vision and may be able to read large print.
- When offering help, identify yourself and let people know you are speaking to them by gently touching their arm. If you leave people's immediate area, tell them so they will not be talking to empty space.
- Speak directly facing the person. Your natural speaking tone is sufficient.
- When giving directions, be specific. Clock clues may be helpful, such as "the desk is at 6 o'clock." When guiding a person through a doorway, let them know if the door opens in or out and to the right or to the left.
- People who are blind or have visual impairments may request (from SFHP) print materials in accessible formats such as digital, audio, large print, or Braille.

**Need more information? Contact [HealthEducation@sfhp.org](mailto:HealthEducation@sfhp.org)**



## **New Provider Training Attestation Form**

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ attest that I have received materials and training on the following subjects:

- About the SFHP Provider Network
- Key Contacts
- SFHP Programs
- Eligibility
- Access to Care
- Referrals, Prior Authorization, and Appeal to UM Decisions
- Member Rights, including the right to full disclosure of healthcare information and the right to actively participate in healthcare decisions
- Member Complaints and Grievances
- Medi-Cal Benefits
- Initial Health Appointments (IHA)
- Coordination of Care for Medi-Cal Members
- DHCS Waiver Programs
- Health Education
- Cultural and Linguistics Training
- Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Training

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Signature

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Date

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Print Name

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Address, City, St, Zip