



CalOptima Health
A Public Agency
505 City Parkway West
Orange, CA 92868
☎ 714-246-8400
📞 TTY: 711
🌐 caloptima.org

CONTACT:

Janis Rizzuto
Director, Communications
jrizzuto@caloptima.org
714-246-8837

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**CALOPTIMA HEALTH'S CARMEN KATSAROV NAMED TO
GOVERNOR'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TASK FORCE**

Katsarov's expertise will be an asset to addressing the statewide behavioral health crisis

ORANGE, Calif. (October 4, 2023) — Carmen Katsarov, LPCC, CCM, CalOptima Health's Executive Director of Behavioral Health Integration, has been named to Gov. Gavin Newsom's Behavioral Health Task Force. Starting this month, she will participate in the task force's quarterly meetings to tackle statewide behavioral health issues and develop solutions to improve mental health resources.

"I am honored to join this task force, on behalf of CalOptima Health, with my colleagues from all parts of the state to advance innovations that transform our behavioral health system and share insights on the best-in-class integrated model we support with our health care partners for Orange County," Katsarov said. "Better behavioral healthcare will improve the lives of millions of Californians."

The Behavioral Health Task Force was formed in January 2020 under the auspices of the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) to address mental health and substance use disorders as well as to advise the governor on the implementation of statewide behavioral health services. Chaired by the CalHHS secretary, the task force includes a broad range of stakeholders representing people living with mental health conditions, family members, advocates, behavioral health providers, health plans, county officials and leaders of state agencies.

Under Katsarov's leadership, CalOptima Health has increased its support for behavioral health providers, services and member care. This includes implementing significant provider rate increases to ensure access to care, expanding school-based services available to children and creating innovative partnerships with key groups developing mental health resources. She oversees CalOptima Health's partnership with Be Well OC, a nationally recognized, first-of-its-kind behavioral health hub in which CalOptima Health has invested \$27.4 million.

"Carmen's experience and leadership will make her a valuable addition to the Behavioral Health Task Force," said Michael Hunn, CEO of CalOptima Health. "I am confident that she will bring insightful perspective and actionable solutions to a very challenging statewide issue."

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Katsarov has more than 20 years of both clinical and leadership roles for commercial, Medicaid and Medicare insurance plans. She holds a bachelor's degree in social work from Northeastern University and a master's degree in psychology from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology.

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About CalOptima Health

A county organized health system, CalOptima Health provides quality funding 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 990,000 members with a network of nearly 9,900 primary care doctors and specialists and 43 acute and rehab hospitals.