



**Department of Health Care Services
SFHP Non-Specialty Mental Health Services
Outreach and Education Plan**

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Introduction

San Francisco Health Plan (SFHP)'s mission is to provide superior, affordable health care emphasizing prevention, and promoting healthy living to the largest number of low-income San Francisco residents possible. Many Medi-Cal members experience mental health symptoms that are undertreated each year. Since the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, these findings have been exacerbated with low utilization rates of non-specialty mental health services (NSMHS). In order to increase the utilization rates of these services among Medi-Cal members, particularly among those groups that are found to be underutilizing care, SFHP has created the following member and provider outreach and education plan to increase awareness about the type of mental health services available through SFHP, to help destigmatize seeking care, and ultimately increase utilization of NSMHS.

SFHP delegates the management of behavioral health services to Carelon Behavioral Health, a National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) - Accredited Managed Behavioral Health Organization (MBHO). Members requiring NSMHS can contact Carelon directly to connect with an appropriate provider. SFHP maintains monitoring and oversight of Carelon to ensure the delivery of high-quality, accessible, and effective behavioral health services.

This plan complies with All Plan Letter (APL) 24-012, which is a guideline issued by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to help managed care plans (MCPs) improve access to mental health services. It was created in response to California Senate Bill (SB) 1019 and aims to address gaps in the use of these services. The plan requires managed care organizations to reach out and educate members and their primary care providers each year about the mental health services that are covered under the plan. This initiative supports the state's CalAIM program, which promotes the idea that there should be no wrong door for accessing necessary mental health services, ensuring that individuals understand how to access the mental health care they need.

The following plan outlines the activities undertaken and planned by SFHP's Behavioral Health department (hereafter Behavioral Health department) in collaboration with SFHP's Health Education department to achieve the goals of the outreach and education plan.

SFHP will conduct a comprehensive outreach campaign to increase awareness and utilization of NSMHS among our members. This campaign aims to address gaps in mental health service utilization, particularly considering the impacts of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

Stakeholder and Tribal Partner Engagement

Community Engagement

In 2024, SFHP convened staff, members, and community-based organization to co-create solutions to challenges that members face in accessing quality healthcare.¹ In support of SFHP’s 2022 and 2023 accreditation process, HR&A conducted research and six member focus groups to understand the experience of members of color in finding a health care provider, explore whether providers meet the needs of members from a cultural, ethnic, racial and linguistic view, and explore how needs are met by SFHP and its providers.

Findings from the member focus groups included needs related to members’ experience with their primary care providers, as well as findings relative to their experience with the administration of the insurance plan, and highlighted opportunities to expand access to culturally competent care for underserved populations. These findings were included in SFHP’s Net1A Report to the State of California and were also able to support the health plan in deploying trainings and outreach materials for its staff, provider network, and members.

The framework for engaging key partners in the community formed the Solutions Lab, depicted in Figure 1 below. This Lab can be engaged for community input for future needs assessments and to give important feedback on the outreach and education plan.

Figure 1: Population Needs Assessment Community Engagement Strategy: Solutions Lab



¹ SFHP Solutions Lab Final Report June 2024

Tribal Partner Engagement

In collaboration with Tribal Liaisons, SFHP will tailor marketing, education and outreach materials to Tribal members and communities. SFHP will make all tailored marketing, education and outreach materials available to Tribal members through channels recommended by Tribal Liaisons.

Member Advisory Committee (MAC) Engagement

SFHP met with the Member Advisory Committee (MAC) on December 4, 2024 to discuss the plan and to gather input and feedback. The MAC gave feedback that they were not aware of the array of mental health services available to SFHP members or how to access care. They recommended flyer at single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels, sharing with community-based organizations (CBOs), and restructuring the website to make NSMHS more visible to members.

Quality Improvement and Health Equity Committee (QIHEC) Engagement

San Francisco Health Plan presented the plan to the QIHEC on December 19, 2024. The QIHEC reviewed outcomes including population health metrics for NSMHS, web analytics, numbers of providers and members reached through training and marketing efforts. This Committee will highlight the outreach and marketing channels that appear to have the best reach to members.

