

**Department of Health Care Services
Proposed Trailer Bill Legislation**

**Eliminate Medi-Cal Optional Benefit: Acupuncture
Services**

FACT SHEET

Issue Title: Eliminate Optional Benefit: Acupuncture Services. The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) proposes to eliminate the Medi-Cal coverage of acupuncture services, effective no sooner than January 1, 2026.

Background: Acupuncture services are used to prevent, modify, or alleviate the perception of severe, persistent chronic pain resulting from a generally recognized medical condition. Outpatient acupuncture services (with or without electric stimulation of the needles) are limited to two services in any one calendar month per the Medi-Service reservation limitation although additional services can be provided based upon medical necessity through prior authorization.

Assembly Bill X3 5 (Evans, Chapter 20, Statutes of 2009) eliminated Medi-Cal coverage of several optional benefits, including audiology, optometry, podiatry, psychology, speech therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic services, optician and optical laboratory services, incontinence creams and washes, and dental services. Senate Bill 833 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 30, Statutes of 2016) restored acupuncture as a Medi-Cal benefit for all eligible members, effective July 1, 2016.

Justification for the Change: DHCS proposes this General Fund solution to achieve a balanced budget (Welfare Institutions Code Sections 14131.10(b)(1)(G) and 14132).

Estimate Issues and Titles: PC 213: Eliminate Medi-Cal Optional Benefit - Acupuncture