

Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose and Brand Pillars	3
Overview	3
Legal/Regulatory Framework & Governance.....	4
Regulatory Requirements	4
Accountability.....	5
Plan Specific Goals and Proposed Initiatives	6
2023 Proposed Initiatives.....	7
Overall Education:	7
Address language:	7
Geographic Area.....	8
Population Assessment	8
Information as reported in the 2022 QAPI Program Evaluation.....	8
Population by region	9
Delivery of Care and Services	10
Education and Training.....	11
Translation Services	11
Evaluation and Monitoring.....	12
Organizational & Administrative Improvements.....	13
Communication and Language Assistance	14
Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability.....	14
Acknowledgement and Approval Signatures	15
Appendix: 2022 HE&D Plan Outcomes.....	16
2022 Initiatives:	18
Principle CLAS Standards and Themes.....	19

Introduction

Peach State Health Plan™ (Peach State, the Plan) and its parent company Centene Corporation actively address Health Equity and Diversity (inclusive of Cultural Competence) and awareness, through a comprehensive, data-driven, systematic, multidisciplinary Program designed to improve outcomes of Peach State members. This is done by addressing, cultural, ethnic and language barriers, as well as, intervening to decrease disparities in care.

Purpose and Brand Pillars

Peach State Health Plan, in alignment with Centene, is driven by the purpose: *transforming the health of the community, one person at a time*. The purpose is reinforced by the three brand pillars:



Focus on the individual

Empowering people to create healthy habits that last a lifetime



Whole Health

Delivering a full spectrum of care from physical health to emotional wellness



Active Local Involvement

Helping our neighbors create a stronger, healthier community

Overview

Cultural competency within Peach State Health Plan is defined by Centene Corporation as the willingness and ability of the organization to value the importance of culture in the delivery of services to all segments of the population. Health equity is the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health and by merging the cultural competency/Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) program(s) and health equity programs, into the Health Equity & Diversity (HE&D) Program, the Plan will use resources more effectively and potentially have a greater impact on the community.

The HE&D Program is comprehensive and incorporates all Members, Providers and Plan staff. In 2022, major accomplishments related to health disparities and cultural competency included:

- Peach State changed the name of the Cultural Competency Committee to the Health Equity & Diversity (HE&D) Committee.
- In December 2022, Peach State submitted and received (January 2023) Health Equity Accreditation from NCQA.

Peach State Health Plan provides for services and care that are culturally/ethnically and linguistically sensitive. The Plan implements processes that assure the health care services provided have the flexibility to meet the unique needs of each member. The HE&D Program includes:

- A workplan that describes each activity and a timeline for completion
- Written policies and procedures to ensure services are provided in a culturally competent manner to all members, including those with limited English proficiency, hearing impairment, a speech or language disorder, physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, differential abilities, or diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds

- Collection, control and use of member race, ethnicity, and language data
- Organization structure to support sustainability, leadership, and continuous process improvement around HE&D (including CLAS)
- Goals and accountability for organizational alignment
- Ensure HE&D is used in Utilization Management, quality improvement and planning for the course of treatment
- Information about the HE&D training program that is ongoing for all staff and providers and/or subcontractors
- Oversight and monitoring of interpretive services vendor(s)
- Ensuring availability of easily understood written (printed) materials to meet the needs of members whose primary language is not English, using qualified medical interpreters (both sign and spoken languages)
- The provision and oversight of language services, including interpreter and translation services

Legal/Regulatory Framework & Governance

Peach State Health Plan strives to provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care and services to members. In collaboration with providers and the community, the Plan continues to work to be responsive to the diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication requirements of the membership.

Regulatory Requirements

Peach State Health Plan adheres to Federal standards related to cultural competency, Cultural and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS), health equity and non-discrimination. Peach State will follow (not all inclusive).