San Francisco County Department of Mental Health Engagement

SFHP works closely with the San Francisco County Behavioral Health Services (SF CBHS). To support the implementation of this plan, SFHP will work closely with the SF CBHS coordinator to share marketing, education, and outreach materials to expand the reach into the community.

Carelon Behavioral Health Engagement

SFHP's Behavioral Health Manager met with Carelon Behavioral on December 17, 2024 to discuss the plan and Carelon's support of the increased education and outreach efforts. Carelon has created a referral form to simplify the process for PCPs to refer members to services. Additionally, they offer PCP decision support, enabling PCPs to consult with Carelon's psychiatrist for guidance on psychiatric diagnoses and medications. SFHP will also discuss the opportunity of developing member-facing materials in 2025.

Population Needs Assessment

SFHP's Annual Population Health Assessment includes a profile of SFHP's membership during Q3 of 2023 along with clinical utilization metrics from June 2022 through May 2023. The



population health assessment, also known as the population needs assessment (PNA) describes how the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted access to preventative and chronic care, and that disparities that were exacerbated by the pandemic persist. 10.4% of San Francisco County's residents are living in poverty. The PNA and the data it contains is a critical tool that will be used to support and guide the education plan.

SFHP directly manages care for Medi-Cal members under the Medi-Cal line of business. The PNA includes members delegated to SFHP's MCP county partners, Anthem Blue Cross and Kaiser Permanente.

Key statistics from the PNA:

- SFHP had 43.2% male members and 56.8% female members.
- The most commonly spoken languages are English (71.1 %), Spanish (18.8%), Chinese (8.5%)
- The most prevalent races are Other (36.5 %), Latino(a) (21.7%), Asian/Asian-American (15.2%), Caucasian (12%), Black/African-American (6.9%).
- Information from the PNA has guided the outreach and education plan as follows:

SFHP will ensure outreach materials are posted at SFHP Service Center as well as shared with partner CBOs that serve SFHP members, specifically providing information on telehealth behavioral health services available through SFHP's's delegate, Carelon Behavioral Health.

Utilization Assessment

A utilization assessment stratified by gender, race, age group, and language was completed. Due to data limitations, the stratification of utilization by sexual orientation and gender identity and disability is still under development. SFHP is committed to improving the quality of data in future years. The data source for information on sexual orientation and gender identity and disability will be thoroughly evaluated, and strategies will be implemented to enhance data collection and ensure more comprehensive reporting.

