



**YOUR  
PARTNER  
IN HEALTH**

**Partnership HealthPlan of California**  
**2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan**



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PARTNERSHIP  
HEALTHPLAN of CALIFORNIA



# Partnership HealthPlan of California

## 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan

### Message from the CEO

Since our last three-year strategic plan, Partnership has experienced a significant transformation. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of CalAIM (California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal), and expanding to 10 new counties have all uniquely shaped Partnership. As we went through each of these transformative events, Partnership staff and leadership worked to meet the needs of our members and community. As we look forward to new challenges, I am more confident than ever in Partnership's ability to be a leader in our service area and on a state level.



The new Medi-Cal environment requires that we take a more meaningful approach to developing our next three-year strategic plan. Medi-Cal managed care plans are being asked to do more. Health care is not isolated; every aspect of one's life plays a role in their overall health. Partnership must expand our engagement beyond the historical, traditional box of health care. The 2024-2027 three-year strategic plan reflects the new realities of delivering quality Medi-Cal managed care services to all eligible individuals.

The 2024-2027 strategic plan is built on three **strategic priorities**:

1. Champion Local Partnerships, Provide Statewide Leadership
2. Be a Catalyst for Health Equity and Quality
3. Extend Our Reach, Transform Our Role

With 24 counties in the Partnership service area, including many of California's most rural counties, we must be a key advocate for rural care. Partnership has been successful in identifying solutions to meet the unique needs of local communities; this perspective must be shared and influence statewide policymaking. Additionally, Partnership serves an extremely diverse membership. The challenges faced by those in Solano County are vastly different from those in Plumas County. Extreme sensitivity must be taken to address local health disparities faced by different populations, such as African American mothers and children, Tribal members, and rural communities.

As a safety-net plan, Partnership will be faced with many challenges over these next three years. Many clinics and hospitals are facing new financial realities post-COVID. Workforce challenges continue to strain access. Partnership will be implementing a Medicare Dual Eligibility Special Needs Plan. All of these factors place Partnership at the center of a transformation of health care with the goal of best serving our most vulnerable populations. I am confident that Partnership will continue to be a leader. Together with our strong community partners, we will continue to achieve our mission, *to help our members, and the communities we serve, be healthy.*

A special thank you to all those who participated in the development of this strategic plan – our leaders and staff, the Strategic Planning Committee, Board of Commissioners, and community partners who passionately serve alongside us in caring for our most vulnerable community members.

Your Partner in Health,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sonja Bjork'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'S' and 'B'.

Sonja Bjork, CEO  
Partnership HealthPlan of California



## About Partnership HealthPlan of California

Partnership HealthPlan of California is a community-based, safety-net health care organization. Partnership contracts with the state to administer Medi-Cal benefits through local providers to ensure our members have access to high-quality health care. Beginning in Solano County in 1994, Partnership now provides services in 24 Northern California counties: Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Yolo, and Yuba.

### Mission

To help our members, and the communities we serve, be healthy

### Vision

To be the most highly regarded managed care plan in California

### Values

Partnership HealthPlan of California believes in...

- Fostering strong partnerships with members, providers and community leaders to collectively improve health outcomes,
- Focusing on continuous quality improvement in every aspect of the organization and in collaboration with our partners,
- Setting a standard of professionalism, integrity and accountability,
- Communicating honestly, directly and respectfully with our members, community partners, and staff,
- Striving to be innovative and seeking creative solutions,
- Being good stewards of our resources while making mission-driven business decisions,
- Promoting diversity by respecting and valuing individual differences and capitalizing on the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our members, community partners and staff, and
- Creating a work environment that provides opportunities for employees to have fun, build relationships, grow professionally, and stay connected across the entire organization





## The Health Care Environment

The external environment is characterized by significant transformation in the Medi-Cal program, a notable expansion in the expectations of Medi-Cal managed care plans, and in the service reach and role of Partnership. The development of the three-year organizational strategic plan considered the below major external factors:

- **Medi-Cal Transformation.** The California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) reform introduces significant program changes and expansions to deliver whole person care that address medical and social drivers of health, improve quality outcomes and reduce health inequities, and promote a more integrated Medi-Cal delivery system. Medi-Cal plans have been tasked with implementing new programs/benefits, developing partnerships with social service agencies and community partners, and developing content expertise in new service areas that address the social drivers of health. In addition, plans are now accountable for enhanced quality, population health, and equity standards that require significant focus and investment.
- **Elevated Managed Care Plan Role and Expectations.** CalAIM expansions and requirements substantially expand the role, responsibilities and service reach of Medi-Cal managed care plans in California. As California moves beyond initial implementation of CalAIM reforms, Partnership will be challenged to transform organizational expertise, internal sophistication and functions, and broaden the scope and role of community leadership. Success will require an openness to transformation, data and community informed decision-making, and effective statewide leadership and advocacy.
- **Expanded Service Area and New Populations.** In January 2024, Partnership welcomed 10 new counties and over 300,000 new members from largely rural Northern California communities. We now serve almost 900,000 members across 24 California counties. In 2026, Partnership will offer a Dual Special Needs Plan (D-SNP) for community members eligible for both Medi-Cal and Medicare. Growth in both geographic area and member populations will challenge Partnership to mature its organizational structure and capabilities to maintain its commitment to local partnership and continue to deliver exceptional quality, access, and member experience.



