

## CHCF CHIP Summary

**Name, Degree:** Edwin Poon, PhD

**Professional Title, Organization:** Deputy Director of Managed Care, Behavioral Health Service Department, County of Santa Clara

**CHIP Title:** Improving the Quality of Applied Behavior Analysis Service with a Pay For Value Program

### **Project Description (include objectives, results, solutions):**

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a type of behavioral therapy commonly used to treat children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The treatment is long-term, intensive, and highly individualized. If the service is poorly designed or implemented, it may lead to behavioral regression and the need to restart treatment. The goal of my CHIP is to improve the quality of ABA service with a Pay-For-Value (P4V) program. Two metrics were used as lead indicators: 1) percentage of supervision conducted by board certified clinicians and 2) utilization rate of approved treatment hours. Providers will have the opportunity to earn up to 4% of their annual total claims amount if they meet preset quality benchmarks.

### **Key Findings and Lessons Learned:**

I started planning my CHIP in early 2020 and launched the program in January 2021. While most providers were excited about the opportunity to earn incentive payment, a few were concerned about the launch date as ABA service was severely impacted by COVID-19. One provider actually contacted a board member to complain about the timing of the program. It was completely unexpected, and I had to explain my rationale to the board member staff. In June 2021, I accepted a job with the County of Santa Clara. I was ready to move on but did not want the program to lose its momentum. Prior to leaving CalOptima, I secured funding for calendar year 2022, established monitoring procedure, and received commitment from leadership to continue the program. In 2021, providers earned over \$600,000 incentive which is about 50% of the potential earnings. The program has also been extended for a second year!

### **Next Steps:**

This ABA P4V Program was designed to promote individualized treatment recommendations, improve treatment delivery, and decrease number of member grievances. The metrics chosen are considered lead indicators, and the data from the first year will serve as baseline. To fully evaluate the effectiveness of the program, it will require long term commitment from leadership. CalOptima has taken the first step by renewing the program for another year. I am hopeful this project will pave way to a comprehensive behavioral health P4V program that will lead to high quality and good clinical outcomes.