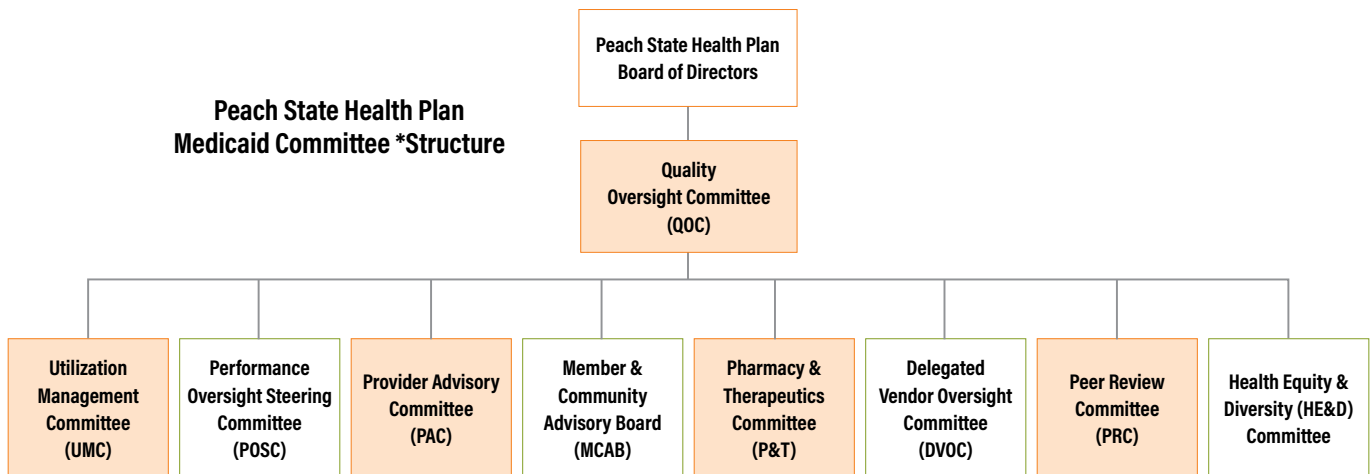
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that entities, such as companies or corporations, receiving federal financial assistance shall not do any of the following based on protected status:
 - » Deny an individual a service, aid or other benefit
 - » Provide a benefit that is different or is provided in a different manner
 - » Subject an individual to segregation or separate treatment
 - » Restrict an individual in the enjoyment of benefits, privileges, etc.
 - » Treat an individual differently when determining eligibility
 - » Select sites or facility locations that exclude protected individuals
- Federal Executive Order 13166: Also, as an organization that receives federal financial funding, Centene Corporation must comply with Executive Order 13166, which sets forth that persons with limited-English language skills have meaningful access to services.
- 1557 Non-Discrimination Law: Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability and builds upon longstanding nondiscrimination laws and provides new civil rights protections.

- CLAS STANDARDS National CLAS 15 Standards, developed by the U.S. Department Health & Human Services, Office of Minority Health, as our guidelines for furnishing equitable and culturally competent services to all members, by improving quality and eliminating health care disparities through the CLAS standards organized below into one Principal Standard and three themes:
 - » Governance, Leadership, and Workforce
 - » Communication and Language Assistance
 - » Engagement, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Accountability
- The Affordable Care Act
- National Committee for – Quality Assurance (NCQA) Health Equity Accreditation (accredited January 2023)
- Georgia Department of Community Health (Contract Section 4.3.9).

Accountability

Quality is integrated throughout Peach State Health Plan and represents a strong commitment to cultural competency and appropriate linguistic assistance services for members. Peach State Health Plan provides direction, overall support, and oversight across departments in all aspects of language assistance services. Informed by data and feedback from field staff, every department and advisory group contributes to organizational cultural competency and works as a team to promote health equity. The Board of Directors is the governing body designated for oversight of the Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement (QAPI) Program and has delegated the authority and responsibility for the development and implementation of the QAPI Program to the Quality Oversight Committee.

The Quality Oversight Committee is chaired by the Chief Medical Director. Reports on HE&D Program activities, findings, recommendations, actions, and results are presented to the Board of Directors no less than annually. The Quality Oversight Committee serves as the umbrella committee through which all subcommittee activities, including those of the Health Equity Work Group are reported and approved. The Peach State Health Plan Quality Oversight Committee structure is designed to promote information, reports, and improvement activity results, driven by the HE&D Workplan, throughout the organization and to providers, members, and stakeholders.



*Committees in orange have external practitioner participation.

As of December 2022

Peach State Health Plan has the staffing resources, technology infrastructure and data analytics capabilities to support goals for HE&D Program. For additional staffing and analytic resources, refer to the 2023 QAPI Program Description.

Plan Specific Goals and Proposed Initiatives

The Plan has five focus areas that align with the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care. Peach State’s five focus areas for the HE&D Program and 2023 aligned goals are in the next table. The table is followed by proposed interventions.

CLAS THEME	Area of Focus	2023 Goals
Governance, Leadership and Workforce	Organizational and Administrative Improvements	In 2023, Peach State Health Plan will complete and submit a HE &D Plan (including Cultural Competency), work plan and Evaluation to the QOC inclusive of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ goals and outcomes from the previous year and cultural and linguistic grievances ■ provider and practice data regarding languages spoken ■ analysis of language interpreter requests and top five languages requested ■ annual review of Interpreter service vendor reports to include assessments
	Cultural Competency	In 2023 Peach State Health Plan will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Advance and sustain organizational governance and leadership that promotes CLAS and health equity through policy, practices, and allocated resources. ■ Recruit, promote, and support a culturally and linguistically diverse governance, leadership, and workforce that are responsive to the population in the service area. ■ Educate and train governance, leadership, and workforce in HE&D including culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis. At least 90% will complete assigned annual training ■ Ensure the availability of HE&D Training for providers
Communication and Language Assistance	Communication and Language Assistance	In 2023 Peach State Health Plan will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services. ■ Inform all individuals of the availability of language assistance services clearly and in their preferred language, verbally and in writing. ■ Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance, recognizing that the use of untrained individuals and/or minors as interpreters should be avoided. ■ Provide easy-to-understand print and multimedia materials and signage in the languages commonly used by the populations in the service area.