Figure 2: NSMHS Utilization by Gender

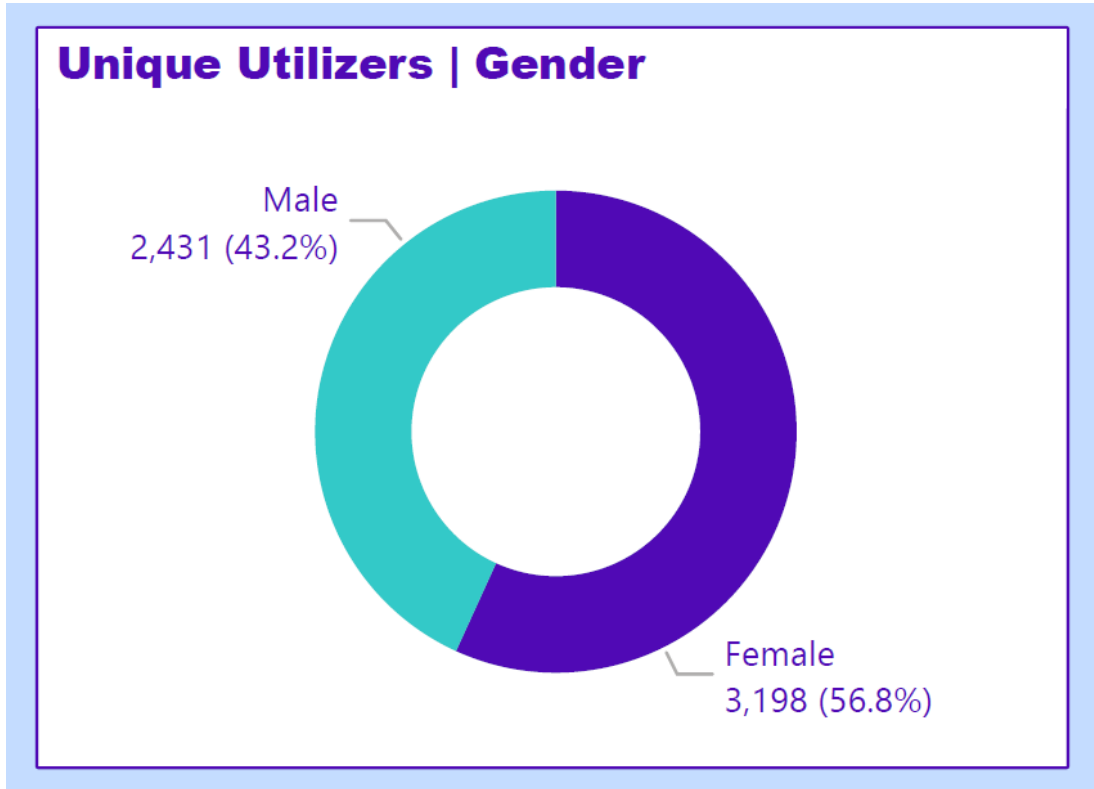


Figure 3: NSMHS Utilization by Language

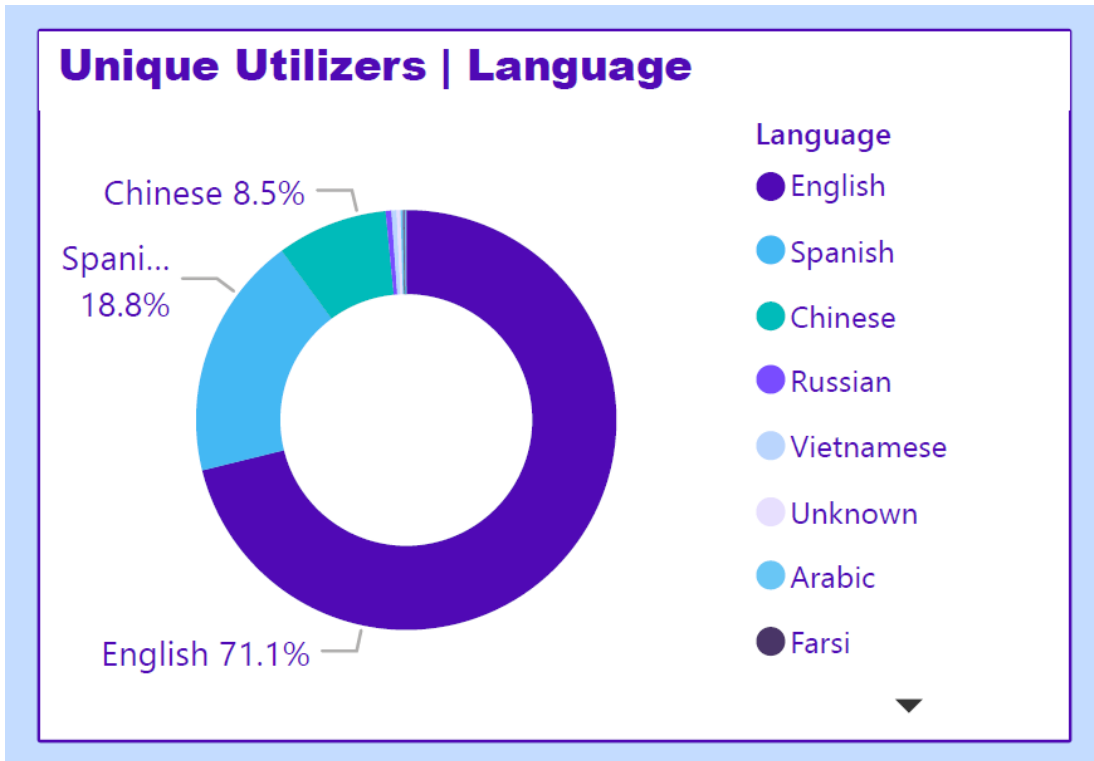
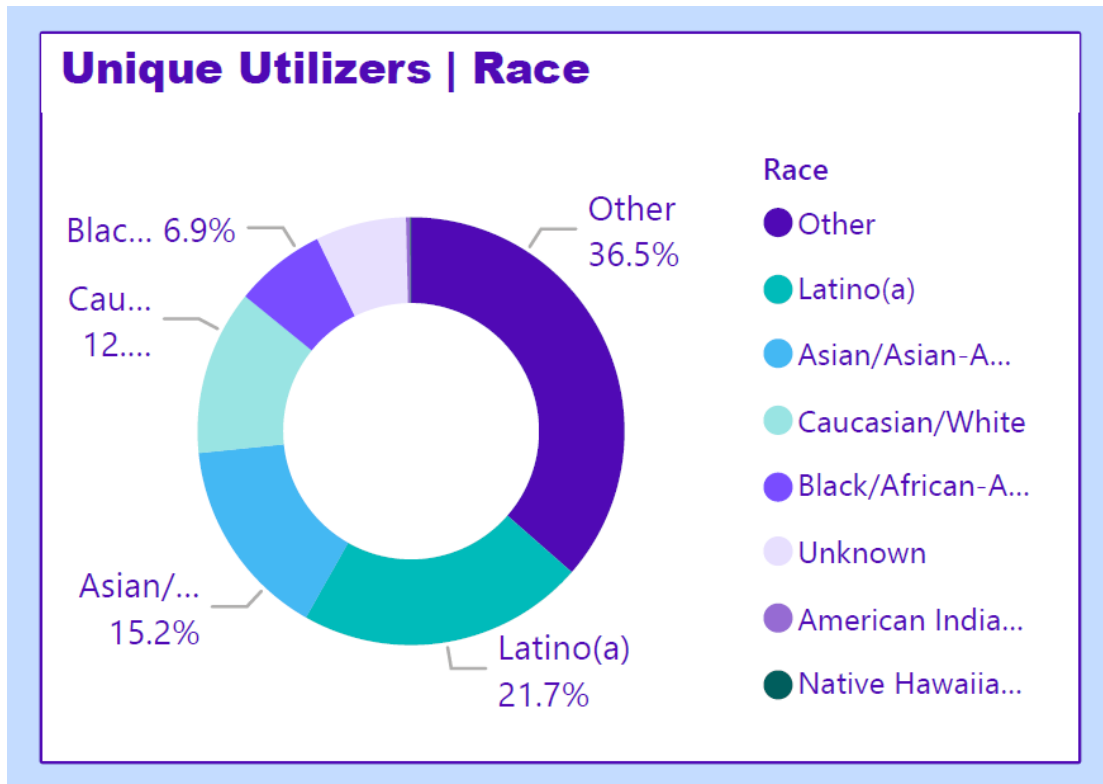


Figure 4: NSMHS Utilization by Race



Member Outreach Plan

Top Priorities from Utilization Assessment and Stakeholder Engagement

Disparities for Unhoused Individuals:

In order to meet the needs of members of all races and ethnicities, the Solutions Lab recommended:

Strategy
Engage shelter and single-room occupancy (SRO) tenant organizers across the city to conduct a tactical SFHP flyer campaign.
Develop a specific webpage targeted towards unhoused residents.



Disparities by Race:

In order to meet the needs of members of all races and ethnicities, the Solutions Lab recommended:

Strategy
Continue to involve members in marketing efforts and the creation of culturally appropriate materials about services and health education.
Design and proactively promote training with providers to expand knowledge on members’ culturally diverse needs, including food habits and cultural practices.
Identify “narrative change” strategies, including working with cultural organizations as opportunities to rebuild trust in the healthcare system.
Work with Carelon to expand group offerings in SF communities of color. Offer group therapy, in community centers & organizations, to members that might be hesitant to engage in one-on-one therapy sessions.
Identify local agencies leading digital equity work and opportunities to pursue state and federal grants that simultaneously increase the adoption of broadband and telehealth services.
Recruit culturally competent providers to expand telehealth services.

