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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALOPTIMA HEALTH AWARDS MORE THAN \$16 MILLION FOR COMMUNITY CANCER SCREENING AND SUPPORT

Program for Medi-Cal members aims to decrease late-stage cancer diagnosis rates, increase early detection, and improve quality and member experience during cancer screening and treatment

ORANGE, Calif. (August 5, 2024) — To kick off its \$50.1 million cancer screening effort, CalOptima Health’s Board of Directors has approved the first round of community grants, totaling \$16.4 million for 13 organizations. The Comprehensive Community Cancer Screening and Support Program is designed to help Orange County achieve the lowest incidence rate nationwide for late-stage breast, cervical, colon and certain lung cancers. This is the single largest investment in a disease prevention program in the health plan’s history.

“CalOptima Health is excited about working with these innovative organizations to help us realize our vision of improved member care by detecting cancer in the early stages when it is more treatable,” said Richard Pitts, D.O., Ph.D., Chief Medical Officer. “With rare exception, no one should die from breast, cervical or colon cancer, and many people who smoke should not die from lung cancer.”

The organizations receiving funding include:

- AltaMed Health Services Corp.
- American Cancer Society Inc.
- Celebrating Life Community Health Center
- Families Together of Orange County
- Friends of Family Health Center
- Hurtt Family Health Clinic
- Korean Community Services
- Laguna Beach Community Health Center
- Latino Health Access
- mPulse
- Share Ourselves
- The G.R.E.E.N. Foundation
- UCI Health Family Health Center

“There’s a great need to improve preventive cancer screenings in federally qualified health centers, and we commend CalOptima Health for providing resources for community health centers to improve outreach and reduce disparities,” said Nafiseh Khodaparast, D.O., a physician with UCI Health Family Health Center, one of the institutions receiving a grant. “Increasing our ability to screen more people for cancer will get them into treatment earlier, save more lives and contribute to a healthier Orange County.”

Staff will provide oversight of the grants, which support the organizations’ work to raise awareness about cancer screening, increase access to screenings, improve facilities and boost care coordination.

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“Because studies have shown that Medi-Cal patients often experience lower cancer survival rates, AltaMed Health Services is grateful to CalOptima Health for providing a grant that will expand our ability to provide routine cancer screenings and support our patients as they navigate a complex health care system to find treatment for a cure,” said Bihu Sandhir, M.D., CPE, Chief Quality Officer, AltaMed Health Services, another provider receiving a cancer screening grant. “Being able to detect cancer in earlier stages will help connect our patients to vital support services and life-saving treatments to improve outcomes.”

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About CalOptima Health

A county organized health system, CalOptima Health provides quality health care coverage for low-income children, adults, seniors and people with disabilities in Orange County, California. CalOptima Health’s mission is to serve member health with excellence and dignity, respecting the value and needs of each person. CalOptima Health serves more than 919,000 members with a network of 11,400 primary care doctors and specialists and 40 acute and rehab hospitals.