Engagement, Continuous Improvement and Accountability	Health Equity	In 2023 Peach State Health Plan will conduct internal workgroup meetings to include QI, UM and CM. Topics to include SDOH analysis, resource and referral processes, Health Equity model
	Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability	<p>In 2023 Peach State Health Plan will perform the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish culturally and linguistically appropriate goals, policies, and management accountability, and infuse them throughout the organization's planning and operations. ■ Conduct ongoing assessments of the organization's CLAS-and HE related activities and integrate related measures into measurement and continuous quality improvement activities. ■ Collect and maintain accurate and reliable demographic data to monitor and evaluate the impact of CLAS and health equity on outcomes and to inform service delivery. ■ Conduct regular assessments of community health assets and needs and use the results to plan and implement services that respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of populations in the service area. ■ Identify 2-5 health opportunity priority communities during 2023 and partner with the community to design, implement, and evaluate policies, practices, and services to ensure programs are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community. ■ Maintain the grievance resolution processes that is culturally and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent, and resolve conflicts or complaints. ■ Communicate the organization's progress in implementing and sustaining CLAS and HE to all stakeholders, constituents, and the public.

2023 Proposed Initiatives

In addition to continuing initiatives in place in 2022, the Plan may implement the below activities to ensure that members receive care that is delivered in a culturally sensitive manner.

- Applicable Grievance and Appeals staff to be assigned and complete training focused on recognizing language service-related complaints
- The HE&D Workgroup will work to create conflict and grievance resolution processes that are culturally and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent, and resolve conflicts or complaints
- The Plan will present an executive summary to QOC and make the document available to members and providers upon request by Q4, 2023

Overall Education:

- Amplify provider website to include additional training and education resources.
- Utilize CNET and the Peach State Employee Newsletter to educate employees on different aspects of health equity and cultural competency
- Remind providers of health equity and cultural competency training available by visiting the provider website
- Health Equity Lunch and Learns for all Peach State Staff
- Promotion of provider cultural competency training on Centene Institute
- Health Equity and Health Literacy related materials and resources within member and provider newsletters

Address language:

- Identify potential training for at least one outreach staff in American Sign Language.
- Continue to provide training to all HALO and EPSDT staff with basic healthcare Spanish courses (conversational Spanish).

- Seek bilingual certification for staff speaking more than one language.
- Evaluate needs of provider network to enhance interpretation services

Geographic Area

- Continue to hold a ‘talk’ session with diabetics in the southwest (who are more non-compliant than other regions) for root cause analysis.
- Work with Centene to identify health equity zones in both urban and rural areas to provide focused interventions based on disparity data.
- Generate analysis based on member location and provide services in accordance with member access and needs.

Population Assessment

Information as reported in the 2022 QAPI Program Evaluation

By December 2022, Peach State provided healthcare coverage to 1,045,430 active members. The overwhelming majority of members were enrolled in Medicaid (Including P4HB) versus PeachCare for Kids.

Year	Medicaid (including P4HB)	% Of Total Membership	PCK	% Of Total Membership	Total Membership
2021	869,960	90.61%	90,178	9.39%	960,138
2022	945,570	90.45%	99,860	9.55%	1,045,430

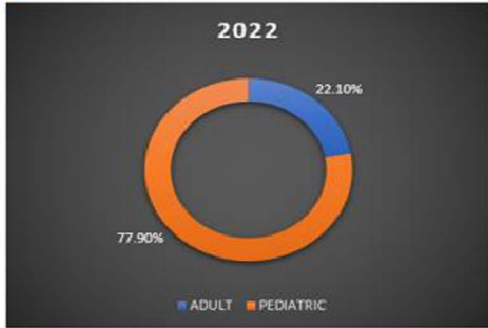
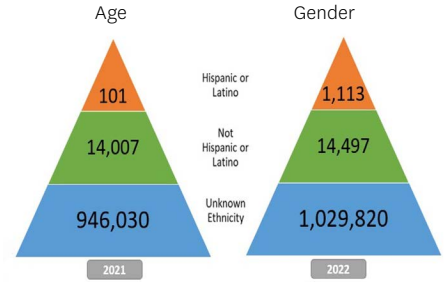
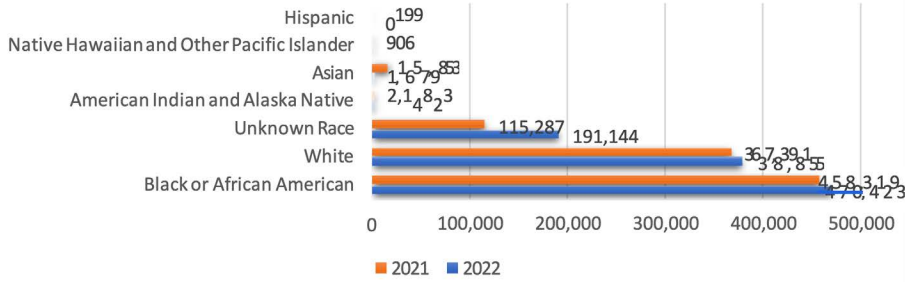
In 2022, Atlanta continued to be the largest region with 51.34% of Peach State Membership. Black or African Americans and non-Hispanic ethnicity are the highest reported race and ethnicity, respectively. Both data points are self-reported by members.