Disparities by Age:

In order to meet the needs of members of all ages, the Solutions Lab recommended:

Strategy
Provide updated training offerings to CBOs who are interested in supporting SFHP in effectively building awareness of new services.
Consider partnering with organizations that can provide training on telehealth to target communities and staff a “helpline” for tech assistance to members.
When messaging about telehealth services, focus on the value of telehealth being 24/7 and "after hours" access to doctors, and emphasize that it is not replacing in-person care.

Disparities by Language:

In order to meet the needs of members who speak languages other than English, the Solutions Lab recommended:

Strategy
Post key information and education materials on social media platforms. Members mentioned Facebook, Instagram, and Threads, as the most used social media platforms.
Join existing convening platforms and networks in the community health space in SF. Identify opportunities to contribute to, and eventually take a leadership role in, those networks.

SFHP member outreach will focus on:

1. Providing information about covered NSMHS benefits.



2. Educating members on how to access NSMHS.
3. Reducing stigma associated with seeking mental health services.
4. Ensuring culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach.

Social Media Outreach

This outreach campaign is targeted to:

- Members who have underutilized NSMHS.
- Members from diverse backgrounds, with utilization assessment stratified by race, ethnicity, language, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability.
- Members who may be experiencing mental health symptoms that are undertreated.
- Members who may have been impacted by the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, which has exacerbated low utilization rates of NSMHS.

Communications will be released in Medi-Cal threshold languages – English, Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Russian.

Social media posts will direct members to the website pages noted in the Digital Communications section below. Furthermore, dedicated posts on mental health will be published during holiday and national health observances. Certain social media posts will also include paid advertising on platforms such as Google, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Threads.

Member Communications

Digital Communications

SFHP releases three health education articles monthly on the [SFHP website](#). Articles are based on data from the Population Analysis, emerging health issues, HEDIS (Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set) rates, and organizational priorities. In 2025, behavioral health articles will be published during holiday and national health observances, including but not limited to:

- Women's History Month
- Men Health Month
- Asian American and Pacific Islander Month
- LatinX Heritage Month
- Native American Heritage Month
- Black History month
- Autism Awareness month
- Mental Health Awareness month
- LGBTQ Pride month
- Disability Pride month
- Transgender Day of Visibility and Transgender Day of Remembrance



Many articles already exist on the SFHP website addressing behavioral health services, stigma reduction, and managing mental health conditions. In 2025, these articles will be repurposed and updated:

- Landing Page: <https://www.sfhp.org/getting-help-can-make-a-difference/>
- Internal Page: <https://www.sfhp.org/programs/medi-cal/benefits/behavioral-mental-health-services/>
- Stress Article: <https://www.sfhp.org/news/health-and-wellness/lgbtqia-mental-health-benefits/>
- Alcohol Addiction: <https://www.sfhp.org/news/health-and-wellness/7-ways-to-curb-drinking-during-the-holidays/>
- Seasonal Affective Disorder: <https://www.sfhp.org/news/health-and-wellness/what-is-seasonal-affective-disorder-sad/>
- Suicide Prevention: <https://www.sfhp.org/news/health-and-wellness/national-suicide-prevention-month/>
- Mental Health for Family: <https://www.sfhp.org/news/health-and-wellness/mental-health-care-for-the-whole-family/>
- Support for Behavioral Health: <https://www.sfhp.org/news/health-and-wellness/get-support-for-behavioral-or-mental-health/>
- What is Mental Health?: <https://www.sfhp.org/news/health-and-wellness/what-is-mental-health/>
- Depression: <https://www.sfhp.org/news/health-and-wellness/help-with-depression/>
- Mental Health When Pregnant: <https://www.sfhp.org/news/health-and-wellness/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-when-pregnant-or-a-new-parent/>

Print Communications

Your Health Matters (YHM) is a quarterly member newsletter mailed to all SFHP member addresses. The Health Education and Marketing department consistently publishes articles in the member newsletter to inform members about important behavioral health services and how to manage or prevent mental health issues. These publications are translated into all threshold languages, written at a sixth grade reading level, and offered in alternative formats. In 2025, newsletter articles will include information on destigmatizing mental health care and using culturally sensitive language when talking about mental health among different demographics.

