



For Immediate Release
July 21, 2008

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF MANAGED HEALTH CARE REQUESTS HELP FROM HEALTH PLANS TO AID FIRE VICTIMS

(Sacramento) – The California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) is calling on California health plans to help victims of California wildfires who are experiencing problems obtaining health care services by speeding up approvals for care, replacing lost prescriptions and ID cards, or quickly arranging for health care at other facilities if a hospital or doctor’s office is evacuated.

“By smoothing the way for fire victims to easily obtain their prescriptions and health care, we can alleviate at least a part of the tremendous stress they are undergoing as they face the loss of their homes and businesses,” said Cindy Ehnes, Director of the DMHC. “Many health plans have already taken measures to assist their members impacted by the fires and would like to urge all plans to take similar steps to ensure that their members’ health care needs are met.”

The DMHC has requested that each of the 107 medical, behavioral health, dental, vision, and pharmacy health plans in the state relax certain requirements such as:

- Prescription refill limitations
- Length of time to obtain authorizations for treatment
- Approval of out-of-network services if necessary, if a hospital, health facility or doctor’s office becomes unavailable

In addition, health plans should have toll-free telephone numbers available for affected members to use to obtain information and have questions answered. Members should first

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D E P A R T M E N T O F M A N A G E D H E A L T H C A R E

980 9th Street
Suite 500
Sacramento, CA 95814-2725
916-324-8176 Voice
916-322-9430 Fax

320 West 4th Street
Suite 880
Los Angeles, CA 90013-1105
213-620-2744 Voice
213-576-7183 Fax

www.hmohelp.ca.gov
1-888-HMO-2219



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contact their health plans, but if they have problems obtaining services or assistance from a plan, they can also contact the DMHC's HMO Help Center at 1-888-HMO-2219, or at

www.hmohelp.ca.gov.

The California Department of Managed Health Care is the only stand-alone HMO watchdog agency in the nation, touching the lives of more than 21 million enrollees. The DMHC has assisted more than 800,000 Californians resolve their HMO problems through its 24-hour Help Center, educates consumers on health care rights and responsibilities, and works closely with HMO plans to ensure a solvent and stable managed health care system.

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