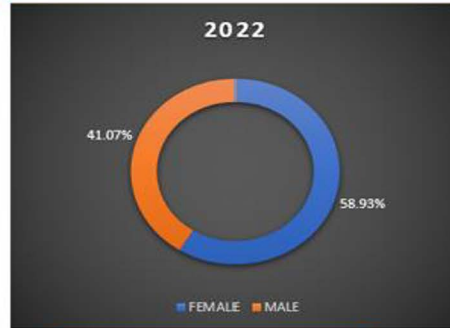
Region	2022
Atlanta	536,688
Central	139,892
Southwest	120,229
North	107,275
Southeast	87,135
East	49,827
(blank)	4,384
Grand Total	1,045,430

Population by region

Population by Race



ADULT	PEDIATRIC	Member Count
ADULT		231,000
	PEDIATRIC	814,430
Grand Total		1,045,430



FEMALE	MALE	Member Count
FEMALE		616,031
	MALE	429,399
Grand Total		1,045,430

Peach State membership in 2022 showed a higher proportion of members under age 21 years old and predominantly female.

The 2022 Language assessment revealed that members primarily speak English and Spanish, as do providers. Spanish is the most requested language for language (interpreter) services).

Data provided by NCQA NET 1A Analysis

2022 Language Line Requests	Total	% Of Total
Spanish	6,342	90.0%
Vietnamese	89	1.3%
Burmese	82	1.2%
Arabic	64	0.9%
Mandarin	62	0.9%
Amharic	45	0.6%
Farsi (Persian)	40	0.6%
Korean	37	0.5%
Russian	34	0.5%
Dari (Afghanistan)	29	0.4%
Pashto (Afghanistan)	27	0.4%
Swahili	24	0.3%
Nepali	20	0.3%
French	18	0.3%
Karen	14	0.2%

Language	Member		All Practitioners	
	%	Total	Total	%
English	97.4%			100
Spanish	2.3%	1,138		5.9%
Arabic	0.1%	80		0.4%
Vietnamese	0.04%	34		0.2%
French	0.03%	149		0.8%
Russian	0.03%	49		0.3%
Burmese	0.03%	1		0.0%
Portuguese	0.02%	31		0.2%
Persian	0.02%	6		0.0%
Amharic	0.01%	8		0.0%
Creoles and Pidgins, French-based (Other)	0.01%	15		0.1%
Nepali	0.01%	6		0.0%
Chinese	0.01%	42		0.2%
Karen languages	0.01%	0		0.0%
Korean	0.01%	47		0.2%

Most of Peach State Health Plan members reside in urban areas

Rural vs. Urban	Population by Rural/Urban 2021	% Of Total	Population by Rural/Urban 2022	% Of Total	% Change	Difference
Rural	187,125	18.29%	202,929	19.41%	8.45%	1.12%
Urban	770,141	81.52%	838,117	80.17%	8.83%	-1.35%
Unknown	2,872	0.19%	4,384	0.42%	52.65%	0.23%
Grand Total	960,138	100.00%	1,045,430	100.00%	8.88%	0.00%

Overall, there were no significant changes in membership make-up when comparing membership at the end of CY 2021 versus CY 2022.

Delivery of Care and Services

Cultural norms, values, beliefs, customs, histories, and behaviors influence how individuals approach care delivery, the course of treatment and the attainment of positive outcomes. Accordingly, the Plan’s approach is to emphasize culturally sensitive, ethnicity competent and linguistically appropriate at every point of care/service. The purpose of Peach State’s Health Equity and Diversity Program is to make certain that the Plan meets the individual, culturally and linguistically diverse needs of all members; to ascertain that the providers of the Plan value diversity within the organization; meet the needs of the members that need culturally sensitive information; and enable members to obtain adequate communication support.

Peach State’s policies and procedures outline how the Plan’s HE&D Program provide information to members and have the linguistic skills required for meeting the needs of all. The Program utilizes the following relevant materials in conveying information regarding cultural competency, linguistic, and disability-related access to members and providers. Communication mechanisms include:

- Member Handbooks & Provider Manuals
- Member & Provider Newsletters and websites
- Member/Community and Provider Advisory Councils
- In-person and virtual member, community and provider meetings/events
- Ad-Hoc/Special Mailings

The Plan solicits member and community feedback to improve and aid in ensuring that members’ needs are being met appropriately at MCAB meetings and provider feedback during PAC meetings.

Education and Training

Peach State Health Plan's overall approach to HE&D (including CLAS) across the organization aligns with the Centene purpose of 'Transforming the health of the community, one person at a time.' A nondiscrimination policy such as this assures that all members regardless of race, ethnicity, cultural background, English proficiency, ability or disability, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity receive equal access to covered benefits. The Policy includes the cultural and linguistic services that are provided to members, contracted providers and major subcontractors. Peach State Health Plan maintains the HE&D Program that assures compliance with the Principal Standard of CLAS.

