

Expanding Access to Care

MOBILE & VIRTUAL HEALTH





Introduction

For decades, Health Net has served as one of California's most-experienced Medi-Cal partners. Over that time, we've evolved toward a whole-person model of care, with a focus on social drivers of health to close health equity gaps. As the state has expanded Medi-Cal over this time, we've enrolled more hard-to-reach members across all corners of the state.

Health Net has led in the implementation of CalAIM, across our statewide footprint, to strengthen the system and drive equity. It's important to sustain this program's momentum while we help ensure access to, and continuity of, quality health care. Because of this emphasis, Health Net has expanded and innovated beyond the walls of hospitals and health clinics across our diverse state.

In this brief, we will discuss how Health Net leads initiatives to leverage mobile and virtual services so more Californians have access to quality care and experience more equitable health outcomes.

Mobile and Virtual Care as Innovative Solutions

*The people and communities in California have diverse backgrounds and needs. Comparably, the Medi-Cal population deserves more than one-size-fits-all approaches to equally **unique and personal health care needs.***

We know how to serve residents in these communities because of on-the-ground experience with local stakeholders. Many Medi-Cal members experience greater rates of disparities because of negative social drivers of health.

To overcome these barriers, **Health Net has invested in innovative mobile and virtual solutions to ensure our members can get the care they need, when, how and where they need it.**

*Medi-Cal members experience **greater rates of health disparities** because of negative social drivers of health*

As we've innovated with local partners, what we've learned is that a one-size-fits-all approach is not the answer. That's because no two California communities, or Medi-Cal members, are identical. Some of our Medi-Cal members are agricultural workers who spend their days in the fields based on seasonal crops and harvests. If they need to take time off to see a doctor or care for their children, those are missed wages.

Other Health Net members are single moms who work part-time while pursuing their education and have to drive one hour or more to the nearest grocery store. Some of our members have chronic conditions, which makes it difficult for them to establish consistent routines and work schedules or achieve personal mobility.

Each of these people – and millions more – benefit when care comes to them based on their convenience, through trusted channels, rather than via brick-and-mortar locations.



Telehealth Grants



THE CHALLENGE

Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, **barriers in access to care made in-person appointments difficult**. The pandemic exacerbated the urgent need to provide safe access to medical care.



THE RESPONSE

As part of Health Net's pandemic response, **Health Net awarded cash grants to 138 Medi-Cal providers across California, totaling \$13.4 million**. The funds were dedicated to building or expanding telehealth practices, which became even more key to providing safe access and continuity of care for patients at home.


Telehealth use increased from two percent of visits prior to the pandemic to 45 percent at the end of the first year of the pandemic, representing a more than 20x increase. The grants enabled providers to continue offering patient screenings, routine check-ups, wellness checks, mental health services and more.



THE RESULT


Sixty percent of Medi-Cal providers supported by Health Net said the addition of telehealth provided financial stability for their organization and 85 percent of providers plan to integrate telehealth as a sustainable practice for patients going forward.

Following the successful integration of telehealth and telephonic services for many providers, Health Net awarded a \$200,000 grant in April 2021 to the California Primary Care Association (CPCA) to develop programming to improve workflows for virtual patient care. In 2022, CPCA produced learning modules to train community health center staff on how to implement the appropriate workflow and care team model to best meet their patient and staff needs.



Telehealth use increased from 2% of visits prior to pandemic to 45% at the end of the first year of the pandemic.

20x increase during pandemic



Street Medicine

? THE CHALLENGE

The issues of health and homelessness are complex. **For people who are unhoused, access to a physician and much-needed medical treatment can feel nearly impossible and be discouraging.** Left untreated, their underlying health issues can worsen over time, impacting themselves and their communities. This population is highly susceptible to poorer outcomes, particularly if local efforts intended to help them are disrupted and access to care disappears.

↻ THE RESPONSE

Since 2017, Health Net has invested over \$2.5 million in grants and programs to help the unhoused. In particular, we funded the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital (MLKCH) Street Medicine program – a collaboration between MLKCH and the USC Keck School of Medicine.

The Street Medicine program delivers care directly to homeless people in South Los Angeles via specialized care teams for patients and integrated inpatient and outpatient care. The program engages experts in street medicine to help reduce disparities in health outcomes.

✓ THE RESULT

This effective boots-on-the-ground model to combine inpatient and outpatient care led to **Health Net's support and expansion of the USC Street Medicine program with Health Net providing an additional \$1.5 million grant over the next three years.** The grant will support growth of the existing street medicine workforce to deliver care as well as guide other programs on how to integrate street medicine into Medi-Cal and CalAIM.



