

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SECRETARY AZAR CALLS ON CALIFORNIA QUALITY COLLABORATIVE TO HOST ROUNDTABLE ON COVID AND ITS IMPACT ON PRIMARY CARE**

**The Pacific Business Group on Health’s California Quality Collaborative Hosted Leading Voices in Health Reform to Address Enhanced Access to Health Care Beyond the Pandemic**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (August 26, 2020) – The Pacific Business Group on Health’s (PBGH) California Quality Collaborative (CQC) hosted a wide-ranging discussion on Wednesday with U.S. Health & Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar and among the most influential stakeholders and health care experts in California. At the Secretary’s request, leaders came together to share their varied perspectives on delivering care during the COVID-19 pandemic and how the government can support needed innovations.

“COVID-19 has underscored the systemic flaws of our health care system that hamper efforts by providers to quickly respond to the needs of their patients during a public health crisis,” said Elizabeth Mitchell, CEO of PBGH, who made initial introductions to commence the roundtable. “PBGH remains committed to partnering with legislators and stakeholders to help remove barriers to affordable, high-quality health care.”

The discussion, which was moderated by PBGH’s Dr. Chris Jaeger, Vice President of Care Redesign and Chief Clinical Innovation Officer, touched on chronic disease management, the impact of missed care during the pandemic including pediatric immunizations, and the continued role of telehealth and other solutions for delivering primary care and behavioral health care. Importantly, the discussion also highlighted the need to adopt prospective, population-based payment models that will better support broad adoption of evolving care delivery methods and protect provider organizations from future financial strain in the event of additional disruptions to in-person care.

“The public health emergency has created an unprecedented health care access crisis resulting in deferred care for chronic conditions and prevention, which will have significant near- and long-term impacts on quality outcomes and the overall cost of health care,” Dr. Jaeger said. “As our CQC member panelists expertly called out, we need to support primary care, particularly with the adoption of outside-the-box solutions regarding how and where it

is delivered, to mitigate those impacts. In addition to legislative and regulatory action, such support requires we change how we pay for primary care.”

Dr. Michael Weiss, CQC Steering Committee Co-Chair and Vice President of Population Health with the Children’s Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) highlighted the pandemic’s impact on children.

“The pediatric population has been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen a marked reduction in preventive well-child visits and immunizations leading to the potential for a spike in undiagnosed developmental issues as well as a resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases.”

Dr. Weiss added, “The panel clearly articulated the importance of supporting primary care as a vehicle to assure proactive, preventive care remains a focus for future care model design.”

Established more than 15 years ago, the CQC is a health care improvement arm of PBGH dedicated to advancing the quality and efficiency of the health care delivery system in California. CQC creates scalable, measurable improvement in the care delivery system important to patients, health care purchasers, providers and health plans.

Panelists for the roundtable included:

- Elizabeth Mitchell – President and CEO, Pacific Business Group on Health
- Chris Jaeger, MD, MBA – Vice President of Care Redesign and Chief Innovation Officer, Pacific Business Group on Health
- Shawn Gremminger – Director of Health Policy, Pacific Business Group on Health
- Michael Weiss, DO – CQC Steering Committee Co-Chair and Vice President, Population Health, Children’s Hospital of Orange County (CHOC)
- Lance Lang, MD – CQC Steering Committee Member Emeritus and Retired Chief Medical Officer, Covered California
- Scott Flinn, MD – Regional Medical Director, Blue Shield California
- Peggy Haines, RN -- Vice President Quality Management, Health Net
- Pam Laesch, MD – Senior Vice President of Clinical Services, Hill Physicians
- Karen Mark, MD, PhD – Medical Director, CA Department of Health Care Services

- Terence Offenberger, MD, MBA – Vice President, CA Medical Director SCAN Health Plan
- Ellen Piernot, MD, MBA – Chief Medical Officer, Golden Valley Health Centers
- Richard Seidman, MD, MPH – Chief Medical Officer, L.A. Care Health Plan

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***About Pacific Business Group Health***

Pacific Business Group on Health is an action-oriented 501c(3) non-profit organization focused on improving health outcomes, experience and affordability for consumers and purchasers across the United States. Since 1989, PBGH has distinguished itself as a national innovator driven by some of the largest and most influential public and private purchasers of health care in the country, including Boeing, CalPERS, Comcast, Intel and Walmart. PBGH leverages purchaser action in partnership with providers, payers, and policymakers to identify, test and scale innovative models for improving health outcomes and affordability.