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State of California Presents 2019 Innovation Award to CenCal Health
Interactive Technology in Health Clinics Educates Families about HPV Vaccination

SANTA BARBARA, CA – Oct 31, 2019 – Yesterday, California’s [Department of Health Care Services](#) (DHCS) presented its fifth annual *Innovation Award* to [CenCal Health](#). The award is given to a Managed Care Plan (MCP) whose innovative interventions strive to improve the quality of health care for Medi-Cal beneficiaries. CenCal Health’s award-winning pilot program, titled *Know More: HPV*, is an in-office patient intervention that supports the public health mandate to increase HPV vaccination rates. The unique intervention is a digital tablet that interactively provides health information on HPV and the need to vaccinate. The *Know More: HPV* education pilot significantly increased HPV vaccination rates in just six months.

CenCal Health had earlier identified a significant geographic health disparity in HPV vaccination rates among their membership: north Santa Barbara County had an HPV vaccination rate of 48.72% while the south Santa Barbara County rate was only 31.03%. To address this disparity, CenCal Health approached [Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics](#) (SBNC) to target members residing in South County for an HPV vaccination improvement pilot. For the pilot, CenCal Health and SBNC identified Medi-Cal plan members ages 11-12 who were due for one or more HPV vaccine, and provided them and their parents with the digital program on a tablet while they were in the clinic.

CenCal Health collaborated with the [American Cancer Society](#) to develop the digital-based learning tool to educate families on the importance of HPV vaccination at a critical moment: when the child is already at the health provider’s office. The program, produced in-house by CenCal Health’s Population Health and Health Education departments, includes a slideshow, a Q&A, and a video. The entire program is also available in Spanish – another factor in the decision to create the program “from scratch.” *Know More: HPV* gives health providers a starting point from which to have a conversation with vaccine-hesitant parents. It also increases clinic workflow efficiency; it educates and primes parents to discuss HPV vaccination during the visit.

“When we identify areas where our members aren’t utilizing available benefits, we look at why that is and how we can successfully address it,” said CenCal Health CEO **Bob Freeman**. “That was the case for this

cancer-prevention vaccine. An advantage of being a local plan is that we're both motivated and able to get our arms around these types of problems and share solutions with the public at-large."

HPV annually infects 14 million people and causes more than 33,000 people in the U.S. to develop cancer each year. The HPV vaccine prevents infections that can lead to six types of cancer, yet HPV vaccination rates remain low. In 2016, the CDC found that only 58% of teens in California complete the HPV series. As comparison, two other vaccines recommended for the same age range - Tdap and meningococcal - have a vaccination rate of around 80%. **Healthy People 2020** and the American Cancer Society each set a goal to achieve 80% HPV vaccination by 2020 and 2026, respectively. In 2016, CenCal Health achieved only a 38.36% HPV vaccination rate in Santa Barbara County. Because HPV vaccination prevents cancer, the local health plan declared it as a 2018-2020 priority, and consequently sought to implement a unique, scalable, and measurable intervention.

In just six months, as of July 2019, the HPV vaccination rate at SBNC nearly doubled. CenCal Health plans to expand the program to additional network providers and create a series for additional health education topics. *Know More: HPV* videos are available at www.cencalhealth.org/vaccines (and in Spanish at www.cencalhealth.org/vacunass).

The *Innovation Award* presented by the Managed Care Quality and Monitoring Division of DHCS is intended to highlight innovative interventions developed by the MCPs. Through this annual award, DHCS hopes to facilitate and encourage the sharing of promising practices. The 2019 award was presented to CenCal Health's Senior Quality Improvement Specialist **Rachel Ponce** at the DHCS Quality Conference in Sacramento on October 30. For more information on CenCal Health, visit cencalhealth.org

About CenCal Health

CenCal Health's mission is to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve by providing access to high quality health services, along with education and outreach, for our membership. As a public entity, CenCal Health is a community-accountable health plan partnering with over 1,500 local physicians, hospitals and other providers in delivering exceptional patient care to more than 175,000 members – about one in four residents of Santa Barbara County and one in five residents of San Luis Obispo County. Established in 1983, it is the oldest managed Medicaid plan of its kind in the nation. CenCal Health employs close to 250 people at offices in both Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo, and contributes approximately \$50 million a month into the local economy, primarily through payments to healthcare providers who serve our membership. cencalhealth.org

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