

Molina Healthcare Cares for Community at Annual Event Thousands Receive Needed Care

By Richard Chambers
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The lines began forming outside the National Orange Show Events Center in San Bernardino the night before the event was scheduled to begin on June 21st. But those who camped in the heat outside weren't hoping for concert tickets or a spot on American Idol. These folks were waiting for the chance to access something that many Americans can't afford—basic health care services.

These patients—the uninsured and

the underinsured—have long been the focus of Molina Healthcare's mission. Molina Healthcare, in partnership with Molina Medical and the Tzu Chi Medical Foundation, hosted the second annual "Care 4 a Healthy I.E." (Inland Empire) to reach that struggling population.

When the gates of the three-day clinic closed on the final day, thousands of underinsured and uninsured patients had been treated. The event served 2,414 people last year, but this year's total was closer to 3,000. The event was made possible by the participation of hundreds of health care professionals, including dentists, physicians, medical assistants, nursing students and other volunteers. The cost of renting the space and providing security was covered by the state.

Many patients who attended received care for chronic conditions that they were aware of but couldn't afford to treat properly. Others learned for the first time that they suffered from high blood pressure or diabetes. Each patient treated was processed through an exit

table where they received specific instructions for follow-up care and participated in a needs assessment.

Care 4 a Healthy I.E. didn't just provide access to the health care service but also offered information about other available community resources. During the needs assessment, some expressed other basic needs such as food. At this time, staff at the exit table would use an iPad to locate the nearest food bank. These were hardworking people, and after the costs of keeping their families fed and providing them shelter, health care is a luxury that they just can't afford. They depend on events like this to get the care they need.

Medical evaluations, dental work, vision exams and prescription glasses were all provided free of charge, and more than 100 vouchers for free care were offered to those who were unable to receive the desired services due to patient capacity.

The event was a community affair, offering events and activities that

reached far beyond health care. Saturday saw educational activities, games and music for youngsters in attendance. Free haircuts were provided to more than 150 people, courtesy of Supercuts, and Helping Hands Pantry distributed more than 11,000 pieces of fruit. Catholic Charities helped to enroll qualifying families and individuals into programs to receive food stamps and other forms of assistance, while the Mexican Consulate provided more than 200 people with passport and ID services.

The Care 4 a Healthy I.E. event is about more than health care. This

event is really about taking care of the community, showing families and individuals that there is help—that they are not in this alone.

Richard Chambers is the President of Molina Healthcare of California and is responsible for the overall strategic direction and operations for the health plan. With more than 35 years of experience in the health care industry, he spent more than 27 of these years working for the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Prior to joining Molina, Chambers was the Chief Executive Officer for CalOptima, the county-organized health system providing

publicly funded health coverage programs for low-income families, seniors and people with disabilities in Orange County, CA. He currently serves as a Commissioner on the Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC), and a member of the Congressional Budget Office Panel of Health Advisers—two high-level groups that advise Congress on health care policy matters. He also serves on the California Olmstead Advisory Committee. Chambers received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Virginia.

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