

Article 3 of 5 in Our Cal MediConnect Series

The following is the third in a series of articles about Cal MediConnect that Hershey Cause Communications has developed for physicians, specialists and other health care providers serving in Los Angeles County.

Cal MediConnect: Continuity of Care Available to Ensure a Smooth Transition

Cal MediConnect offers dual eligible patients—usually low-income seniors and people with disabilities—the opportunity to receive their Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits through a single, coordinated system of care under one health plan. In Los Angeles County, there are five different health plans from which to choose: L.A. Care Health Plan, Health Net, Care1st Health Plan, CareMore and Molina.

Benefits of Enrolling in Cal MediConnect

Patients who enroll in Cal MediConnect will no longer have to endure the fragmented care that comes from two separate systems with little communication or coordination between them. But, like all change, the transition to this new system of care has its challenges. Many physicians, concerned that they will lose patients, are taking a conservative approach, advising all of their patients to simply “opt out.” But, that may not be the best choice—for either the patient or the physician.

The most important consideration for a physician is whether his/her patient will benefit from enrolling in Cal MediConnect, where they will have one phone number to call for support, new and enhanced benefits and a care manager to help them coordinate the full range of medical, pharmacy, long-term care (home and community-based) and behavioral health services to which they are now entitled.

Continuity of Care Protects Physician-Patient Relationships

Cal MediConnect also includes continuity of care provisions to give the physician and patient time to finish a course of treatment or to allow the physicians to become contracted with a Cal MediConnect provider network. Even if a physician is not contracted by a patient’s plan, the patient has a right to continue seeing that physician for up to 6 months for Medicare services and 12 months for Medi-Cal services. The physician must only demonstrate a preexisting relationship with the patient, have no documented quality of care concerns and be willing to accept the reimbursement rate and payment from the health plan.

It is important to note that while patients may opt out of Cal MediConnect, most Medi-Cal recipients are now required to enroll in a health plan to receive their Medi-Cal benefits, including Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS).

To find out more about the program and how to participate, please visit www.calduals.org. You can also visit www.calmediconnectla.org or call 1-888-522-1298 for more information.