# Strategic Plan Overview

The enclosed strategic plan articulates an ambitious vision for the role and impact of Partnership over the next three years. In a moment of significant transformation and elevated expectations, Partnership will be challenged to not only meet mandated requirements, but to leverage these requirements to deliver improved health outcomes and experience for our members, deepen our community partnerships, and position the organization to excel in a new era for the Medi-Cal program. The 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan outlines three over-arching **strategic priorities**:

- 1. Champion Local Partnerships, Provide Statewide Leadership**
- 2. Be a Catalyst for Health Equity and Quality**
- 3. Extend Our Reach, Transform Our Role**

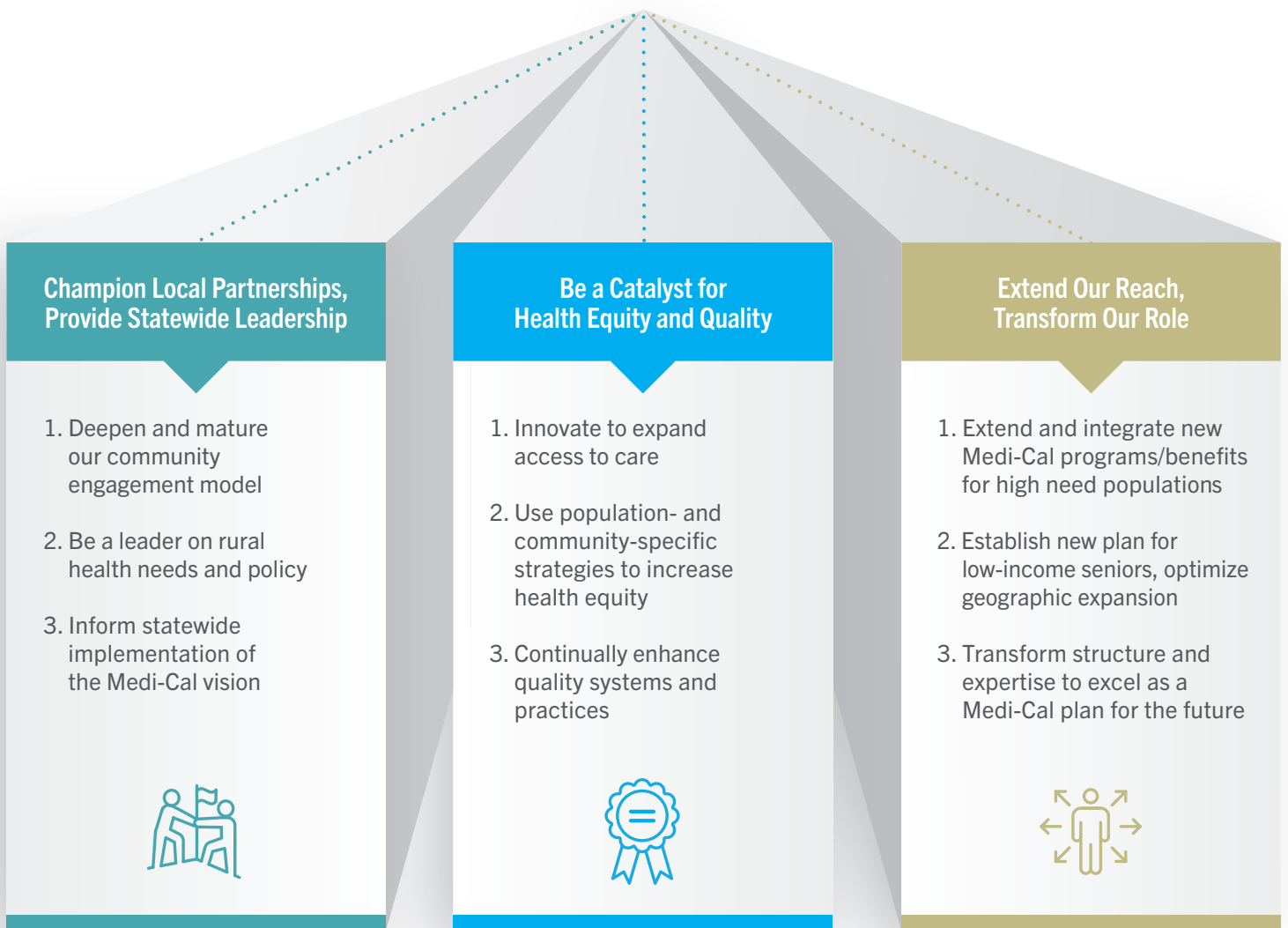
In order to deliver on the expanded vision for Medi-Cal managed care plans and maintain performance and local connection in an environment of growing membership and responsibility, Partnership will evolve, adapt and strengthen its organizational structure and capabilities. Specifically, Partnership will prioritize organizational development and focus on the below areas of organizational development:

- **Business and Data Systems**, including strengthening technology systems infrastructure and both internal and community reporting functions;
- **Workforce Support and Development**, with particular focus on developing internal staff leadership and strengthening pathways for staff advancement and development, and;
- **Strategic Financial Management**, encompassing responsible financial management, adaptive and strategic financial planning, and strategic investments in Partnership infrastructure to ensure the organization is equipped to meet its goals effectively.





## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



## ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT







## Champion Local Partnership, Provide Statewide Leadership

Community proximity, relationships, and responsiveness are hallmarks of Partnership's identity and historical success and will continue to be so in the future. In addition to establishing robust relationships in new Partnership counties, Partnership will take steps to thoughtfully structure and mature local engagement in a way that enables community connection and responsiveness, and also provides a manageable structure for a plan encompassing 24 California counties.

The 2024 geographic expansion will firmly establish Partnership as the pre-eminent rural health plan in California and the entity with the foremost responsibility to care for rural California residents with low incomes.

Partnership will play a leading role in describing the unique needs and challenges of rural communities, representing rural perspectives at the statewide level, and informing rural Medi-Cal policy solutions.

As a plan committed to the success of Medi-Cal transformation, Partnership will more broadly prioritize its role of providing policy guidance, expertise, and advocacy around transformation and implementation directions at the statewide level.







Goals	Strategies
<b>Community Partnership.</b> Deepen and Mature our Community Engagement Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make further investments in community liaisons and key points of contact with local stakeholders</li> <li>• Engage new partners, including providers and agencies providing services and caring for populations represented in expanded CalAIM services/benefits</li> <li>• Clarify and brand forums/avenues for community engagement</li> <li>• Follow guiding principles to enable community variation versus enterprise practices</li> </ul>
<b>Rural Health Leadership.</b> Be a Leader on Rural Health Needs and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate how policy and regulatory changes impact rural communities</li> <li>• Engage closely with California Tribes and Tribal Health Centers to describe and address issues</li> </ul>
<b>Statewide Leadership.</b> Inform Statewide Implementation of the Medi-Cal Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate relationships and be seen as a leading partner in representing Northern California</li> <li>• Serve on statewide advisory groups and committees</li> <li>• Educate legislators and leaders on issues</li> </ul>





## Be a Catalyst for Health Equity and Quality

Moving forward, access to care will play a defining role in driving quality outcomes and member experience, and thus is a first-order priority to improve Medi-Cal quality and reduce member health inequities. Multiple factors, including persistent workforce shortages, expanding Medi-Cal eligibility, increasing member complexity, and geographic expansion into rural communities, indicate that Partnership will need to innovate to expand access to care.

We must focus on leveraging digital health and telehealth services, piloting innovative “bolt on” or vendor service models, expanding community-responsive mobile or community-based services, and strategically contributing to community workforce development. Additionally, Partnership will prioritize foundational network adequacy and access for core populations, such as pediatric, obstetric and delivery services, and pursue both plan-driven strategies and statewide advocacy/education.

In alignment with its mission and in recognition that health equity and quality are intertwined, Partnership will implement strategies that identify, address, and reduce health inequities across multiple dimensions. Our analytics highlight geographic and demographic health inequities, including for rural, Native American, and African American members, in particular.

The proposed strategic approach to addressing health inequities will encompass both enterprise and community-tailored strategies, including utilizing data to allow every county/region to understand its health inequities and populations of focus, providing structured support for communities to develop tailored local strategies, and enterprise-wide initiatives to address known inequities for specific populations, such as African American mothers and children, tribal enrollees, and rural communities.

Lastly, Partnership will take continual steps to enhance quality systems and practices that will enable the highest level of clinical quality for members.







