

MEETING OF  
BLUE SHIELD OF CALIFORNIA PROMISE HEALTH PLAN  
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT HEALTH EQUITY COMMITTEE (QIHEC)

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Via Conference Call  
September 25, 2025

Once a quorum was established, the Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Quality Improvement Health Equity Committee (QIHEC) meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Dr. Jennifer Nuovo, Chief Medical Officer via telephone conference on Thursday, September 25, 2025.

### Attendance

#### Committee Members present:

1. Dr. Jennifer Nuovo, Chief Medical Officer, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan
2. Valerie Martinez, Chief Health Equity Officer, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan
3. Christine Nguyen, Director, Clinical Quality, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan
4. Dr. Brendan Mull, Medical Director, Quality Management, MedPOINT Management
5. Sonia Tucker, VP of Population Health, San Ysidro Health
6. Frances Trimble, Quality Manager, San Ysidro Health
7. Wendy Parrino,
8. Yesenia Curiel, Director, Associate VP Behavioral Health and Crisis Intervention Services, AltaMed Health Services
9. Sarine Pogosyan, Health Equity Program Director, Community Clinic Association of LA County (CCALAC)
10. Richard Powell, MD, RLP Enterprises
11. Ruth Novodor, El Proyecto del Barrio, Inc.
12. Rosa Hernandez, Sr. Manager, Lifestyle Medicine, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan
13. Diana Lam, Director of Quality Operations, Accountable Health Care
14. Susan Mahonga, Director CalAIM, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan
15. Alison Sipler, Program Coordinator, San Diego County Health and Human Services
16. Dr. Jesus Saucedo, Clinical Advisor, Harmony Health

#### Committee Members absent:

1. Jennifer Schirmer, VP, Medi-Cal Growth, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan

2. Job Godino, Director of Quality Improvement and Innovation/Scientific Director, Family Health Centers
3. Jennifer Christian-Herman, VP, MindBody Medicine, Blue Shield of California
4. Deanna Newman, Senior Manager of Data Operations, Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County
5. Taylor Ballou, Interim Vice President Performance, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan
6. Vivian Phillips Husband, VP Customer Experience and Shared Services, Blue Shield of California
7. Gloria Shier, Chief Executive Officer, Elite Care Health
8. Jennifer Miyamoto-Echeverria, Senior Director, Medi-Cal Population Health Management, Blue Shield Promise Health Plan
9. Alyson Spencer, Senior Director, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan
10. Jesse Brennan-Cooke, Director, Clinical Access Programs & Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Operations, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan

Blue Shield of California and Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan Representatives present:

1. Alexis Duke, Health Equity Business Analyst, Consultant
2. Nicole Evans, Director, Medi-Cal Maternal, Infant & Child Health Equity
3. Brigitte Lamberson, Principal Program Manager
4. Eduardo Delgado, Principal Program Manager
5. Heather Smalley, Sr. Manager, Program and Project Management, QA Accreditation, Quality Regulatory Compliance, QI
6. Karin Bartley, Director, Clinical Oversight, Office of Promise CMO
7. Marilyn Milano, NCQA Health Equity Program Manager Principal, Clinical Operations Oversight
8. Norm Cohen, Principal Project Manager
9. Ron Baur, Principal Program Manager, Promise, Quality Management, QI
10. Shahid Salam Sr. Manager, Operations, Medicare Non-Clinical AGD
11. Caitlin Wentz, Sr. Manager, Quality Improvement
12. Som Florendo, Program Manager, Consultant, QI
13. Araceli Garcia, Program Manager, Consultant
14. Yasamin Hafid, Senior Director, Medi-Cal Compliance Promise Chief Compliance Officer
15. Maira Torre, Health Education Cultural & Linguistic Specialist
16. Nairi Varteressian, Program Manager, Community Programs
17. Leigh Purry, Senior Manager, Health Equity
18. Edward Davis, Sr. Director, Network Compliance
19. Ayesha Sharma, Director, Special Populations, Office of the CMO
20. Danika Cunningham, Sr. Director, Health Operations Oversight
21. Paul Vota, Sr. Director, Program and Project Management

## Introductions and Welcome

Valerie Martinez welcomed committee members, called the meeting to order, previewed the meeting agenda, and provided a brief statement on Blue Shield Promise' health equity commitment.

