CalOptima
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALOPTIMA MEMBER PURSUING HEALTH CAREER WINS SCHOLARSHIP

Anaheim resident receives $500 from Orange County's community health plan employees

ORANGE, California (September 7, 2018) — CalOptima employees have taken their dedication and commitment to their members a step further. For the third year, the agency's employees raised money in support of an annual scholarship essay contest. This month, Nayeli Rodriquez Hernandez was awarded a $500 college scholarship for her winning essay about how overcoming health challenges inspired her goal to become a speech pathologist.

The essay contest was open to all members pursuing a college degree in health care or social services. Members were asked to share how they have benefited from CalOptima's services, how their current studies will help them in the field of health care or social services, and why they are a good candidate to receive the scholarship.

"Our employees believe in our mission and in giving back to others," said Michael Schrader, CalOptima Chief Executive Officer. "Our annual scholarship essay contest is yet another example of employees coming together in support of our community."

At the age of 24, Nayeli was diagnosed with Globus Sensation, a lump in the throat caused by anxiety. That condition led to problems with her digestive and nervous systems and impacted her voice quality. She was unable to eat solid foods, causing weight loss, fatigue and depression. "Thanks to CalOptima, I received the care I needed to normalize my digestive health and gained back my healthy voice, which led to my aspiration to be a speech pathologist," said Rodriguez Hernandez.

In May 2018, Nayeli graduated from California State University, Fullerton with a bachelor's degree in Communicative Disorders. The CalOptima scholarship will help fund her master's degree in Speech Pathology, a program she began this fall at CSUF.

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About CalOptima
A county organized health system, CalOptima provides publicly funded health care coverage for low-income children, adults, seniors and people with disabilities in Orange County, California. CalOptima's mission is to provide members with access to quality health care services delivered in a cost-effective and compassionate manner. In total, CalOptima serves more than 785,000 members with a network of more than 7,000 primary care doctors and specialists, as well as 30 hospitals.