Goals	Strategies
<b>Access.</b> Innovate to Expand Access to Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand telehealth and digital health care delivery</li> <li>• Make strategic investment in community workforce training programs</li> <li>• Use targeted network provider recruitment and retention strategies</li> <li>• Prioritize community-based/mobile services and vendor / “bolt-on” service arrangements</li> <li>• Focus on community network assessments and locally driven network strategies</li> <li>• Drive obstetrics and delivery initiatives for rural communities</li> <li>• Strategize to leverage MCO tax rate increases</li> <li>• Align statewide education and advocacy around member access</li> </ul>
<b>Health Equity.</b> Use Population- and Community-Specific Strategies to Reduce Health Inequities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize county-level health inequity data to inform local priorities and solutions</li> <li>• Facilitate local health inequity strategies</li> <li>• Champion population and region-specific initiatives to decrease inequities (e.g. African American maternal health, Tribal health, geographic inequities)</li> </ul>
<b>Quality Systems and Practices.</b> Continually Enhance Quality Systems and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve 4 Star NCQA certification</li> <li>• Support implementation of DHCS quality framework</li> <li>• Enhance member experience</li> </ul>





## Extend Our Reach, Transform Our Role

Statewide initiatives expanding Medi-Cal programs/benefits, integrating medical and behavioral health, elevating equity and quality goals, and extending managed care options for those dually eligible for Medi-Cal and Medicare, underscore significant transformations in the Medi-Cal program. There is a more expansive role and greater expectations for Medi-Cal managed care plans.

Moving beyond initial implementation, Partnership will strive to maximize utilization of new programs/benefits, integrate and coordinate new programs with existing plan functions, and leverage expanded programs for improved member outcomes.

Beginning in 2026, Partnership will offer a Dual Special Needs Plan (D-SNP) for community members dually eligible for both Medi-Cal and Medicare. The new product will offer an opportunity to deliver an integrated care experience for members and Partnership's reach from birth to aging. It will vastly expand Partnership's scope of responsibility and infrastructure requirements.

To enable long-term success, Partnership will responsibly plan for financial sustainability, build out organizational functions, engage community partners in collaborative planning and preparation, and pursue the highest quality outcomes for our members.

Collectively, the above initiatives will drive important transformation in how Partnership is structured, what organizational expertise it builds and maintains, and how it coordinates and communicates within the organization.







Goals	Strategies
<b>New Programs/Benefits.</b> Extend and Integrate New Medi-Cal Programs/ Benefits for High-Need Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target strategies to expand Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports network, increase provider capacity and grow member utilization</li> <li>• Better integrate behavioral health services into Partnership’s care model</li> <li>• Build robust Community Health Worker and Doula networks</li> </ul>
<b>Dual Special Needs Plan and Geographic Expansion.</b> Establish New Plan for Low-Income Seniors, Optimize Geographic Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop D-SNP organizational infrastructure, functions, and expertise</li> <li>• Engage provider network and partners in D-SNP planning and implementation to achieve participation and quality</li> <li>• Establish robust network for medical, behavioral health, and other covered benefits</li> <li>• Recognize and respond to the unique needs of our communities, incorporating best practices and lessons learned</li> </ul>
<b>Internal Transformation.</b> Build Internal Expertise and Structure to Excel as a Medi-Cal Plan for the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand organizational expertise for new CalAIM initiatives</li> <li>• Cultivate expertise for ongoing management of Enhanced Care Management and Community Support programs/benefits</li> <li>• Revise organizational structures and practices to promote coordination and integration across traditional functions and new CalAIM functions</li> </ul>



# Organizational Development

## Business & Data Systems



As a next step in organizational maturity, Partnership will develop a high-performing IT infrastructure that facilitates operational efficiency (e.g. automation), enables data-driven business and service decisions, provides community partners with easy access to accurate and real-time information, and facilitates rapid expansion of digital engagement by members. This capability is a foundational step to improving organizational performance.

## Workforce Support & Development



Within an organization with a vastly expanded service area and scope of responsibilities, it is essential that Partnership extend subject matter expertise and non-executive leadership responsibility for operations and external engagement. Efforts to expand leadership will include several strategies, including explicit identification of subject matter experts and leadership roles, mentoring and coaching for emerging leaders, structured leadership succession/resiliency planning for individual departments, and revised approaches to job descriptions and functions. In addition, we will continue our commitment to building an equitable and culturally competent workplace for our employees.

Partnership will also take steps to mature human resources functions to support staff, provide improved pathways for internal advancement, promote internal organizational awareness and alignment, and facilitate cross-departmental communication and collaboration.

## Strategic Financial Management



The 10-county rural expansion and upcoming D-SNP transition present major financial implications, including both risks and opportunities. In addition to responsible monitoring and management of plan financial performance against proposed budgets, Partnership will proactively engage in strategic financial forecasting and planning, as well as strategies to maximize D-SNP performance and explore braided CalAIM sustainability models.

Future success and sustainability will be driven by the ability of Partnership to operate efficiently, elevate organizational capability and sophistication, and perform on its expanded responsibilities. To this end, Partnership will explore strategic investments in systems, infrastructure and operations that will ensure a high level of performance with necessary balance against future financial uncertainty.









## Acknowledgments

This document is the culmination of input and feedback gathered from members of Partnership's Leadership Team, Strategic Planning Committee, Consumer Advisory Committees, and Board of Commissioners.