## Old Business

The following items were reviewed:

Item #	Agenda Topic	Action Item(s)	Status
Women's Health Workgroup	HEART Measure Set	Include external partners in the Women's Health workgroup and expand the audience to include providers.	Open: Pending internal logistics.
Korean Population Analysis	HEART Measure Set	Investigate the geographic distribution of the Korean population and their access to clinic sites using Geo mapping	Open: Pending for Q4
Diabetes Control Data	HEART Measure Set	Clarify whether the diabetes data presented is for screening or control and update the title accordingly.	Open: Pending for Q4
Social Media Outreach	HEART Measure Set	Explore partnerships with social media platforms to engage adolescents in preventive care.	Open: Pending draft review of Teen Health Equity Workgroup with Teens Rise Foundation.
Member Incentive: Promising Start Program	Health Equity Spotlight Report	1. Send the new mom kit and the contents of the Amazon shopping options to the group for feedback. 2. Explore opportunity for cloth diapers. 3. Consider alternatives to magnets for the mom and baby program, such as sticky notes that can cling to stainless steel fridges.	Closed: 1. Will share link to view contents of kit post meeting. 2. Cloth diapers have been added to the list. 3. Item was changed to include writing options and dry erase pen for convenience.

## Document Review and Approval (Pre-reads)

The Quality Improvement and Health Equity Transformation Program (QIHETP) program documents were circulated to voting committee members for review and approval via email prior to the QIHEC Q3 meeting. The following documents were approved by voting committee members:

- BSC Promise QIHEC Meeting Minutes Q2 2025
- BSC Promise QIHEC 2025 Work Plan Q3 2025
- HEQ-001: QIHETP Policy and Procedure
- HEQ-003: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Training Program Requirements
- HEQ-003: Attachment DEI Training Selection Criteria Guidelines
- Advancing Health Equity – A Guide for Navigating Challenging Conversations Job Aid

## Health Equity Data Dashboard

Eduardo Delgado, Health Equity Principal Program Manager, presented the quarterly HEART Measure Set updates, including the following: 1) Quarterly action items status updates; 2) Results of disparity data analysis – findings, results, takeaways, disaggregated

data by race, ethnicity, age and/or language and analysis of women and youth populations; and 3) Review and discussion of key findings.

Eduardo provided a thorough disparity analysis of specific measures including a review of findings, results, and key takeaways for each metric in Los Angeles and San Diego counties. Disparity analysis included disaggregated data by race, ethnicity, age and/or language and analysis of women and youth populations.

Overall, key findings indicate the following, 1) Women's health outcomes are influenced by both access to preventive screenings and quality of maternal care, highlighting the need for tailored interventions; 2) Strengthening prenatal and postpartum care access is essential for improving maternal and infant health outcomes; and 3) Youth preventive health measures show systemic gaps, highlighting the importance of outreach, culturally tailored education, and structural support for families.

To address health disparities, Blue Shield Promise is dedicated to using a data-driven approach to improve our members' health outcomes. Targeted interventions such as language support, enhanced outreach, age-specific programs, and addressing county-level differences are essential to improve screening rates, care engagement, and overall health equity.

Well-Child Clinic events were implemented at Community Resource Centers and local Community Based Organizations serving members in southern San Diego in greatest need of accessible healthcare options. Appointments offered via expanded clinic hours/weekend events; Care Coordinators reiterate the transportation benefit and coordinated transportation to and from the events; and members received a gift card at the time of the visit.

### Member and Family Engagement Strategy

The Member and Family Engagement Strategy and updates were presented by Araceli Garcia, Program Manager Consultant, Community Programs, and Nairi Varteressian, Program Manager, Community Programs. The Community Programs team presented an overview of the current policy, current member and family engagement activities, and three (3) initiatives conducted in CY 2025.

As part of the California Department of Health Care Services Medi-Cal Contract requirements, Blue Shield Promise Health Plan is required to establish and update a Member and Family Engagement Strategy to seek member, family and caregiver input in the design, delivery, and evaluation of member programs and covered services as appropriate. To meet the requirements, the Community Programs team have coordinated with multiple internal departments to develop and implement the Member and Family Engagement Strategy. The internal departments include Health Education and Cultural and Linguistics Services, Member Services, Product and Market Insights, Social Services, Quality Improvement, Marketing, and the Health Equity Office. Additionally, the Community Programs currently have 40 projects where member input is collected. The methods of input

included in-person feedback collected through face-to-face interactions, online and paper surveys, virtual feedback collected via online platforms, telephonic feedback, and/or via a combination of online and in-person interactions.

The Community Programs team will continue to monitor the Member and Family Engagement Strategy and activities throughout the remainder of the year and provide updates to the QIHEC upon request.

### Health Equity Spotlight: Health Equity Navigators

Caitlin Wentz, Sr. Manager, Quality Improvement, presented Blue Shield Promise Health Equity Navigators program a funded Medical Assistant (MA)/Program Coordinator for a select provider group whose focus is to improve HEDIS rates and Initial Health Assessments (IHA) among Blue Shield Promise Medi-Cal members.

The program includes care gap outreach, medical record review and ad-hoc requests for Blue Shield Program. The program is run by a Blue Shield Promise Quality Program Manager across Los Angeles and San Diego Counties for effective and streamlined improvement efforts. Priority lists have been enhanced to include a prioritization strategy for timely outreach to members with time sensitive compliance deadlines and includes annual in-person Navigator meeting(s). In Los Angeles County, the program currently includes 11 navigators across 10 groups, with a mix of embedded and non-embedded placements. In San Diego County, there are 8 navigators across 4 groups, all non-embedded, with one additional navigator pending placement.

