



**Project Open Hand™**  
meals with love



## **Project Open Hand Partners with Anthem Blue Cross to Address Chronic Disease through Medically Tailored Meals**

*Using food as medicine is an innovative approach to achieving better health outcomes while significantly reducing costs for California's Medi-Cal program.*

**SAN FRANCISCO (February 5, 2020)** – Anthem Blue Cross has partnered with a leading Bay Area nutrition services provider, Project Open Hand, to launch a four-county, one-year pilot project that provides medically tailored meal interventions to Anthem Blue Cross Medi-Cal members who have chronic health conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease.

Through this program, Anthem will identify members in San Francisco, Alameda, Santa Clara and Los Angeles counties, who struggle with chronic disease, and can benefit from food interventions that combine medical nutrition therapy with medically appropriate home-delivered meals. Project Open Hand will ensure Anthem members receive customized meals in addition to specialized nutritional counseling provided by a registered dietitian.

“Our partnership is going to redefine what’s possible in improving the lives of those with chronic disease,” said Paul Hepfer, CEO of Project Open Hand. “Having such a large and progressive health partner like Anthem Blue Cross goes a long way in furthering the evidence that food, when prepared with very specific menus and delivered in conjunction with individualized nutrition education with registered dietitians, can greatly improve health outcomes.”

Project Open Hand and its partners in the California Food is Medicine Coalition, The Health Trust and Project Angel Food, are leading this new pilot on behalf of Anthem Blue Cross. It has been modeled after several similar peer-reviewed studies that have shown that medically tailored meal interventions can significantly improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare program costs.

“Anthem Blue Cross understands that addressing social drivers, such as access to healthy food and nutrition programs, is the key to improving health outcomes,” said Dr. Barsam Kasravi, President, Anthem Blue Cross. “That is why we are committed to investing in new programs and partnerships that expand access to both healthcare and the life essentials that form the foundation of healthy living.”

Research and outcomes continue to demonstrate that medical nutrition interventions improve health outcomes, decrease hospital readmission rates and reduce Medi-Cal program costs. Anthem Blue Cross, its affiliates and parent organization continue to observe data and case studies that pinpoint nutrition as a leading driver of health; thus, Anthem Blue Cross has launched several initiatives across California to link food, medicine and other resources to help its members and entire communities to better manage chronic conditions and lead healthier lives.

### **ABOUT PROJECT OPEN HAND**

Founded in 1985 as a grassroots response to the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco, Project Open Hand is an innovative, outcome-driven, client-centered partner in the public health and medical arenas,

preparing 2,500 medically tailored nutritious meals daily for clients with chronic disease such as cancer, diabetes and HIV in San Francisco and Oakland. A leader in the "Food is Medicine" movement, Project Open Hand employs a staff of 120, relies on the support of nearly 125 volunteers every day and is headquartered in San Francisco's Tenderloin with a second location in Oakland, CA. To learn more, visit [www.openhand.org](http://www.openhand.org) and [www.calfimc.org](http://www.calfimc.org).

#### **ABOUT ANTHEM BLUE CROSS**

Anthem Blue Cross helps improve health care access and quality for Californians by developing innovative care management programs and services. Anthem Blue Cross' top priority is the health and well-being of our consumers and we are committed to providing members with access to comprehensive health care. Through health education and community outreach programs, members are empowered to choose and sustain a healthy lifestyle. Anthem Blue Cross is the trade name for Blue Cross of California. Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Cross of California Partnership Plan, Inc. are independent licensees of the Blue Cross Association. ANTHEM is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. The Blue Cross name and symbol are registered marks of the Blue Cross Association. Blue Cross of California is contracted with L.A. Care Health Plan to provide Medi-Cal Managed Care services in Los Angeles County. To learn more, visit <https://mss.anthem.com/ca>. Also, follow us on Twitter at [https://twitter.com/anthemBC\\_News](https://twitter.com/anthemBC_News) or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/AnthemBlueCrossMediCal>.

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