Health Net's RV Program Brings Health, Dental and Other Services to the People



THE CHALLENGE

Transportation is a well-known barrier to access. **Members historically could only receive care if they could physically get to a doctor's office.** Without mobility, members have limited access to even basic care, such as health screenings, behavioral support, preventive services, vaccinations and more. This barrier exacerbates poorer health outcomes.

THE RESPONSE

Health Net launched our MOVES program to bring care and resources directly into communities. Through MOVES, we offer a suite of mobile services and solutions to enter into communities and meet members where they are. We tailor Health Net MOVES events and services based on local needs, and team up with local organizations and providers that give communities the comfort of a familiar face.

THE RESULT

The Health Net MOVES RV, teams and community partners have traveled throughout the state, to bring both technology-enabled services and people-centered interventions to hard-to-reach regions and community hubs. Events may include:

- On-demand telehealth
- Behavioral support
- Mobile vision, dental, wellness and preventive services
- Health screenings
- Health Net's RVax 180 for mobile COVID-19 vaccinations

In addition, we have **Member Connect Station kiosks** for emergent and non-emergent needs. Health Net's Member Connect kiosks provide value and support as members access resources for:

1. Housing, food & transportation
2. Public programs
3. Telehealth information
4. Mental health
5. Health Net public website





Health Net's Mobile COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

? THE CHALLENGE

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the stark disparities in access to care and health outcomes among underrepresented groups. With the development and release of the COVID-19 vaccine, gaps in vaccination rates also developed due to the inability of many members to travel or take time off from work to receive their multi-dose vaccines. Vaccinations are foundational interventions in public health, and we cannot afford to have shortfalls in these efforts.

↻ THE RESPONSE

To increase health equity and help as many Californians get vaccinated as possible, Health Net launched the RVax 180 initiative. RVax 180 aimed to deliver COVID-19 vaccines through 180 mobile clinics in communities across the state.

We partnered with trusted community partners – non-profits, school districts, faith-based groups and more – to bring vaccines directly to members and non-members alike. We also made these events opportunities for people to come together in community through providing activities, games and music.

✓ THE RESULT

The RVax 180 initiative held more than 210 vaccine clinics, beyond the initial goal. **People in more than 70 cities in 15 counties throughout the state received more than 22,000 vaccines**, to give much-needed vaccination and protection to Californians.

The RVax 180 clinics partnered with organizations like the Los Angeles Rams, United Farm Workers Foundation, Community Organized Relief Effort (CORE), Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Los Angeles Unified School District, Sutro Avenue-Southeast Park Block Club and more.



Telehealth in Schools

? THE CHALLENGE

School-aged kids from low-income families often face barriers to access for quality urgent and behavioral health care, which results in greater disparity and inequity. Children cannot learn unless they feel healthy. Without access to care, they are more likely to miss school because of health issues.

Broadband access has grown steadily in recent years, but gaps still exist. According to the 2020 American Community Survey, out of more than 13 million households, 74 percent had high-speed internet at home in 2017 and that share increased to 84 percent in 2019 (which means more than two million did not).

Home broadband access has increased across most demographic groups, but **racial/ethnic gaps persist, as 80 percent of Latino households and 83 percent of Black households reported that they had broadband in 2020, compared to 87 percent of white households.**

↻ THE RESPONSE

Health Net has partnered with Hazel Health – the national leader in school-based telehealth – through a \$3 million grant to expand students’ access to care. Through Hazel Health’s services, students can connect directly with licensed medical professionals for on-demand care, whether at school or at home. The goal is to close health equity gaps via a reduction in the number of school days missed. If these gaps widen, disparities stand to increase further and perpetuate throughout the affected children’s lives.

✓ THE RESULT

Hazel Health’s services have helped students in more than 130 schools across California. Students who had an in-school physical health visit safely returned to class 83 percent of the time. That return rate has resulted in a lower incidence of overall absenteeism by three days, which saved nearly 1,800 hours of class time for students.

Hazel Health will use Health Net’s grant to more than double the number of schools where their services are available.

The expansion into 200 new schools in 10 California counties (including Butte, Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, Stanislaus and Tulare) will be achieved by the end of 2022.



Expanding Telehealth During the Pandemic



? THE CHALLENGE

Members who are at-risk, homeless, homebound, pregnant or may struggle with behavioral health issues are often **challenged to find** child care, transportation and time to see in-person primary care providers. These issues became even more acute during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The needs for care remained.

↻ THE RESPONSE

In 2020, just after the declaration of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, we offered telehealth services to our entire 1.5 million primary insured Medi-Cal members. We made these services available at no additional cost through an app.

The bond that our members have with their doctor is important. To support our members and providers, the app offers urgent medical care and behavioral health services through an integrated approach where medical records are shared with primary care clinicians.

The service offers convenient, timely access when members cannot see their doctor, which helps transform the health of communities one person at a time.

✓ THE RESULT

At the beginning of the pandemic, members who could not reach their doctor were then able to use the app to make a video appointment face-to-face with a health care provider for non-emergency medical or behavioral health issues.

