

Proven Health Care Cost Reduction Through Strength in Numbers

**NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BRINGS
VISION AND EXPERTISE**

The Pacific Health Coalition welcomed Bonnie Payson, its new executive director, at the 2023 annual meeting.

“Bonnie has a remarkable wealth of knowledge and valuable relationships. I am thrilled to see her at the helm of the Pacific Health Coalition,” said Board of Trustees President Joey Merrick.

A recent arrival in the Pacific Northwest from Las Vegas, Bonnie was a senior vice president of Strategy Business Development with Zenith American Solutions. During her 32-year career in the Taft-Hartley market, she knew of the PHC and worked with many of our trustees and member plan professionals.

“I felt genuine excitement when I learned that the Coalition was recruiting a new executive director.

I am honored to be chosen and look forward to fulfilling my responsibilities,” Bonnie said.

The search committee, facilitated by Colleen Savoie, VP and account executive at Parker Smith & Feek, narrowed more than 100 applications down to five semi-finalists and two finalists. “This is a unique position, and it sparked the imagination of many candidates with a range of qualifications, each of whom would bring something different to the table,” Colleen said.

Noting Bonnie’s “vision and expertise,” Joey said he expects “her to tackle new challenges and growth opportunities in a changing health care landscape.”

To that end, Bonnie listed three areas of focus:

1. Meeting with each member plan to explore how well the Coalition is delivering the services and products they need.
2. Engaging with member plans through tailored savings analyses regarding services they are not using.
3. Increasing the number of member plans, both within and outside of the Coalition’s existing market reach through speaking engagements, conferences and strategic partnerships.

“Growth provides collective bargaining power. Our tiered pricing structure with our vendor partners means that when more member plans participate, everyone benefits from lower pricing. And because we work only with partners who deliver quality services, we create a win-win-win on price, quality and value,” Bonnie concluded. □

ANNUAL MEETING RECAP



National CooperativeRx CEO Josh Bindl and Senior Director Wayne Salverda, R.Ph., started their presentation at the Coalition's 2023 Annual Meeting with the good news that Coalition member plans enrolled with NCRx saved more than \$96 million in 2022.

They continued with an analysis of marketplace dynamics that are shaping the future: Increases in drug prices and rebates; obesity/weight loss, cell and gene therapies that are in the pipeline; and reforms at the state and federal level that will affect prescription drug prices. A discussion of specialty spend and the rise of biosimilars followed. This year, NCRx added a specialty prior authorization carveout that brings the prior authorization

process for specialty medications in-house, with the goal of controlling costs. Their presentation ended with information about alternative funding and changing coupon dynamics.

Andy Johnson, fund administrator with New York City's Teamster Center Services Fund, provided sobering insights into trends in behavioral health. He addressed the opioid epidemic, the rise in "pandemic drinking," the increase in sexual violence and risky behavior (including suicidal thoughts and attempts), and the impact of marijuana legalization. Positive trends cited included the expansion of telehealth services and the availability of medically assisted treatments to promote sobriety.

Bill Gillis, PsyD, delved into the mental well-being strategies and capabilities Aetna offers individuals with various needs, from feeling stressed, to struggling to cope, to being in crisis. One example: Algorithms now push targeted content and issue alerts when individuals search for mental health providers on [aetna.com](https://www.aetna.com). In addition, the Mind Companion feature on the website is an entry point to engage members in well-being care. Aetna also has added in-network behavioral health providers. Since 2021, the number of providers is up 47% in Washington and 30% in Alaska.

For copies of the speakers' slide decks or more information, email info@phcoalition.org. ☐

Delta Dental Joins the PHC as Vendor Partner

Nearly 9 in 10 Americans say that having dental coverage gives them peace of mind.*

With the addition of Delta Dental to its service offerings, the PHC makes it easy and affordable for member plans to provide both dental care and peace of mind to their individual members. The offering is crafted to deliver quality care and savings to individuals. It also

delivers convenience and cuts administrative costs for the plans.

Participating plans will save money when their plan participants use in-network providers. Average discounts are estimated between 12-16% of retail charges with no change in plan design for most plans. And rather than using your plan's third-party administrator, Delta Dental will administer the claims.

It typically takes 90 to 120 days for plan implementation. The sooner your plan chooses Delta Dental through the Coalition, the more peace of mind you can deliver to your individual members.

For more information, please email the Coalition at info@phcoalition.org.