Resources from Health Education

SFHP offers members access to HealthTrio's Healthwise Knowledgebase, a medical encyclopedia providing evidence-based self-management tools regarding a suite of health topics, symptom descriptions, pictures, and treatment options. These topics include, but are not limited to, mental health, identifying depressive symptoms, managing stress, and more. SFHP members can access Healthwise Knowledgebase through the [SFHP Member Portal](#).

The SFHP Health Education Department also provides members with a [Health Education Library](#) of fact sheets to prevent and manage health conditions, including fact sheets on reducing stress. A new fact sheet on managing mental health conditions such as anxiety and



depression will be released in January 2025. Fact sheets include information on behavioral and mental health services provided by SFHP, as well as the City and County of San Francisco. Members can download fact sheets online at any time and can request to have these fact sheets printed and mailed to them. All fact sheets are translated into SFHP's threshold languages.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services

SFHP is committed to providing care to members that are culturally and linguistically appropriate. Free language assistance services are available. Interpreting or translation services, information in a preferred language or another format, as well as auxiliary aids and services, can be requested by contacting SFHP at 1 (800) 288-555; TTY 1(888) 883-7347 or through California Relay Service 711. Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm. This call is free.

When members have a doctor's appointment, they can have a Qualified Health Interpreter with them if needed. Medical providers will provide either a face-to-face or phone interpreter at no cost. Members can ask their provider office or medical group to arrange for Interpreter Services when they make an appointment. Members can call Customer Service at 1(800) 288-5555, Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm. Members are encouraged to utilize professional interpreters, available at no cost, for medical appointments. Outreach materials will be reviewed for readability and will be made available in the relevant languages prior to publishing.

Primary Care Provider Outreach Plan

SFHP has multiple methods for educating providers on behavioral health services to ensure PCPs have adequate access to information on how to refer members to behavioral health care. PCPs and other providers on SFHP's Quality and Physician Advisory Committees consistently provide feedback on how to effectively outreach and engage providers by using succinct communication, emphasizing written communication and easy-to-find resources. These strategies have been developed with input from SFHP's Tribal Liaison, as well.

Email Distribution

SFHP will incorporate information on the importance of behavioral health and screening for depression and substance use in its communication with providers.

In 2025, SFHP will distribute letters to providers outlining guidelines for screening for depression using the PHQ-2 and PHQ-9 tools and for reporting the results to SFHP. Additionally, SFHP will continue promoting the use of the Substance Abuse, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment (SABIRT) tool for identifying alcohol and substance use disorders. These screenings will also serve as an opportunity to refer members to NSMHS when a need is identified.



As SFHP develops materials on destigmatizing mental health care for underutilizing groups, the Behavioral Health department will share this information with providers.

Provider Newsletter

The Behavioral Health department consistently publishes articles in the provider newsletter to inform providers about important behavioral health information. These publications are concise and easily accessible to providers. In 2025 publications will include information on destigmatizing care and using culturally sensitive language when talking about mental health among different demographics. The newsletter will also include the resources discussed below.

Carelon Provider Resources

Carelon has created two resources for PCPs and all providers, one outlining available resources and referral processes and another on screening for behavioral health issues. Both Carelon and SFHP host these resources on their Provider Web pages, emphasizing the importance of behavioral health screening and addressing underutilizing groups.

Provider Portal

SFHP will leverage the provider portal to post resources about behavioral health, including materials developed to highlight disparities in utilization, destigmatizing mental health in target demographics, and the Carelon provider resources.

Provider Onboarding Training

SFHP and all its delegates ensure training for new providers to familiarize them with SFHP's benefits and equip them with the tools and knowledge needed to effectively support members. The Behavioral Health section of this training explains the various behavioral health services that are covered for SFHP members and how to refer members to services.