



CalRx® Biosimilar Insulin Initiative Patient Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting Details:

Title: CalRx Insulin Patient Advisory Council Meeting
Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2026
Time: 2:30 – 4:30 PM (PST)
Location: Virtual

Attendees:

Council Members:

Albert Bach, Pharm.D.
Craig Stubing
Diana Wyenn
Joe Garbanzos
Kathryn Topalis, M.D.
Laura Feeney, Pharm.D.
Luz Gallegos
Michelle Chu, Pharm.D.
Samantha Lappin

HCAI Staff:

Sarah Turner, CalRx Project Manager
Robin Figueroa, Sr. CalRx Program Advisor
Nitisha Patel, Pharmaceutical Data Specialist
Ryvenna Hanson, Pharmaceutical Policy Specialist
Heriberto Camarena, Pharmaceutical Program Coordinator
Dolly Kaushal, Pharmaceutical Policy & Research Manager
James Yi, Attorney
Elizabeth Ballart, Attorney

Civica Rx Staff:

Carrie Sather, Market Access & Implementation Manager, Biosimilars
Allan Coukell, Chief Government Affairs & Public Policy Officer
Brent Eberle, President, CivicaScript

Key Takeaways:

The fourth quarter CalRx Insulin Patient Advisory Council meeting focused on post-launch updates for the private label CalRx insulin glargine pens, early distribution and communications progress, and feedback on outreach efforts, pharmacy participation, and affordability coupon cards. The meeting also included discussion of the Council's reappointment process for the new term year.

1. Early product launch progress is positive but too soon to assess market penetration. CalRx insulin glargine pens are available through all three major wholesalers and formulary



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placement with Blue Shield of California, Anthem Blue Cross California, and the Federal Employee Program.

2. Pharmacies can order the product overnight even if not stocking on hand; however, patient and provider awareness, particularly in high-prevalence regions, remains the key challenge.
3. Council members emphasized that national media and influencer strategies alone will not reach vulnerable populations; trusted messengers, local newspapers, ethnic media, faith-based organizations, and community health networks were highlighted as critical channels.
4. Prescriber and pharmacist education on biosimilar interchangeability is needed.
5. Awareness of the Team Cuban Card was low and concerns around pharmacy acceptance and patient awareness were raised.

Action Items:

1. HCAI to distribute meeting materials and send the reappointment acceptance form to current Council members.
2. Council members to confirm their reappointments by February 13, 2026.
3. Council members to submit any additional media and outreach recommendations to HCAI.

CalRx® Insulin Glargine Pen Distribution & Communications Updates:

The California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) provided a comprehensive update on post-launch communications and stakeholder engagement. Civica® also provided updates on communications, distribution, and market access. Since launch, HCAI and Civica® published three core resources:

1. A pharmacy fact sheet outlining how to order CalRx insulin,
2. A patient flyer for quick reference, and
3. A patient FAQ document that incorporated prior Council feedback.

The patient flyer and FAQs are in the process of being translated into the top five Medi-Cal threshold languages—Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean—to ensure broader accessibility. These materials, along with a social media toolkit, were disseminated to the Council and other partners.

Civica also completed a press release, published multiple LinkedIn posts, and continued engagement with advocacy organizations such as Breakthrough T1D and Beyond Type 1. Allan Coukell, Civica's Chief Government Affairs & Public Policy Officer, also recently spoke with Council member Craig Stubing on the [Beta Cell Podcast](#), and Civica is updating its website (Civicalnsulin.org) to provide clearer guidance for both consumers and pharmacists on accessing CalRx insulin.

Additional outreach efforts include requests from California legislators to feature CalRx insulin in constituent newsletters, a presentation to Covered California health plan carriers to encourage



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formulary adoption, and a presentation to local health department leadership, in partnership with the California Department of Public Health, to raise county-level awareness. HCAI and Civica also partnered with the California Pharmacists Association and the California Council of Pharmacy Deans to distribute the pharmacy fact sheet and a newly launched pharmacy survey intended to identify independent pharmacies willing to carry CalRx insulin and support consumer access.

HCAI concluded its update by sharing preliminary data visualizations that overlay confirmed independent pharmacy participation with regional diabetes prevalence using 2023 claims data from HCAI's Healthcare Payments Data (HPD) program. The maps highlighted priority regions, including Los Angeles County, particularly the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys, as well as the San Joaquin Valley and rural Northern California. HCAI acknowledged that broad distribution will take time due to formulary decisions and pharmacy stocking practices, noting that the data reflects early signals rather than a complete picture.

Pharmacist representatives on the Council noted the survey responses may underrepresent participation because many independent pharmacies do not keep insulin on hand but can order it overnight. Suggestions were made to engage wholesaler-affiliated pharmacy networks and business support programs to educate pharmacists.

Discussion Questions:

Feedback on Media Campaign

Council members expressed the need to incorporate local, ethnic, and community-based media outlets. Multiple members emphasized the importance of grassroots communication, particularly for immigrant, farmworker, Indigenous, and rural communities where English may not be the primary language. Suggestions included community newspapers, ethnic media, local public radio, and trusted community messengers. HCAI acknowledged these concerns, agreed on the need for a balanced national and local approach, and invited continued input via email while noting current budget limitations for large-scale outreach campaigns.

Increasing Awareness of CalRx® Insulin

Council members offered recommendations for targeted outreach in areas with high prevalence of diabetes. Suggestions included:

- Engaging county health systems where formulary changes could affect large patient populations,
- Faith-based organizations,
- Federally qualified health centers,
- Diabetes educators,
- Hospital-based diabetes programs, and
- Community health workers.

Several members stressed that messaging should reflect the realities of patients focused on survival rather than prevention and should meet communities where they are, including door-to-



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door and trusted-messenger approaches. HCAI agreed with the importance of grassroots engagement and emphasized that multilingual materials and partnerships with local health departments are key tools available within current resource constraints.

Questions were raised about how CalRx insulin is treated on formularies given its biosimilar status. Civica clarified that, as an interchangeable biosimilar approved under a biologic license application, it is listed as a brand on formularies but does not require a new prescription to switch. Council members emphasized the importance of educating prescribers and pharmacists to reduce hesitation around biosimilar substitution.

Feedback on Team Cuban Card (offered through Mark Cuban Cost Plus Drug Company)

HCAI sought the Council's feedback on experiences with the Team Cuban Card to inform its broader evaluation of existing affordability tools. Awareness among Council members was limited, though some reported positive experiences with Cost Plus Drugs for uninsured patients. Concerns were raised about pharmacy acceptance, pricing control by third parties, and comparisons to other discount programs like GoodRx.

2026 Council Member Reappointment Process:

HCAI invited Council members to continue serving for the April 2026 – March 2027 term year, with reappointment acceptance forms to be distributed following the meeting and responses requested by February 13, 2026. HCAI noted that any vacancies would be filled by prior applicants, if needed.

Next Meeting: April 28, 2026, at 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. PST