These medical and behavioral health appointments are available 24/7. Members receive medical advice, treatment and obtain prescriptions, if needed. They can also access additional tools on the app to receive medical decision-making support; such as high-quality information and expert COVID-19 resources while monitoring their overall health to stay well over the long-term.

Self-Help Options for Long-Term Gains

? THE CHALLENGE

Behavioral health shapes how we feel, think and act. Like other medical conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease, **behavioral health requires attention and help as people need it.**

Mental health issues can happen to anyone at any time and experts can help. If left alone, the issues can get worse. Mental health problems can lead to poor health, self-injury or even suicide. Studies show that people with depression have an increased risk of stroke and are more likely to have heart attacks.

↻ THE RESPONSE

Health Net has partnered with myStrength since 2015 to help members manage and improve their moods. The program provides many self-help tools designed to improve mental and physical health, plus relieve stress for changes that last.

✓ THE RESULT

Over the course of our partnership, more than 20,000 members have enrolled in myStrength. Common programs recommended for members were for: how to deal with and move beyond trauma, ways to control anxiety, depression, chronic pain management and better sleep.

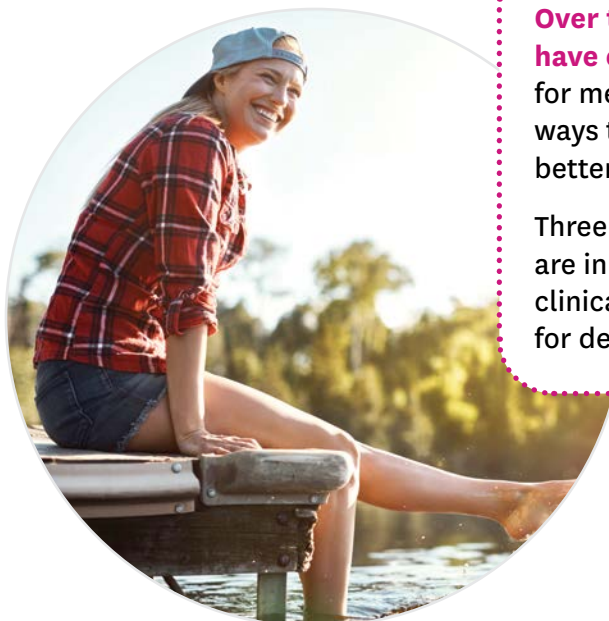
Three-quarters of enrolled members are women and about half are in the 18 to 44 age range. Through the myStrength programs, clinical improvement has occurred in about one-third of members for depression, anxiety and well-being.

myStrength offers:

- Step-by-step eLearning modules
- Hands-on tools to improve mood
- Weekly action plans
- Daily words to inspire – and more

Members can use mindfulness activities to help with:

- Panic attacks
- Easing stress and worry
- Boosting total wellness



Health Net Community Connect Matches Members with Local Services



? THE CHALLENGE

Many resources, services, businesses and organizations exist in communities throughout the state, but **without knowing the right keywords or doing hours of research, it's hard to figure out who does what.**

↻ THE RESPONSE

Health Net has partnered with findhelp, which enables members to connect to medical care, food, shelter, job training and other local services. **Health Net Community Connect helps members find programs, connect to services and apply for benefits.** The service is free and users can search for local vendors anytime, with 20,000+ programs in all. There are 10 topic filters, plus subtopics based on ZIP code and results in more than 100 languages.

✓ THE RESULT

From January through August 2022, about one-third of searches were for services in Los Angeles County, followed by Sacramento, Fresno, San Diego and Kern counties. Top needs have been food, medical, housing, transportation and utilities.

This year, more than 4,000 programs were added to the Community Connect platform. **Out of nearly 14,000 searches, members have made more than 1,300 connections with programs, including referrals, appointments, phone calls or emails.** We will continue to work with emphasis on referrals and other connections for people in need of assistance with the services in their communities.



Looking Ahead

We will serve members how and where they need it

Health Net will continue to use new tools and channels to advance health equity and decrease health disparities, especially among California's most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations.

We, along with our community partners, are trusted voices and familiar faces in those efforts. We take on health equity with multi-faceted, collaborative and culturally-relevant programs at all levels, with the recognition that **continuity is a key way to improve the lives of those who depend on our help and care.**

This is just a snapshot of our efforts to-date – and we will continue to increase access to care and drive innovation through person-centric solutions like mobile and virtual care.

Disruption to continuity of care could create unstable situations for people who are at-risk, including children, the chronically ill and the homeless. In addition to work via CalAIM, we will address health disparities and increase health equity for all Californians through these expanded efforts and partnerships.

As we have for decades, Health Net cares about our members, wherever and whomever they are.