All Plan staff and network providers are required upon hire (initial contracting), and annually thereafter, to complete HE&D Training. Internally, Peach State provides staff training through Centene University, the virtual learning portal. HE&D training is required for all Plan and sub-contractor associates upon hire and annually, to ensure that services are provided effectively to our members of different cultures.

Peach State provides training materials for all associates and network providers at no cost to the provider. The training materials include ideas on how to assist providers with servicing the member's health care needs appropriately. Providers can access educational materials through the following websites:

- Physician Toolkit and Curriculum: <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/assets/pdf/checked/toolkit.pdf>
- Physician's Practical Guide: <https://cccm.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov>
- Provider's Guide to Quality and Culture <https://innovations.ahrq.gov/qualitytools/providers-guide-quality-culture>
- HHS <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/about>
- Peach State Health Plan website 'Provider Resources' tab <https://www.pshpgeorgia.com/providers/resources/provider-training/cultural-competency-provider-training.html>

Translation Services

Peach State Health Plan provides a continuum of language services to non-English speaking members and persons with disabilities. These services include interpreter services (telephonic, face-to-face, and video) for oral communication and timely translation services for written communication. Peach State Health Plan contracts with nationally known interpreter services such as Voiance and/or Language Service Associates as well as local resources for telephonic and face-to-face translation services. Other services offered to assist with non-English languages include:

- Telephone/face-to-face interpreters are available at no cost, at all points of contact where a covered benefit or service is accessed.
- Hearing and speech access for members who are impaired is available by calling 711 or calling Member Services.
- Language Line services that are available 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week in 140 languages to assist providers and members in communicating with each other during urgent/emergent situations, non-urgent/emergent appointments as requested, or when there are no other translators available for the language requested. Accessed through Member Services during regular business hours or through Envolve People Care, the medical triage advice line, after normal business hours.
- Member mailings are sent in English and Spanish. The material can be translated to different languages upon

request on an as-needed basis

Peach State Health Plan evaluates and arranges for qualified interpreter services at the time of the appointment that is appropriate to the member's situation face-to-face or telephonic assistance. For phone interpreters, the caller does not have to hang up or call a separate number. Special training is provided for call center staff to assist in identifying the language needs of monolingual non-English speakers.

Peach State Health Plan works to ensure that members are educated about how to access language services at all points of contact (member services, claims, utilization management, disease management, case management and/or grievances and complaints). To support this, information on how to access language assistance services is available to members orally and in writing in easy-to-understand, ≤5th grade reading level.

Based on CY 2022 language assessment analysis, Spanish and Burmese languages and cultures are the most prevalent in the Peach State service area, currently. We ensure our member Services representatives can communicate with the members in English, Spanish, and Creole. The PSHP Provider Credentialing Applications also captures the capacity to recruit providers of diverse racial and ethnic background by documenting the provider's self-identified ethnicity, culture and race (if provided). The Application also includes a question about other languages spoken by providers to indicate their linguistic diversity – this information is used in the provider directory for informational purposes.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Peach State Health Plan implements ongoing initiatives to identify and address disparities in health care. The Plan identifies network gaps related to cultural/ethnic needs and preferences and provides information to Provider Relations if availability issues are identified. Additionally, QI leads the annual Evaluation efforts of the effectiveness of its Cultural Competency Program.

Peach State Health Plan monitors the delivery of care and services in relation to the provision of HE&D services through a comprehensive set of quality methods that include the CAHPS Member Satisfaction Survey, Provider Satisfaction Survey and member communications such as Complaints (Grievances).

Survey results are accessed to identify areas for improvement and revision. The evaluation will serve as the foundation for planning the upcoming year's plan and activities relating to elevating cultural awareness. The Plan further tracks and reviews requests for translation services, requests for member information in alternate languages and requests for providers who speak specific languages. The Plan monitors the activities determined to implement to improve outcomes. The three National CLAS standard themes (inclusive of the five focus areas) are monitored, ongoing and reported to the HE&D Committee and the QOC.

Organizational & Administrative Improvements

HE&D Program Documents - Annually, Peach State Health Plan completes a trilogy of documents as part of the HE&D Program.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HE&D Program Evaluation: This document contains outcomes of goals/objectives from the previous year and provides direction for planning the program for the subsequent year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HE&D Program Plan: This current year document provides basic program structure, scope, structure, goals/objectives and potential initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HE&D Work Plan: As a companion to the Program Plan, the work plan outlines owners, due dates and tracks progress of initiatives
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The documents are provided/presented (via entire document or executive summary with the option of requesting the entire document) to the Quality Oversight Committee (QOC) at least annually with feedback used to modify current activities and/or in planning future endeavors

