



News Release

Media line: (916) 206-7777

@CoveredCANews

media@covered.ca.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 18, 2020

Covered California Names Dr. Alice Hm Chen as Its New Chief Medical Officer

- *Dr. Chen comes to Covered California after helping lead the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic as the deputy secretary for policy and planning and chief of clinical affairs at the California Health and Human Services Agency.*
- *Prior to that, Dr. Chen served as the chief medical officer for the San Francisco Health Network since 2015 and has been a professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine since 2005.*
- *Dr. Chen replaces the retired Dr. Lance Lang, who served with the agency since May of 2015.*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Covered California's Board of Directors has appointed Alice Hm Chen, MD, MPH, as its new chief medical officer. Dr. Chen comes to Covered California after serving as the deputy secretary for policy and planning and chief of clinical affairs at the California Health and Human Services Agency. During her time with the state of California, she played a critical role in the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the areas of strategic reopening, hospital surge planning, data analytics and therapeutics. She also has a long history of leadership in improving care delivery with a focus on addressing the needs of underserved populations.

"Dr. Chen joins us from the front lines of the pandemic, where she has been working tirelessly to protect Californians across the state," said Peter V. Lee, executive director of Covered California. "She brings a commitment and set of skills that are perfectly suited to Covered California's work to promote changes in how health care is delivered in order to address both cost and quality gaps that affect all Californians, but have a higher burden on communities of color."

(more)

During her time at the California Health and Human Services Agency, Dr. Chen led signature health policy initiatives on affordability and access, including the Office of Health Care Affordability, generic drug manufacturing and the Healthy California for All Commission.

As Covered California's chief medical officer, Dr. Chen will be responsible for health care strategy, medical policy, medical management and other clinical operations to continuously improve not only the health services provided through Covered California's contracted health plans but also California's delivery system. The chief medical officer is also responsible for ensuring that the health care strategy, tactics, and resources are in place to successfully advance the mission of Covered California and help the agency improve the evolving health care landscape. As part of hiring Dr. Chen, Covered California announced that she would join the executive leadership team, reporting directly to Peter Lee.



Dr. Alice Chen

“Dr. Chen brings a wealth of experience in making a positive difference in the health of Californians,” said Dr. Mark Ghaly, the California Health and Human Services secretary and chair of the Covered California Board of Directors. “She is not only dedicated to Covered California’s mission of making coverage more affordable and accessible, but also brings unique experience to help us amplify our work on value, quality, outcomes and disparities. She also brings vital skills and the ability to work in close partnership with state agencies, health care providers and consumer advocates, while holding health plans to a high bar.”

Dr. Chen is known for her work with vulnerable populations. Before being appointed to the California Health and Human Services Agency, she was the deputy director and chief medical officer for the San Francisco Department of Public Health’s San Francisco Health Network. The \$2 billion-a-year publicly funded delivery system includes acute care, mental health services, primary care, long-term care, specialty care, substance abuse treatment, trauma care, jail health services and homeless health care services. Among her past board positions include the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN) and Health Access, on which she served as board chair.

A graduate of Yale University, Stanford University Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health, Dr. Chen maintains an active primary care practice at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and holds an appointment as clinical professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. She is also proficient in Mandarin and Spanish.

(more)

Dr. Chen will be replacing Dr. Lance Lang, who retired in June after serving in the position since May of 2015. She will earn \$395,000 annually, effective Dec. 14, 2020.

About Covered California

Covered California is the state's health insurance marketplace, where Californians can find affordable, high-quality insurance from top insurance companies. Covered California is the only place where individuals who qualify can get financial assistance on a sliding scale to reduce premium costs. Consumers can then compare health insurance plans and choose the plan that works best for their health needs and budget. Depending on their income, some consumers may qualify for the low-cost or no-cost Medi-Cal program.

Covered California is an independent part of the state government whose job is to make the health insurance marketplace work for California's consumers. It is overseen by a five-member board appointed by the governor and the Legislature. For more information about Covered California, please visit www.CoveredCA.com.

###