

CHILDREN NOW

**Consumers  
Union**  
POLICY & ACTION FROM  
CONSUMER REPORTS



California Pan-Ethnic Health Network



August 19, 2013

Toby Douglas, Director  
California Department of Health Care Services  
1501 Capitol Avenue, MS 0000  
P.O. Box 997413  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7413

**RE: Transfer of the Healthy Families Advisory Panel**

Dear Director Douglas,

The undersigned organizations are writing to provide recommendations for the forthcoming plan to transition the Healthy Families Program Advisory Panel (HFP Advisory Panel) to the Department of Health Care Service (DHCS). There are nearly 5 million children in Medi-Cal, and it is critical that their voices be heard to shape the future of the program.

The HFP Advisory Panel is a 15-member panel of stakeholders that has been advising the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board (MRMIB) since the inception of the Healthy Families Program (HFP). AB 1494, Chapter 28, Statutes of 2012 authorized DHCS to create a strategic plan for the transition of HFP to Medi-Cal that addresses, among other things, the transfer of the HFP Advisory Panel. The strategic plan, published by DHCS on October 1, 2012, specified that "DHCS will work collaboratively with MRMIB to develop a plan for transitioning the HFP Advisory Panel to DHCS. Such efforts will include identification of current members, need for replacement of members, roles, and responsibilities for advisory board members, and establishing a timeline for transition. This transition plan will be informed by input from the advisory panel and will be shared publicly." To our knowledge, such a transition plan has not yet been developed or shared publicly.

We believe that it is critical that the HFP Advisory Panel, once transferred to DHCS, retains an important role in advising the Department about the health coverage that children receive in Medi-Cal. In order to do so, the Panel should continue to consist of a broad array of stakeholders, as specified in statute (INS 12693.90), and report directly to the Director of DHCS with a frequency of no less than four times per year. The state may also want to consider (1) monthly communications with the HFP Advisory Panel, at

least initially, in order to establish a relationship and maintain a focus on children in Medi-Cal, and (2) opening the meetings to the attendance of the broader stakeholder community.

Furthermore, we believe that in order to have an effective and efficient process for providing stakeholder feedback for Medi-Cal, it is critical that the HFP Advisory Panel, once transferred to DHCS, work as a subgroup within a single advisory body. The purpose of a Medi-Cal advisory body would be to make recommendations to the Department and to the Legislature in order to improve quality and access in the delivery of Medi-Cal managed care services. AB 209 (Pan), currently awaiting a vote on the Senate Floor, would create an advisory committee with this purpose. Within this body, the HFP Advisory Panel could act as a subgroup specifically to make recommendations based on the wellbeing of children who are enrolled in Medi-Cal program.

Following the transition of all children in HFP, nearly 5 million children are expected to be enrolled in Medi-Cal; in addition, many of the approximately 600,000 children who are currently eligible but not enrolled in Medi-Cal are expected to enroll as outreach efforts associated with implementation of the Affordable Care Act. In light of these changes, the need is greater than ever for children in Medi-Cal to benefit from an effective and efficient stakeholder advisory process.

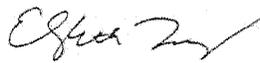
**Given the importance of serving children in Medi-Cal as well as possible, we believe that the transfer of the HFP Advisory Panel to the Department should be completed by January 1, 2014, and respectfully request a meeting with DHCS staff to discuss plans for the transfer.**

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with DHCS to ensure that children enrolled in Medi-Cal have timely access to quality health care services. Please contact Kelly Hardy at 510-763-2444x126 or [khardy@childrennow.org](mailto:khardy@childrennow.org) with any questions or concerns.

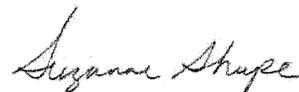
Sincerely,



Ted Lempert  
President  
Children Now



Elizabeth Imholz  
Special Projects Director  
Consumers Union



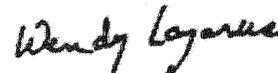
Suzie Shupe  
Executive Director  
California Coverage & Health  
Initiatives



Sarah de Guia  
Director of Government Affairs  
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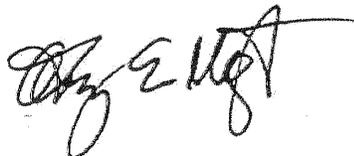
Kim Brettschneider  
California State Coordinator  
Children's Defense Fund California



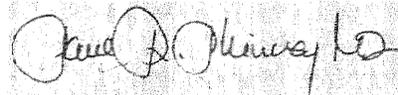
Wendy Lazarus  
Founder and Co-President  
The Children's Partnership



Bernadette Arellano  
Director, Government Relations  
California Children's Hospital  
Association



Anthony Wright  
Executive Director  
Health Access California



Paul R. Phinney, MD  
President  
California Medical Association

cc: Diana Dooley, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency  
Dr. Richard Pan, Chair, Assembly Health Committee  
Janette Casillas, Executive Director, MRMIB