- **Advance and sustain organizational governance and leadership** - Peach State Health Plan has a robust governance and leadership structure that promotes CLAS and health equity. Quality is integrated throughout Peach State Health Plan and represents a strong commitment to cultural competency and appropriate linguistic assistance services for members. Peach State provides direction, overall support, and oversight across departments in all aspects of language assistance services. Informed by data and feedback from field staff, every department and advisory group contributes to providing input and expertise into ensuring Peach State maintains an organizational governance that promotes inclusivity and equity.
- **Recruit, promote & support a culturally and linguistically diverse governance, leaders, and workforce** - Peach State Health Plan strives to be responsive to the membership and to have a workforce that represents the diversity of our members and communities. To achieve this Peach State Health Plan recruits, promotes, and supports a diverse staff in all positions, including leadership, which is representative of local demographics. Approaches include utilizing online job postings and job fairs targeted at hiring a diverse work force representative of local and/or regional demographics. Additional avenues include working with local community leaders to advise them of job opportunities and how to apply.
- **Educate and train governance, leadership, and workforce** - Peach State Health Plan ensures that our mission to promote cultural competency and reduce health disparities is central in every department across our health plan. Learning opportunities are offered in multiple modalities to engage staff and leadership throughout the organization. These include health literacy challenges, panel discussions with leading professionals in health disparities, cultural sensitivity training, and learning circles which engage staff with diverse perspectives to collaboratively tackle a core problem and find ways to implement change throughout the organization. Peach State Health Plan supports contracted providers in their efforts to provide culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate care and covered services to members. Contracted providers are advised on how to access language services in the provider operations manual, through routine provider updates, and via online newsletter articles. The services offered to contracted providers are intended to:
 - » Promote cultural responsiveness and awareness.
 - » Support access to and coordination of language services such as interpreters and translation services.
 - » Offer tips for effective communication using interpreters.

Providers may request cultural competency training tailored to the needs of their practice. Customized training may include specific strategies to address the cultural barriers to health care prevalent in the service area. Peach State Health Plan may provide the training in person, as a webinar, or in computer- based training modules

Communication and Language Assistance

Peach State Health Plan provides a continuum of language services to non-English speaking members and persons with disabilities. These services include interpreter services (telephonic, face-to-face, and video) for oral communication and timely translation services for written communication. Peach State Health Plan contracts with nationally known interpreter services such as Voiance and/or Language Service Associates as well as local resources for telephonic and face-to-face translation services including American Sign Language.

The Plan evaluates and arranges for qualified interpreter services at the time of the appointment that is appropriate to the member's situation face-to-face or telephonic assistance. For phone interpreters, the caller does not have to hang up or call a separate number. Peach State Health Plan works to ensure that members are educated about how to access language services at all points of contact (member services, claims, utilization management, disease management, case management and/or grievances and complaints). To support this, information on how to access language assistance services is available to members orally and in writing. The Plan trains contracted providers and specialists on how members can get access to no-cost interpreter services and oral translation services. Providers are also offered language tools to assist in the provision of language services.

A telephone interpreter vendor that can provide language assistance in more than 150 languages is available to assist Member Services or Call Center operations to assure that limited English proficiency (LEP) members have access to plan benefit information.

- The Plan ensures special training is provided for call center staff to assist in identifying the language needs of monolingual non-English speakers.

Peach State established standards for interpreters, translations and alternate formats that are based on the definitions provided in 45 CFR 92 (Section 1557 of the ACA). Quality standards for contracted interpreter services include an assessment process to demonstrate that the interpreter is versed in health care and medical terminology and is familiar with interpreter ethics. The Plan provides easy-to-read, culturally sensitive materials in English and threshold languages. Materials are written in plain easy to understand language at or below a fifth grade reading level, and take into consideration,

- language proficiencies
- type of disabilities
- literacy levels
- cultural variation
- age-specific targeted learning skills
- ability to access and use technology.

Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability

Peach State Health Plan identifies health equity and diversity, as well as linguistic goals, and records activities and timelines in an annual workplan. Peach State Health Plan's overall cultural competency and language strategies work to ensure that members are an active participant in their own health and health care through clear and effective communication. The Plan sets and evaluates annual Program goals each year and assures that cultural competency approaches and language services are implemented throughout the organization and with contracted providers. The HE&D Program Evaluation includes an annual summary of all culturally competent and linguistic assistance related activities, the overall effectiveness of the program and an analysis of the achievement of stated goals and objectives.

Peach State collects and maintains member demographic data including Race, Ethnicity, Language and Alternate Formats received from various sources such as state or federal electronic file feeds (primary source) and enrollment forms to capture member demographic data including race, ethnicity, preferred language, alternate format preferences and disability status.

Peach State holds regular Member/Community Advisory Board (MCAB) meetings to assist with identifying cultural competency and/or language service-related issues, obtain feedback on service needs of the community, and promote health equity services to the community. The Plan's established complaint and grievance process is culturally and linguistically appropriate by accepting grievances in writing or telephonically in any languages spoken by the member. The Plan implements ongoing initiatives to identify and address disparities in health care and identifies network gaps related to HE&D needs. Peach State will continue to promote culturally competent communication and service delivery throughout our networks.

Acknowledgement and Approval Signatures

Members and providers may obtain paper copies of the HE&D Program documents by calling Member Services and practitioners may obtain paper copies by contacting their Provider Services Representatives. Further, input from members, providers, community partners, Plan staff and other stakeholders are obtained and used when developing the Plan.

