



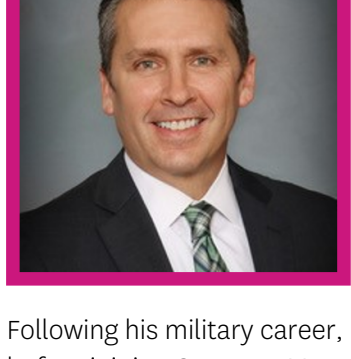
health net™

News Now

AUGUST, 2026

HEALTH NET NEWS

Meet Eric Schmacker, Health Net of California’s Interim CEO



Health Net of California is pleased to welcome Eric Schmacker as Interim CEO. Eric brings more than three decades of military and healthcare leadership experience, along with nearly seven years at Centene.

A military dependent who lived across the U.S. and in Europe growing up, Eric also has longstanding ties to California. After college, he served 21 years in the U.S. Army, beginning as an aviator before becoming a healthcare administrator and leading Army hospitals.

Following his military career, Eric held executive leadership roles with Tenet Healthcare’s Baptist Health System in Texas before joining Centene. Most recently, he served as CEO of Silver Summit Health Plan in Nevada.

What drew him to Health Net? A deep connection to purpose.

“I’m a big believer in being aligned with an organization’s mission and values,” Eric said. “The opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the health of Californians and the communities we serve made this an easy decision.”

After spending his first weeks meeting with leaders and teams across the organization, Eric said one thing stands out above all else: the people.

“The consistent theme I’ve heard is how strong this Health Net team is. Health Net is an admired organization, and I couldn’t be more proud to be part of this team.”

As Brian Ternan prepares for his next chapter in Florida, we thank him for his leadership and many contributions while with Health Net. Eric’s appointment as Interim CEO helps ensure continuity as we continue our mission to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Oregon Eyes \$421 Million in Medicaid Cuts, Including Fewer Benefits and Limits on Treatments



Major cuts are coming to the Oregon Health Plan, the state’s free healthcare program covering 1.4 million children and low-income adults. But the group of experts Governor Tina Kotek charged with minimizing the harm of those cuts has given her no definitive recommendations.

Instead, this week they gave the governor a report listing more than 40 different options for reducing spending on the program, with no consensus on which to choose. That means Kotek still has no clear path to plugging a \$421 million hole in the state’s upcoming two-year budget, with five months left before her budget plan is due to the state legislature.

That hole has opened as rising prices for healthcare and increased spending on addiction and mental illness are driving up state costs, while Republicans in Congress have passed the steepest federal cuts to Medicaid since the program began.

“We shouldn’t be in this situation,” Kotek said in a statement. Kotek said she plans to review the cuts and seek additional feedback from Oregonians. “My goal in convening the advisory group was to gather options to keep as many people insured with the best level of care possible.”

The cuts will hit Oregon harder than most states in part because Oregon has expanded government-funded coverage to so many people.

Kotek and other Democrats have long used Medicaid as a tool to push toward universal health coverage, expanding the program to single adults and adding coverage for undocumented immigrants who meet the program’s income threshold. One in three Oregonians and more than half of children in the state now have healthcare through the program.

That’s helped drive down the uninsured rate in Oregon, from about 15% of Oregonians in 2011 to about 3% today, according to state data. But its push to insure more people left Oregon even more dependent on the federal funding that’s now being cut as part of HR1, President Donald Trump’s major tax and spending cut bill.

Kristina Narayan, a senior advisor to the governor and one of the leaders of the Medicaid-focused panel of 18 people, said it has been looking for a way to soften federal cuts she said were “designed to kick people off health insurance.”

Kotek directed the group to prioritize proposals that avoid people losing their coverage. Even without any state policies targeting enrollment, the health authority projects that the work requirements in HR 1 could lead up to 200,000 Oregonians to lose their health insurance. OHA has projected that Oregon will lose a total of \$9.4 billion as a result of the bill.

Kotek also directed the group not to propose cuts to long-term services and supports for people with disabilities, services that are funded through Medicaid but not by the Oregon Health Authority. She told them to look for opportunities for administrative savings, reductions in benefits, and cuts to provider pay.

The records make it clear that achieving the needed \$420 million in savings, using only the strategies the group has identified, will be a stretch.

Read more in this article from [Oregon Public Broadcasting](#), (OPB)

IN THE COMMUNITY

Learn More About How Health Net of Oregon’s Parent Entity Trillium CHP Contributes to Improving Oregonians Health



Trillium Community Health Plan is the parent entity of HealthNet of Oregon and delivers Medicaid benefits to Oregonians. Trillium Community Health Plan is committed to working with members and partners to address unique community health needs and health priorities. The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHP) is specific to each region and details community health priority areas, goals, and strategies to be implemented within the region in collaboration with community partners.

