Southwest Regional Meeting

Location: Costa Mesa, CA
Date: November 5, 2026
8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Time	Content	Speaker(s)
8:00 am – 8:30 am	**Registration**	
8:30 am – 8:45 am	**Welcome and Introduction**	**Emily Brower**, CEO, NAACOS
8:45 am – 9:35 am	**Advocacy Update: From Policy to Practice** As the CMS accountable care strategy moves into implementation, NAACOS is focused on helping members succeed in new and evolving programs and models. This session will provide an overview of key developments and early learnings, discuss how NAACOS is responding, and facilitate a conversation about members' experiences and identify emerging challenges and opportunities.	**Aisha Pittman, MPH** Senior Vice President, Government Affairs, NAACOS
9:35 am – 9:45 am	**Break**	
9:45 am – 10:30 am	**Regional Payer Insights** Attendees will gain perspective on how payer partnerships and collaboration across the region help in driving value-based care.	Moderated by: **Alex Bardakh, MPP, CAE** VP Government Affairs & Policy CareConnectMD **George Fields, DO** National Medical Director, Care Connections, Molina Healthcare Inc. **Laura Fox, MPH** Healthcare, Quality & Affordability Blue California

10:30 am – 11:15 am	**Utilization Trends** This session will review key utilization patterns that could include, areas of rising risk, avoidable use, and opportunities to improve performance. Discussion may focus on how data can inform care management, population health strategies, and operational decision-making.	**Jennifer Brooks**, VP of Population Health, Banner **Kynda Wolfrum**, Senior Director, Government Programs, Banner
11:15 am – 11:25 am	**Break**	
11:25 am – 12:10 pm	**Model Selection and Regional Insights** Explore how organizations are approaching model selection and the strategic considerations shaping those decisions. Hear emerging regional trends and insights from data and modeling. The session will highlight opportunities to translate these insights into actionable regional perspectives.	**Hunter Schouweiler**, Director, VP Practice Lead, Wakely **Alex Kim,** Consultant Wakely **Niki Daul, FSA, MAAA**, Consulting Actuary, Wakely **Will Simson**, CFO, CareConnectMD **Arett Zartarian, COO**, Rancho Health
12:10 pm – 1:15 pm	**Networking Lunch**	
1:15 pm – 2:00 pm	**The Family Caregiver as a Risk Variable: What ACOs Miss in Dementia Care** Most ACO risk models capture the patient and miss the person holding the care plan together at home. In dementia, caregiver strain drives avoidable utilization: ED visits, readmissions, earlier facility placement, and it shows up in total cost of care long before anyone codes it. This session makes the case for treating the family caregiver as a measurable risk variable, covers how caregiver assessment data can be collected and operationalized inside existing ACO workflows, and shares field findings on what moves utilization.	**Genevieve Caruncho-Simpson**, Co-founder & CEO, Dyad Health **Monique Parrish**, DrPH, MPH, LCSW, Clinical Advisor, LifeCourse Strategies **Allison Kato**, Founder, Kato Advisory

2:00 pm – 2:50 pm	**Post-Acute Collaborations in Value-Based Care** This session will focus on the role of post-acute partners in improving transitions of care, reducing avoidable utilization, and supporting the patients journey through the care continuum. Discussion may include strategies for building stronger partnerships, aligning incentives, and improving communication across care settings.	**Alex Bardakh, MPP, CAE** VP Government Affairs & Policy CareConnectMD **Erin O'Brien, MA, RN** Director of Clinical Education and Development, CareConnectMD
2:50 pm – 3:00 pm	**Closing Remarks**	**Melody Danko**, Vice President of Education, NAACOS