

NEWS RELEASE

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The MolinaCares Accord Hosts Panel on Keeping California Kids Healthy Amid Loosening State Restrictions and Back to School Discussions

LONG BEACH, Calif., May 26, 2021 – [The MolinaCares Accord](#) (“MolinaCares”), in collaboration with [Molina Healthcare of California](#) (“Molina”), recently hosted a [virtual panel on Helping Children Thrive in a Post-Pandemic World](#). State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond offered welcoming remarks before a panel of experts, moderated by CalMatters reporter Ana Ibarra, and discussed the impact of COVID-19 on children’s health. The panelists focused on how California’s youth can be supported as the state prepares to return to a sense of normalcy with its scheduled reopening on June 15.

The negative impacts of missed preventative care throughout the pandemic was compounded by enormous nutritional needs for children missed meals and healthy food options due to school closures. As the conversation pivoted to a return to in-person learning and youth vaccines, the importance of school nurses was emphasized as being key to inoculating students, combined with increased outreach and education for families.

Supt. Thurmond noted, “Schools have had to get involved in health conversations and sometimes without health staff and resources so it’s important for us to be able to partner with MolinaCares and others who can help us have access to the information and the knowledge that we need.”

Thurmond also discussed supporting children’s comprehensive needs, including physical, behavioral, and mental health, as well as new programs to support communities. He highlighted that California still has one million students without high-speed internet, which impacts both learning and health because students without devices and internet do not have access to telehealth.

Abbie Totten, plan president of Molina Healthcare of California, opened the panel following Supt. Thurmond’s remarks. “Our fundamental mission at Molina Healthcare of California is to serve the underserved, especially children,” she said. “We need to do everything we can to empower children to be successful. Molina is dedicated to addressing the full spectrum of children’s health needs, including primary care provider access, well-child visits, and immunizations.”

The panel, featuring Stacey Scarborough, chief human resources and Early Head Start director for Venice Family Clinic; Yolanda Vera, senior health deputy for LA County 2nd District Supervisor Holly Mitchell; and Catherine Flores-Martin, executive director of the California Immunization Coalition, discussed how COVID-19 affected children and how organizations and health systems can support them. They noted a dramatic uptick in domestic violence and shifting services to better serve children and families experiencing trauma.

In closing, Abbie Totten noted that organizations will need to be creative to meet the needs of California’s children in the future. There are long-term ramifications from the pandemic that are still unfolding, and collaborations across industries and sectors will continue to be paramount.

The full panel discussion can be viewed [here](#).

About the MolinaCares Accord:

Established by Molina Healthcare, Inc., [The MolinaCares Accord](#) oversees a community investment platform created to improve the health and well-being of disadvantaged populations by funding meaningful, measurable, and innovative programs and solutions that improve health, life, and living in local communities. The MolinaCares Accord funds such measures through The Molina Healthcare Charitable Foundation Inc., a 501(c)(3) established in 2020 by Molina Healthcare, Inc.

About Molina Healthcare of California:

Molina Healthcare of California has been providing government-funded care for 40 years. The Company serves members through Medi-Cal, Medicare, Medicare-Medicaid (Duals) and Covered California (Marketplace). Molina's service areas include Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, Orange County and Imperial counties. Through its locally operated health plans, Molina Healthcare, Inc., a FORTUNE 500 company, served approximately 4.6 million members as of March 31, 2021. For more information about Molina Healthcare of California, visit [MolinaHealthcare.com](https://www.molinahealthcare.com).

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