

# Daily Journal

DECEMBER 4, 2019

## TOP Health Care LAWYERS 2019

### STEPHEN L. GOFF

**G**off, who focuses on managed care contracting and health care litigation, leads King & Spalding's California team in helping set health premium rates and contract terms for the nation's largest public pension and health benefits fund, the California Public Employees' Retirement System, known as CalPERS.

"My relationship with CalPERS started five years ago as we began to advise on how they set prices with their providers for health care benefits for members," Goff said. "And last year they had the lowest premium increase in 21 years."

Goff has been in the business for more than three decades. "I've learned how to employ best practices to make these things happen," he said.

At CalPERS, "The total spend is about \$9 billion, and the 2018 increase was less than 1 percent. In prior years the increases were running at 9 percent," he said.

CalPERS contracted health plans include Kaiser Permanente, Anthem Blue Cross, United Health, Blue Shield, Sharp Health, Western Health Advantage and Health Net. Goff appears frequently before the CalPERS Pension Health and Benefits Committee, which makes recommendations to the full CalPERS board of directors, to provide updates and to advise on the status of the premium development and negotiation process.

He kept premium increases low by using detailed data analysis to examine closely every aspect of providers' pricing. "We

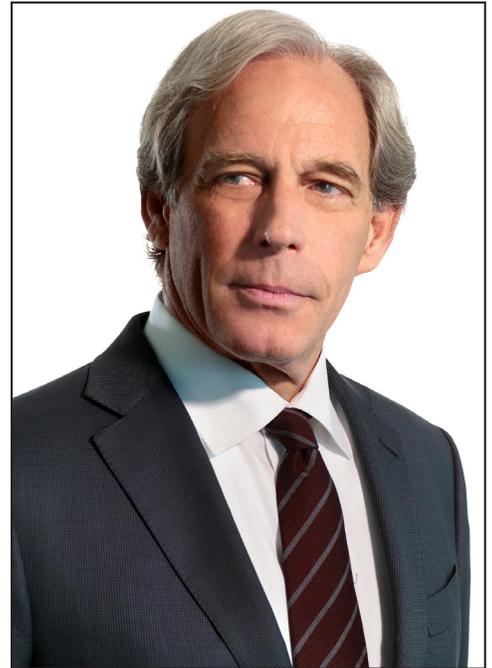
FIRM  
**KING & SPALDING LLP**  
CITY:  
**SACRAMENTO**  
PRACTICE:  
**Managed Care  
Contracting and Litigation**

can tell the plans what their prices should be; we stopped just taking their word for it. Our feeling was that that way we were independently thinking about every component."

He said the positive outcome was driven by a true partnership with the client. "I supplied the know-how, based on decades of experience on how plans go about setting their rates. I can smell when something isn't right. I bring market-based knowledge—it doesn't answer every question but it allows you to ask the right questions."

He continued, "CalPERS has the resources to create the data-crunching structure I advised to do the analysis necessary to negotiate from a position of certain knowledge."

Goff expects to extend his work into the future. "Already we're structuring the price negotiations that will begin in January 2020," he said. "I expect we'll be able to keep this low cost trend in place."



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— Goff

For a different client, Prime Healthcare Services, Goff led the King & Spalding team in binding arbitration and subsequent court proceedings regarding the amounts due for services that Prime provided to Kaiser members. Goff said the matter is being closely watched in Southern California because the outcome may determine the overall strategy providers employ when Kaiser members seek services at Prime's facilities.

"We're taking the matter to the court of appeal," Goff said. "As is often the case in health care, many of the legal issues are new."

— John Roemer