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CALIFORNIA TO RELEASE NEW HMO, PPO AND MEDICAL GROUP RATINGS JUST IN TIME FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT

Online Tool Helps Californians Make Informed Health Care Choices

(Sacramento) – With open enrollment season in full swing, millions of Californians are making the critical decision of choosing a new health plan for themselves and for their families. An online tool released today by the State of California’s Office of the Patient Advocate (OPA) can help consumers in making that decision.

OPA’s Report Cards provide unbiased, accurate information, and are available online at www.opa.ca.gov. The Report Cards rate California’s 10 largest HMOs, five largest PPOs and over 200 commercial medical groups on quality and patient experience, and for the second year in a row, medical group cost ratings. Health plans and medical groups can be searched by county and their scores can be compared side by side.

“The Office of the Patient Advocate is pleased to offer these updated, unbiased ratings for health plans and medical groups in California for the 16th year,” said OPA Director Elizabeth Abbott. “I hope these report cards can continue to help Californians make informed health care choices.”

The Report Cards also offer an even more detailed assessment of health plans and medical groups who are especially effective in diagnosing and/or treating different health conditions. Several California health plans exceed national performance averages for diabetes care, mental health, and most pediatric measures. This includes individual plan and group scores for specific measures, such as:

- Checking if weight gain could cause health problems in both children and adults
- Controlling blood pressure and blood sugar for diabetic patients
- Ensuring follow-up visits after a hospital stay for mental illness
- Scheduling treatment for children with throat and upper respiratory infections

Report Card ratings show that many medical groups provide high quality care at a lower average cost than other groups. Comparisons with quality ratings continue to show that medical groups that receive higher total payments do not necessarily provide higher quality care.

The report cards are available online at www.opa.ca.gov.

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The Office of the Patient Advocate's mission is to improve California health care quality and advocate for consumer interests by publicly reporting data for informed decision making.