

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 21, 2012

CONTACT: Marta Bortner
(916) 445-7442

**California Department of Managed Health Care Launches Statewide
Partnership to Help Californians Struggling to Secure Health Care
Coverage**

*Free Assistance Available Online, Over-the-Phone, and at Local Offices
Throughout the State*

(Sacramento) – The California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) announced today a new partnership with the Health Consumer Alliance to help Californians struggling to get health coverage and resolve problems with their health plans. Free assistance will be available online, over-the-phone, and in-person at independent, community-based offices throughout the state.

“This new partnership ensures more Californians will get the critical health care they need,” said DMHC Director Brent Barnhart. “The Health Consumer Alliance will expand our ability to help consumers by providing comprehensive, local, one-on-one assistance to individuals and families struggling to navigate the complex health care system.”

The Health Consumer Alliance is a network of nine consumer assistance programs operated by community-based legal services organizations and two statewide support organizations.

“The Health Consumer Alliance is very proud of our 14 year history of local and statewide health consumer advocacy and systemic improvement, and we are extremely gratified that the department has chosen us as a partner in implementing their new statewide consumer assistance program,” said Gregory Knoll, Executive Director of the Health Consumer Alliance’s San Diego partner, the Legal Aid Society of San Diego.

Department of Managed Health Care

February 21, 2012

Page 2 of 2

To learn more about their health care options, consumer rights, receive assistance filing complaints and appeals, or be referred to a local office in order to enroll in health care coverage, Californians can contact the DMHC Help Center at 1-888-466-2219 or visit www.HealthHelp.ca.gov.

The consumer assistance partnership is supported by a \$1.6 million federal Affordable Care Act grant. In addition to direct assistance, the Health Consumer Alliance will provide information and education about how the health care system is changing under federal health care reform.

The DMHC regulates managed care health plans, protects the rights of 21 million California enrollees, ensures prompt and accurate provider payments, and preserves the financial stability of the managed health care system. Since 2000, the department has helped more than 1 million Californians resolve health plan problems. Information and assistance is available 24/7 at www.DMHC.ca.gov or by calling 1-888-466-2219.

For 14 years, the Health Consumer Alliance (HCA) has provided direct assistance and representation to health care consumers across California. HCA helps consumers establish or maintain health care coverage and ensures that consumers have access to essential health services. The list of HCA partners and more information is available at www.healthconsumer.org.

Follow the DMHC on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/CADMHC>

###

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Suite 880
GOVERNOR

HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES AGENCY

980 9th Street
Suite 500

Sacramento, CA 95814-2724
916-324-8176 Voice
916-322-9430

320 West 4th Street

Los Angeles, CA 90013-2353
213-620-2744 Voice
Fax213-576-7183 Fax