STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND WELFARE AGENCY

PETE WILSON, *Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
714/744 P STREET
O. BOX 942732
SACRAMENTO, CA 94234-7320
(916) 657-2941

March 9, 1995

TO: All County Welfare Directors
All County Directors of Mental Health
All County MEDS Coordinators

Letter No.: 95-16

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS TO MEDI-CAL ELIGIBILITY DATA SYSTEM

This is in response to the Department of Mental Health's (DMH) request for county mental health departments' (CMHD) access to the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data Systems (MEDS) for county specific beneficiary information. The access to information on county residents by the CMHDs is essential for the implementation of Medi-Cal Managed Mental Health Care. Under the managed care concept, the CMHDs will be assuming full financial responsibility for all Medi-Cal specialty mental health services for Medi-Cal eligibles in their county and will need inquiry access to MEDS information.

The Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch has approved DMH's request for full MEDS inquiry access, as it is realized that the CMHD's role and responsibilities will greatly expand under the proposed managed care concept as compared to the current system. The request falls within the scope of "administration of the program", as well as within Title 42, United States Code, Section 1320b-7, Subsection (a)(5)(A) that the "information exchanged by the state agencies is made available only the extent necessary to assist in the valid administrative needs of the program receiving such information..." Also, with the managed care concept, CMHDs will become responsible for authorizing all Medi-Cal psychiatric inpatient hospitalization and will be at financial risk for the State's share to match federal financial participation for medically necessary psychiatric inpatient services to all Medi-Cal eligibles. The counties will be responsible for contracting with hospitals, negotiating services rates, and planning for the delivery of alternative services intended to reduce the demand for psychiatric inpatient hospital services. The counties will also be taking on the responsibility for administration of the mental health component of the Medi-Cal program.

In order to provide for protection of MEDS Network confidentiality and to ease the workload this requirement will place on the county MEDS Coordinators, DHS has appointed a DMH/MEDS Coordinator to assist the county DMHs in obtaining access to MEDS. The DMH/MEDS Coordinator is Janet Aguirre, (916) 654-2473, and may be reached via Emc2/TAO, user ID: DMHSECUR. The county DMH/MEDS Coordinator will establish unique county passwords for the county DMH workers so that the county MEDS Coordinator will be able to distinguish the DMH passwords from county assigned passwords.

Wherever possible, the MEDS access for DMH will be provided on computers already available in the county. If additional equipment is required, the county DMH will be responsible.

A copy of All County Welfare Directors Letter No. 92-66, Confidentiality Policies Governing Medi-Cal and MEDS, is enclosed for confidentiality guidance.

It is requested that the MEDS coordinator in each county pass a copy of this letter to the DMH staff in your county.

If you should have any questions, please contact Al Brinsfield of my staff at (916) 657-0837.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Frank S. Martucci, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch

Enclosure