Trillium community investments, including [sponsorships](#), [community benefit initiatives \(CBI\)](#), and [Supporting Health for All Through Reinvestment \(SHARE\)](#), are aligned with the CHP priorities.

The [Community Advisory Council](#), including Trillium members and community partners, in each region is responsible for approving, monitoring, and guiding funding decisions for the CHP in each region.

[Learn about Lane County CHP](#)

[Learn about Tri-County CHP](#)

Get more information about Trillium’s [Community Health Improvement Plan](#).

WELLNESS

August is National Immunization Awareness Month

National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) is an annual observance held every August to highlight the vital importance of vaccination for people of all ages. The month focuses on promoting recommended vaccines across the lifespan, ensuring children catch up on well-child visits, and addressing vaccine concerns.

Vaccines are widely recognized as one of the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available. They not only protect the individual receiving the shot but also create “community immunity” (or herd immunity) that safeguards vulnerable populations like infants, the elderly, and the immunocompromised.



Vaccination needs change throughout a person’s life:

- **Infants & Children:** Catch-up and routine schedules protect against serious, preventable diseases such as measles, polio, rotavirus, and whooping cough.
- **Preteens & Teens:** Vaccines like HPV, Tdap, and meningococcal shots are critical to preventing cancers and bacterial infections before adulthood.
- **Adults:** Routine flu shots, COVID-19 updates, and Tdap boosters help maintain immunity against circulating viruses and bacterial infections.
- **Seniors:** Adults aged 60 and older are frequently advised to receive specialized vaccines for RSV, shingles, and pneumococcal disease to prevent severe complications.

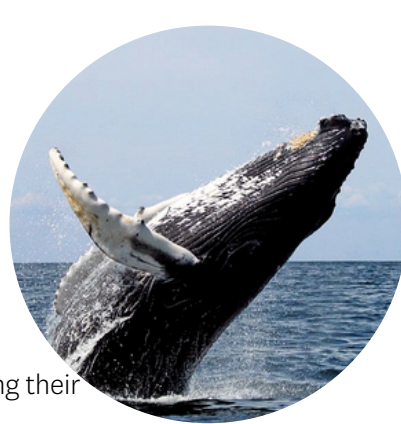
During NIAM healthcare professionals utilize communication toolkits to address misconceptions, answer questions, and promote evidence-based vaccine education.

For more information, visit Health Net’s [“Wellness Center”](#) page.

JUST FOR FUN

It’s Whale Watching Month!

August is a premier time for whale watching on the West Coast, offering great chances to spot blue whales, humpbacks, and resident gray whales feeding on massive krill blooms.



Fun Facts About Whales

Whales are incredible marine mammals that share many traits with humans, including being warm-blooded, giving birth to live young, and having hair. Despite spending their entire lives in the ocean, they must surface to breathe air.

- Blue whales are the largest animals ever to live: They can grow over 100 feet long and weigh as much as 30 elephants. However, their throats are surprisingly narrow, and they can’t swallow anything larger than a grapefruit!
- They only sleep with half a brain: Because whales are conscious breathers and must remember to surface for air, they can only let one hemisphere of their brain sleep at a time.
- Whales can’t breathe through their mouths: Their respiratory and digestive systems are completely separate. They can only breathe through their blowholes, which means they can’t accidentally swallow water when eating.
- They don’t chew their food: Whether toothed or baleen, whales swallow their food whole. A blue whale eats up to 40 million tiny krill every day.
- Ears record their life story: Much like reading tree rings, scientists can analyze whale earwax plugs to determine a whale’s age, its exposure to toxins, and historical stress levels.
- They are closely related to hippos: Despite looking completely different, the closest living terrestrial relatives of whales and dolphins are hippopotamuses.
- Male humpback whales compose complex songs: Humpback whales sing long, complex, and evolving songs that can travel for miles underwater.

If whale watching is on your to-do list for August, here are some great places to see them.

California Hotspots

- **Monterey Bay:** Known as the "Serengeti of the Sea." In August, you’ll find feeding blue whales (the largest animals on earth) and acrobatic humpback whales.
- **Southern California (Newport Beach/Dana Point):** Offers excellent trips where you can see giant blue whales, fin whales, and large megapods of common dolphins.

Oregon Hotspots

- **Depoe Bay:** Known as the "Whale Watching Capital of the Oregon Coast," it is home to a resident population of about 200 gray whales that feed just offshore all summer long. You can book charter boats for \$50.
- **Central Coast & South Coast:** Excellent viewing from land and sea. Try South Coast Tours departing out of Port Orford or view from elevated viewpoints like the Cape Ferrello Viewpoint.

Happy Whale Watching!