This Health Equity & Diversity Plan serves as the blueprint to assist Peach State Health Plan in its ongoing efforts to provide culturally competent, ethnically fitting and linguistically appropriate awareness, services and tools. Incorporating HE&D with accountability throughout the organization's planning and operations, supports business operations in providing equitable, understandable, and respectful quality and safe member care. This HE&D Plan further demonstrates Peach States' commitment to meeting needs of the Plan's members, providers, associates and communities serviced by the Plan.

The annual 2023 Health Equity & Diversity Program Plan has been reviewed and approved by the Quality Oversight Committee and will be presented to the Peach State Health Plan Board of Directors.



6/28/2023

James Richardson, MD

Date Signed

Chief Medical Director, Peach State Health Plan

Appendix: 2022 HE&D Plan Outcomes

The 2022 Cultural Competency Program goals outcomes were used in goal setting and planning the 2023 HE&D Program Plan.

Goal	Objective	Summary (Met/Not Met)
<p>AWARENESS - NOT MET Increasing awareness of the significance and impact of health disparities, and the necessary actions to improve health outcomes for marginalized and underserved populations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Utilize SnapComms, an interactive tool that sends pop-up messages to each associate's computer, to promote and engage associates in the discussion and understanding of the importance of health disparities, and how Peach State Health Plan associates assist in improving the health outcomes for marginalized and underserved populations. ■ Promote and/or distribute at least one health literacy tool or skill-building educational material to providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ SnapComms were used to educate employees on specific topics. The Plan continues to develop and pushing SnapComms to inform about HE&D. (Not Met) ■ Providers were directed to log on to the Centene Institute for education material on HE&D. The 'Centene Institute offers CEUs as applicable (Met)
<p>LEADERSHIP - MET Developing and promoting health equity leadership throughout the organization to address health disparities and promote health equity solutions at all levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recruit, promote, and support a culturally and linguistically diverse governance, leadership, and workforce that are responsive to the population in the service area. ■ Educate and train governance, leadership, and workforce in culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis. ■ Review member satisfaction results by race/ethnicity or language spoken and identify a measure to conduct the PDSA cycle on and develop one intervention by December 31, 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Peach State continues to recruit employees from the communities serviced by the Plan. (Met) ■ Approximately 83% of Plan employees completed applicable HE&D training in 2022. (Met) ■ The HE&D Committee established a workgroup to collaborate with the CAHPS workgroup to review findings and develop an intervention. This work began prior to 12/31/2023 and continues as the most up to date CAHPS Survey results were received Q2, 2023. (Met)
<p>Cultural & Linguistic Competency - NOT MET Improving cultural and linguistic competency of our diverse workforce that better reflects and can better serve the needs of our customers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hire additional bi-lingual member facing staff ■ Train 100% of pertinent staff in improved recognition and coding of CLAS complaints, with a focus on recognizing language services-related complaints. ■ Provide providers in the network with specific cultural humility training opportunities and resources, such as culturally and linguistically appropriate member health education materials based on the racial/ethnic composition of the member population or lists of pharmacies or ancillary providers who offer services tailored to the specific cultural needs of the local area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A bi-lingual EPSDT Coordinator was hired in CY 2022 (Met) ■ Applicable staff were not assigned and did not complete training focused on recognizing language service-related complaints (G & A staff). (Not Met) ■ Providers were offered training specific to culture and CLAS requirements. (Met)

Goal	Objective	Summary (Met/Not Met)
<p>Research & Evaluation - NOT MET Continue to utilize data to help build and optimize solutions for improved outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conduct ongoing assessments of the membership to ensure appropriate programs are in place to address member cultural and linguistic needs (PHM Evaluation and Plan) ■ Conduct ongoing assessments of the organization's CLAS-related activities and integrate CLAS-related measures into measurement and continuous quality improvement activities. ■ Collect and maintain accurate and reliable demographic data to monitor and evaluate the impact of CLAS on health equity and outcomes and to inform service delivery. ■ Create conflict and grievance resolution processes that are culturally and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent, and resolve conflicts or complaints. ■ Communicate the organization's progress in implementing and sustaining CLAS to all stakeholders, constituents, and the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The 2022 PHM Documents are in progress. The HE&D Plan and Evaluation were complete. (Met) ■ CLAS Standards were assessed in the CLAS PD and Evaluation (Met) ■ The Plan collected and evaluated member demographics in the QAPI Program Trilogy. (Met) ■ The HE&D Workgroup will work to create conflict and grievance resolution processes that are culturally and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent, and resolve conflicts or complaints. This was not completed in 2022. (Not Met) ■ The Plan will present an executive summary to QOC and make the document available to members and providers upon request by Q4, 2023. (Met)
<p>Health System & Life Experience - MET Improving health and health outcomes for marginalized and underserved populations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs ■ Inform all individuals of the availability of language assistance services clearly and in their preferred language, verbally and in writing. ■ Provide easy-to-understand print and multimedia materials in the languages commonly used by the membership populations (English & Spanish). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Language assistance continues to be offered to all members (and their providers) as requested. (Met) ■ All members (and providers) were informed of the free language assistance offered by the Plan. Information was given verbally and in writing. (Met) ■ All information was provided in easy-to-understand language. (Met)

During CY 2022, Peach State implemented and/or partnered with community providers to address health care disparities. For additional interventions, please refer to Component 5 - Network Adequacy: Health Care Disparities section of this document.