* [2022 State of America's Oral Health & Wellness Report](#) ☐

The Coalition Stands Up to Defend ERISA



The PHC has joined an amicus (friend of the court) brief in the case of *PCMA v. Mulready* before the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. The brief supports preserving the protections afforded by ERISA preemption, which prevents state regulations that interfere with the ability of ERISA plans to determine plan design and cost containment.

The PHC is joined in this effort by the ERISA Industry Committee, American Benefits Council, Self-Insurance Institute of America, National Labor Alliance, and other industry groups. They oppose an Oklahoma state law which regulates PBMs and restricts ERISA plans from

using prescription network arrangements, mail order drugs and other mandates, all of which affect how self-insured plans develop their plan designs to meet the needs of their participants.

The outcome of this case will have a direct impact on how other states approach regulation of ERISA self-insured plans through laws that impact their vendors (PBMs, TPAs, network arrangements, etc.). The effect of these decisions are of great importance to the PHC as we continue to work to protect the interests of our member plans.

The case will be argued before the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals later this year. ☐



In-Person Health Fairs Continue

Planning is underway for the 2023 Coalition Health Fairs.

“Last year people told us they were happy to be back in person for what is the Coalition’s most popular service—the Annual Health Fairs,” said Lauren Smyrski, administrative assistant with Parker, Smith & Feek. “We can’t wait to welcome people back again this fall.”

This year, participants can begin preregistering on

coalitionhealthfair.org beginning August 2.

Dates, locations and registration information were communicated directly to member plans’ Voting Reps, their consultants and third-party administrators by email. Those communications started rolling out in May, Smyrski noted.

Send any questions or comments to info@phcoalition.org. ☐

CALENDAR

PHC and National CooperativeRx Annual Education Session:

August 24, 2023

Time and location to be announced, Seattle.

2023 Quarterly Business Meeting:

August 24, following Annual Education Session, Seattle

November 15, 2023, Anchorage

Meetings are held in person and by videoconference through Microsoft Teams. Invitations and meeting materials will be distributed via email before the meeting date, including instructions about how to attend virtually. If you have questions about how to attend by videoconference, contact the PHC at info@phcoalition.org or 702.460.4134.

Coalition Health Fairs

August – November

Health Fair dates and locations will be posted on coalitionhealthfair.org when they become available.

International Foundation of Employee Benefits Plans (IFEBP) – 69th Annual Employee Benefits Conference:

October 1-4, 2023

Boston, MA

The PHC/National CooperativeRx Reception – Tentatively scheduled for the evening of October 3rd

Time and location to be announced. ☐





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READ ABOUT THE PHC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BONNIE PAYSON, P. 1.

Since 1994, the Pacific Health Coalition (aka HCCMCA) has been helping member health plans control health care costs by negotiating better pricing on health benefits and services than these same plans could achieve on their own. Currently, there are more than 50 health plans participating throughout the United States.

The Pacific Health Coalition Programs

The services offered by the Pacific Health Coalition to its member plans are selected, negotiated and designed to achieve the best price and value for labor. For more information on these services, click on the links below, contact info@phcoalition.org or call 702.460.4134.



- [Annual Health Fairs](#)
- [Coalition Health Centers](#) (Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su Valley)
- Dental Care (Delta Dental)
- [Dialysis Cost Containment](#) (Renalogic)
- [Disease Management](#) (Optum)
- Joint Claims Administration (Aetna)
- Oncology Care (Transcarent)
- [PPO Contracts](#)
- [Pharmacy Benefits Management](#) (National Cooperative Rx/CVS Caremark)
- [Birthing Center](#) (Geneva Woods Birth Center)
- [Hospital Services](#) (Alaska Regional Hospital, Mat-Su Regional Hospital, Aetna)
- [Nationwide Provider Network](#) (Aetna)
- [Orthopedic Services](#) (Anchorage Fracture and Orthopedic Clinic/ Alaska Medical Alliance, LLC [AFOC/AMA])
- [Outpatient Surgery](#) (Surgery Center of Anchorage, Alaska Surgery Center, Alpine Surgery Center)
- [Physical Therapy Services](#) (Chugach Physical Therapy, Alaska Hand Rehabilitation, Ascension Physical Therapy)
- [Travel Surgery Program](#) (Transcarent)
- Virtual Physical Therapy (Transcarent)
- [Vision Care](#) (VSP) ☐