



Department of Health Care Services  
**MEMORANDUM**

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**DATE:** May 22, 2015

**TO:** Tribal Chairpersons, California Indian Health Programs and Urban Indian Organizations

**FROM:** Original Signed By Andrea Zubiata for Sandra "Sam" Willburn, Chief, Primary, Rural, and Indian Health Division

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Proposed Change to the Medi-Cal Program

The purpose of this memo is to provide information regarding a proposed change to the Department of Health Care Services' (DHCS) Medi-Cal Program that will be submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). DHCS is forwarding this information for your review and comment.

DHCS is required to seek advice from designees of Indian Health Programs and Urban Indian Organizations on Medi-Cal matters having a direct effect on Indians, Indian Health Programs or Urban Indian Organizations per the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). DHCS must solicit the advice of designees prior to submission to CMS of any State Plan Amendment, waiver requests or modifications, or proposals for demonstration projects in the Medi-Cal program.

**State Plan Amendment (SPA) 15-016 Substance Use Disorder Services under Drug Medi-Cal:** DHCS plans to submit SPA 15-016 to CMS to seek approval to modify certain substance use disorder (SUD) services to all Medi-Cal beneficiaries. SPA 15-016 plans to expand coverage of medication assisted treatments to new medications such as buprenorphine, and change the limitations to individual counseling that prohibit service through remote means such as telephone. Please see the enclosed summary of SPA 15-016 for a detailed description and contact information for questions or comments.

**QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:**

Indian Health Programs and Urban Indian Organizations may submit written comments or questions concerning this SPA within 30 days from the receipt of this notice. Comments or feedback may be sent by email to [MHSUDStakeholderInput@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:MHSUDStakeholderInput@dhcs.ca.gov) or by mail to the address below:

**Contact Information**

Don Braeger, Division Chief  
Substance Use Disorder Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services Division  
(SUD-PTRSD)  
Department of Health Care Services  
P.O. Box 997413, MS 2621  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7413  
(916) 327-8608

Notice of Proposed Change to the Medi-Cal Program

Page 2

May 22, 2015

[Don.Braeger@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:Don.Braeger@dhcs.ca.gov)

In addition to this notice, DHCS plans to cover this SPA in the next quarterly Medi-Cal Indian Health webinar. Please note that Indian Health Programs and Urban Indian Organizations may also request a consultation on this proposal at any time as needed.

Enclosure

**Substance Use Disorder Prevention,  
Treatment and Recovery Services Division  
Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)  
Substance Use Disorder Services under Drug Medi-Cal  
State Plan Amendment (SPA) 15-016**

**Background**

The passage of Senate Bill (SB) x1-1 allows the expansion of certain Substance Use Disorder (SUD) services to all Medi-Cal beneficiaries. SB x1-1 specifically added Section 14132.03 to the Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code which allows DHCS to provide these SUD services to an expanded Medi-Cal population.

Currently, some medication assisted treatments (MAT) are not covered under the Drug Medi-Cal (DMC) program; this amendment provides coverage for those treatments.

In addition, the current State Plan does not allow for individual counseling to be conducted by telephone. This amendment eliminates that restriction.

**Description of SPA and Effective Date**

DHCS will submit SPA 15-016 to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to seek approval for the following two changes:

1. Expand coverage of MAT in the DMC program, for example, buprenorphine, disulfiram, etc.
2. Change the limitations to individual counseling that prohibit service through remote means such as telephone.

Upon approval from CMS, the proposed effective date of this SPA is July 1, 2015.

**Impact to Indian Health Programs and Urban Indian Organizations**

• **Impact on Indian Health Programs**

To the extent that an Indian Health Program is a certified DMC provider, this amendment to the State Plan will allow reimbursement under the DMC program for additional MAT medications and individual counseling by remote means such as telephone.

• **Impact on Indian Medi-Cal Beneficiaries**

DHCS anticipates that this proposal will impact AIs by allowing for increased access to MAT and individual counseling.

**Response Date:**

Indian Health Programs and Urban Indian Organizations may submit written comments or questions concerning this SPA within 30 days from the receipt of this letter. Comments may be sent by email or by mail to the contact person listed below:

**Address and contact person**

Don Braeger,

Division Chief

Substance Use Disorder Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services Division  
(SUD-PTRSD)

Department of Health Care Services

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