- Vision Screenings: Peach State partnered with Envolve Vision Van to provide no-cost vision screenings, resources, and education to elementary school students in underserved areas of Northwest Georgia. Serving more than 1,500 students, Peach State was able to provide students who require corrective lenses a pair of prescription glasses by mail at no charge.
- Baby Formula Shortages: Peach State distributed over two hundred cans of formula throughout underserved areas within Georgia, which assisted with providing approximately 4,200 meals to feed newborns and babies of parents and families struggling to access this critical resource.
- The Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University: To address the primary care physician shortage, Peach State partners with The Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University to fund the accelerated MCG 3+ program. The program has been developed to recruit, train, and place more primary care physicians in underserved community around Georgia. This initiative will continue in 2023.

- Peach State Health Plan and Morehouse School of Medicine have established the Peach State Excellence in Health Equity Innovation Fund and Initiative, a partnership that will enhance health outcomes and equity for Black communities across Georgia. The new initiative was launched with a \$500,000 donation from Peach State Health Plan and will provide seed funding to Morehouse School of Medicine’s health-equity innovation efforts in education, clinical innovation, community service, research excellence, and pipeline programs.
- Mobile Wellness clinics: In 2022, Peach State partnered with the Phoebe Putney Health System to begin to host Mobile Clinic Days where the Plan could “meet members where they are.” Locations in Southwest, Georgia where Peach State has many members who were non-compliant for child well visits were identified. During the two inaugural events, 35 African American and Caucasian members were served.
- Mobile Breast Cancer Screenings: Peach State has partnered with providers, including CHI Memorial MaryEllen Breast Centre, Piedmont Augusta Mobile Wellness Unit, St. Joseph Candler, and Macon-Bibb County Health Dept, to serve 46 African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Asian members.

2022 Initiatives:

- Developed the Health Equity/Cultural Competency and Linguistically Appropriate Services Program, which has expanded the previous Cultural Competency Program. Areas addressed by the program encompass health literacy and plain communication, language services, reduction of health disparities, cultural competency capabilities, and support for members with disabilities.
- Submitted All documentation to obtain NCQA Health Equity Accreditation for Medicaid.
- Updated the HE&D Policy to encompass health equity.
- Training materials for HD & E went on Centene University and were made accessible to the Plans’ staff.
- Developed Cultural Humility and Unconscious Bias in Healthcare training as requested by providers.
- Distribution of all member communications including educational materials in English and Spanish Additional languages may be requested as need.
- Continued to inform all members and providers of the availability of interpretation services and how to access bilingual interpreter service.
- Continued to offer free interpretation services to members at points of member contact via telephone, face-to-face, and during doctor’s office visit.

Principle CLAS Standards and Themes

The CLAS Standards provide effective, equitable, understandable and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy and other communication needs.

■ Theme One - Governance, Leadership and Workforce

- » **Standard 1** - Advance and sustain organizational governance and leadership that promotes CLAS and health equity through policy, practices and allocated resources.
- » **Standard 2** - Recruit, promote and support a culturally and linguistically diverse governance, leadership and workforce that are responsive to the population in the service area.
- » **Standard 3** - Educate and train governance, leadership and workforce in culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis.

■ Theme Two - Communication and Language Assistance

- » **Standard 5** - Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services.
- » **Standard 6** - Inform all individuals of the availability of language assistance services clearly and in their preferred language, verbally and in writing.
- » **Standard 7** - Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance, recognizing that the use of untrained individuals and/or minors as interpreters should be avoided.
- » **Standard 8** - Provide easy-to-understand print and multimedia materials and signage in the languages commonly used by the populations in the service area.

■ Theme Three - Engagement, Continuous Improvement and Accountability

- » **Standard 9** - Establish culturally and linguistically appropriate goals, policies and management accountability, and infuse them throughout the organizations' planning and operations.
- » **Standard 10** - Conduct ongoing assessments of the organization's CLAS-related activities and integrate CLAS-related measures into assessment measurement and continuous quality improvement activities.
- » **Standard 11** - Collect and maintain accurate and reliable demographic data to monitor and evaluate the impact of CLAS on health equity and outcomes and to inform service delivery.
- » **Standard 12** - Conduct regular assessments of community health assets and needs and use the results to plan and implement services that respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of populations in the service area.
- » **Standard 13** - Partner with the community to design, implement and evaluate policies, practices and services to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness.
- » **Standard 14** - Create conflict- and grievance-resolution processes that are culturally and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent and resolve conflicts or complaints.
- » **Standard 15** - Communicate the organization's progress in implementing and sustaining CLAS to all stakeholders, constituents and the public.