Key interventions include hosting Well Child Clinic Days at trusted community-based organizations (CBOs), conducting culturally tailored outreach using Spanish-speaking navigators, and providing health equity training to improve engagement strategies. Looking ahead, the program plans to expand the Health Equity Training to all navigators in both regions and deepen partnerships with trusted CBOs to increase community engagement. These efforts are aligned with the PIP's measurement timeline, which includes baseline data collection in September 2024 and remeasurements in August 2025 and 2026.

### I have HEART Advocate Program

The HEART Advocate Program is a strategic initiative by Blue Shield Promise aimed at advancing health equity and supporting the organization's broader Quality Improvement and Health Equity Transformation Program goals and objectives. Central to the program is achieved by empowering staff members—referred to as I have HEART Advocates—to become champions of equity within their departments. The second cohort of the program, launched in March 2025 and concluded in August 2025, included 62 participants who engaged in monthly meetings, volunteer opportunities, and professional development activities focused on health equity.

Throughout the six-month program, participants took part in a wide range of activities designed to deepen their understanding of systemic inequities and foster inclusive practices.

These included educational sessions, guest speaker events, community engagement efforts, interactive experiences and documentary screenings. Advocates also contributed to internal initiatives like the Promise Health Equity Committee and helped develop tools such as the “Advancing Health Equity: A Guide for Navigating Challenging Conversations” job aid led and presented by HEART Advocate Maira Torre Health Education Cultural & Linguistic Specialist.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing that the training provided valuable insights applicable to their roles and helped them better understand and discuss equity-related topics. Survey results showed significant improvements in participants’ confidence and knowledge, with 100% indicating they plan to use the job aid in their work.

### Health Equity Integration Plan Updates

Alexis Duke, Health Equity Business Analyst, presented on Blue Shield Promise Medi-Cal contract requirements to maintain a Health Equity Transformation Program (HETP) which includes at a minimum integration of health equity activities across a wide range of functional areas. Those mandated functional areas include:

1. Health Education and Cultural and Linguistic Services
2. Growth, Community Engagement, and Marketing
3. Provider Network
4. Population Health Management
5. Grievances and Appeals
6. Utilization Management
7. Quality
8. Medical Services: Case management and Maternal Health

Blue Shield Promise will maintain an integration plan program, document planned activities and outcomes to integrate health equity. Teams finalized integration plans by end of last year. Beginning in 2025, activities will begin to be implemented across the functional areas and progress will be reported. This work will continue to focus on interventions and identifying opportunities. There is a total of thirty-seven activities across the eight health equity integration plans. Teams are progressing well with ten activities or 45% completed by the end of Quarter 3, 2025.

### Regulatory Updates

The mandatory DEI Medi-Cal training entitled the *2025 Advancing Health Equity. Training to Support Member Interactions* internal training for all staff was released on March 3, 2025. Blue Shield Promise has reached a 99% completion rate. Blue Shield Promise released the external Provider facing training, 2025 Advancing Health Equity training on the new Blue Shield of California Provider Learning Center platform on April 28, 2025. Blue Shield Promise has reached a 10% completion rate.

In addition, the new Transgender, Gender Diverse or Intersex (TGI) Cultural Competency Training as set forth by All Plan Letter 24-017 and Senate Bill 923 was released on April 1,

2025, to internal member-facing staff. The training is entitled *Improving the Healthcare Experience for the Transgender, Gender Diverse, and Intersex Community*. Blue Shield Promise has reached a 100% completion rate.

### Health Equity Performance Dashboard

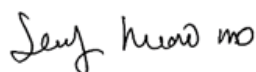
Valerie Martinez presented on the 2025 Health Equity Performance Dashboard and accomplishments through the end of Quarter 2, 2025 (Figure 1). The HEO will continue to track the goals and objectives for calendar year 2025, which focuses on maintaining NCQA Health Equity Accreditation, ensuring contract compliance is met, continually building and integrating a culture of equity across the organization.

### Next Steps

The committee will continue to present QIHETP Workplan updates, present HEART Measure Set Monitoring Report rates and disparity analysis and identify quarterly Health Equity Spotlight reports. The HEO will track the action items and bring updates forward at the next QIHEC meeting.

### Closing and Adjournment

Dr. Jennifer Nuovo thanked the committee for their time and feedback. The next QIHEC meeting will be held December 4, 2025.



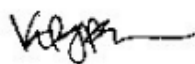
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Dr. Jennifer Nuovo  
Chief Medical Officer  
Chair

12/04/2025

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Date



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Valerie Martinez, DrPH(c), MPH  
Chief Health Equity Officer  
Co-Chair

12/04/2025

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Date