



Medi-Cal Explained: An Overview of Program Basics

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Speaker Biographies

Jacey Cooper serves as the senior advisor, Health Care Programs, at the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). Ms. Cooper leads specified department-wide Medi-Cal initiatives and represents the Medicaid director as needed. She joined DHCS in April 2016 as the assistant deputy director, Health Care Delivery Systems, where she was responsible for overseeing the planning, implementation, evaluation, and management of Managed Care and Integrated Systems of Care Division programs and policies. Prior to coming to DHCS, Ms. Cooper worked as the vice president of administrative services at Kern Medical Center and as a health care consultant. Ms. Cooper has over ten years of experience in health care policy, integrated delivery models, managed care, business development, quality monitoring, care management programs, physical and behavioral health integration, care transitions, and direct patient services. She has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Southern California.

Scott Graves, PhD, joined the California Budget & Policy Center in 2002 and has served as director of research since 2014. In this role, he oversees the Budget Center's analytical work, conducts research and analysis related to health and human services and corrections, and is the organization's lead analyst on the state and county budget processes. Dr. Graves has covered a number of other policy areas at the Budget Center, including child care, preschool, and housing, with a focus on both the state and federal levels. Prior to joining the Budget Center, he worked as a researcher in Austin, Texas, for the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, Consumers Union, and the Public Policy Clinic at the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Graves also was a California executive fellow and worked as a reporter for newspapers in Arizona and California. He received a PhD in political science from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor's degree in government and journalism from California State University, Sacramento.

Lindy Harrington is the deputy director for Health Care Financing at DHCS. She has been with the department for nearly 19 years in various capacities and has held her current position for three years. Ms. Harrington is responsible for overseeing the planning, implementation, coordination, evaluation, and management of the department's health care financing programs and policies. She is a graduate of California State University, Sacramento, where she received a bachelor's degree in communication studies with a concentration in organizational communication.

Deborah Reidy Kelch, MPPA, is the executive director of the Insure the Uninsured Project (ITUP). Prior to joining ITUP, Ms. Kelch had 30+ years of experience analyzing and working to improve health care in California, including 15 years as policy and fiscal staff to the California Legislature and more than 15 years as owner of Kelch Associates, an independent health policy consulting firm. She received her master's degree in public policy and administration from CSU Sacramento and her bachelor's degree in political science from UCLA.

Jennifer Kent, MPA, was appointed director of DHCS by Governor Brown on January 26, 2015. Director Kent oversees a staff of almost 4,000 individuals at DHCS, which is responsible for the operation of Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid program. The department manages the spending of more than \$100 billion annually in public funds that support the health of more than 13.5 million Californians. Ms. Kent served as executive director of Local Health Plans of California since September 2013. From 2011 through 2013, she was a principal with Health Management Associates Inc., where she advised clients on issues of health care reform. Her previous California government service included leadership roles in legislative, inter-governmental, financial, and health policy areas with the Office of the Governor, the Health and Human Services Agency, and at DHCS. Ms. Kent earned a bachelor's degree in government/history at Saint Mary's College of California and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California.

Christopher Perrone, MPP, is director of CHCF's Improving Access team, which works to improve access to coverage and care for low-income Californians. Mr. Perrone was previously director of the foundation's Health Reform and Public Programs initiative, where he led efforts to improve the policies and practices that shape Medi-Cal and other publicly funded health care programs, and to promote greater transparency and accountability within these programs. Prior to joining CHCF, he served as director of planning for the Massachusetts Division of Medical Assistance. He was the first external recipient of the Globe Award, given by the Office of Strategic Planning at HCFA (now CMS), for his work to improve the delivery and financing of acute and long-term care services for low-income seniors. Mr. Perrone has also held positions with The Lewin Group, the American Psychological Association, and the Center for Health Policy Studies at Georgetown University. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University.

Cathy Senderling-McDonald, MSPPM, has served as the deputy executive director of the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) since 2010, and she works with the association's executive director and CWDA Board of Directors to promote legislative, budget, and policy changes that improve human services programs and the delivery of those services. Ms. Senderling-McDonald joined CWDA in 2000 as the association's legislative advocate and later became senior legislative advocate until her promotion to deputy executive director. Prior to

joining CWDA, she served as the California Senate Budget Committee consultant for social services programs and a fiscal and policy analyst for the California Legislative Analyst's Office. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri at Columbia and a master's degree from the Heinz School of Public Policy and Management in Pittsburgh, PA. Ms. Senderling-McDonald currently serves as the president of the National Association of County Human Services Administrators (NACHSA). In July 2018, she was appointed by Supervisor Greg Cox of San Diego, incoming president of the National Association of Counties, to serve as the vice chair of the Aging Subcommittee of the Human Services and Education Steering Committee, of which she is a longtime member.

Kristof Stremikis, MPP, MPH, is director of CHCF's Market Analysis and Insight team, which promotes greater transparency and accountability in California's health care system. He oversees the foundation's work to provide research and analysis to policymakers and other health leaders across the state to give a market-wide view of the complex health care ecosystem and to support informed decisions about California's health care landscape. Previously, Mr. Stremikis served as associate director for policy at the Pacific Business Group on Health, where he also oversaw the Purchaser Value Network. Prior to that, he spent six years at the Commonwealth Fund as senior researcher to the president. He received a bachelor's degree in economics, political science, and history from the University of Wisconsin, Madison; a master's degree in public policy from the University of California, Berkeley; and a master's degree in health policy and management from Columbia University.

Margaret Tatar, JD, is a principal with Health Management Associates and has more than 30 years of public and private sector Medicaid experience in managed care program and policy development, health policy, program development, advocacy, and government/legislative affairs. She has a strong track record in managed care plan leadership, leading large-scale managed care initiatives and multi-disciplinary teams in complex operating environments while fostering professional development and mentoring staff. Ms. Tatar served in the federal government's Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), as well as the executive and legislative branches in Colorado and California. She held a key leadership position with CalOptima, a large public health plan in California. She earned her bachelor's degree in Latin at Bryn Mawr College and her law degree at Villanova University School of Law in Pennsylvania.