



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALOPTIMA HEALTH LAUNCHES STREET MEDICINE PROGRAM IN ANAHEIM WITH HEALTHCARE IN ACTION

Mobile doctor's office will deliver comprehensive medical care and social services to unhoused members through expanded Medi-Cal benefits

ORANGE, Calif. (September 26, 2024) — CalOptima Health, in partnership with the City of Anaheim and Healthcare in Action, launched a street medicine program this month to deliver comprehensive health care to people experiencing homelessness.

Over the past 18 months, CalOptima Health has expanded street medicine, which combines health and social services to address the needs of the unhoused population. The City of Anaheim is the third and largest city in Orange County to offer the program. A mobile medical team in a specially equipped van containing an exam room and supplies delivers direct access to primary care for unhoused members where they are in the community. The program also offers expanded benefits through Medi-Cal's new community-oriented services that provide coordinated, whole-person care. The CalOptima Health Street Medicine Program relies on collaboration with city, county and community organizations with the goal of helping individuals achieve better health outcomes and ultimately gain secure housing.

"I am proud of Orange County's innovative approach to delivering high-quality medical care to our unhoused neighbors," said Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento, who represents Anaheim in the Second District of the Orange County Board of Supervisors and serves as Vice Chair of the CalOptima Health Board of Directors. "This program is a testament to community collaboration, designed by and for the community, and it focuses on building trusted relationships with those experiencing homelessness to enhance their health and eventually to achieve what we all need — stable housing."

"Responding to the challenge of serving our county's most vulnerable residents is an ongoing priority," said Supervisor Doug Chaffee, who represents Anaheim in the Fourth District of the Orange County Board of Supervisors and is a member of the CalOptima Health Board of Directors. "Now that CalOptima Health's Street Medicine Program has expanded to Anaheim, even more people experiencing homelessness will receive vital physical and mental health care and equally important, access to social services to help them get housed."

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“While CalOptima Health’s Street Medicine Program is relatively new, its impact has already been significant in serving hundreds of members experiencing homelessness,” said Michael Hunn, CEO of CalOptima Health. “The Anaheim program’s strength will come from Healthcare in Action’s experienced providers and compassionate peer navigators building trust with those they serve. With that expertise, plus the essential support and collaboration of all stakeholders, including leaders from the city, police and fire departments, the result is life-changing health care for those most in need.”

“In Anaheim, we embrace new ways to get people off the streets and out of the tragedy of homelessness,” said Mayor Ashleigh Aitken. “Street medicine is medical care combined with case management, all to get people off our streets and into lasting housing. This isn’t about treating and sustaining life on the street. Because that is simply unsustainable. This is about primary care medicine as the first step toward breaking the cycle of homelessness.”

“Healthcare in Action is proud to expand our partnership with CalOptima Health to provide essential health care services and support to Anaheim’s unhoused community,” said Benjamin Kaska, Vice President of Clinical Operations at Healthcare in Action. “CalOptima Health’s steadfast commitment to supporting this vulnerable population is vital to combatting the homeless crisis within our communities. Since our inception in 2022, Healthcare in Action has seen the success of approaching the homelessness crisis through the lens of health care. Through our unique ‘street-based’ model, we are able to provide sustainable, primary care addressing the complex medical and social needs of this population, and we look forward to bringing that to individuals in the city of Anaheim.”

As Orange County’s largest city with more than 350,000 residents, Anaheim addresses homelessness with a range of comprehensive and innovative services, including a 325-bed shelter; cold weather spaces; daily social worker outreach; access to mental health, substance abuse disorder and other services; an innovative court program that emphasizes treatment over punishment; housing with supportive services; and now street medicine as another way to break the cycle of homelessness.

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ABOUT

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 nearly 911,000 members with a network of 11,700 primary care doctors and specialists and 39 acute and rehab hospitals. CalOptima Health’s first Street Medicine Program launched in Garden Grove in April 2023, and programs in Costa Mesa and Anaheim began in Summer 2024. Visit www.caloptima.org.

About the City of Anaheim

Anaheim is Orange County’s largest and most visited city. A full-service city supporting more than 340,000 residents, 20,000 businesses and 25 million annual visitors, Anaheim is a modern, diverse city with a proud history dating back to its 1857 founding. Anaheim is known worldwide as the home of the Disneyland Resort, including Walt Disney’s original Disneyland Park, as well as Angel Stadium of Anaheim and Angels Baseball, Honda Center and the Anaheim Ducks, and the Anaheim Convention Center, the largest on the West Coast. Anaheim’s thriving visitor industry and business community help support the city’s neighborhoods and make Anaheim a great place to live, work and play. For more, visit www.Anaheim.net.

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About Healthcare in Action

Healthcare in Action (HIA) is a medical group that provides care via “street medicine” to older adults and individuals experiencing homelessness through its Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports services to people where they are. To date, HIA’s interdisciplinary mobile teams, which are comprised of medical providers, nurses, community health workers and social workers, have served nearly 6,000 patients in six counties across Northern and Southern California. Healthcare in Action was launched in 2022 by the SCAN Group, a mission-driven organization that is tackling some of the biggest issues in health care for older adults. For more information, visit www.HealthcareInAction.org or www.TheSCANGroup.org.

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