

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

**Qualifying Community-Based Mobile Crisis Intervention Services**

**FACT SHEET**

**Issue Title: Qualifying Community-Based Mobile Crisis Intervention Services.** The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) proposes to add “qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services,” no sooner than January 1, 2023 over a five-year period, as a Medi-Cal covered benefit available to eligible Medi-Cal beneficiaries exclusively through the Medi-Cal behavioral health delivery system, which includes the Specialty Mental Health Services, Drug Medi-Cal State Plan, and Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System programs. Qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and provided by a multidisciplinary mobile crisis team to Medi-Cal beneficiaries in the community.

**Background:** Section 9813 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) establishes a state option to provide qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services during a five-year period with an opportunity for three years of 85 percent federal medical assistance percentage for qualifying services.

Qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services are Medi-Cal reimbursable services that are:

- Provided to Medi-Cal eligible individuals experiencing a mental health or substance use disorder (SUD) crisis outside of a hospital or other facility setting and; and
- Provided by a multidisciplinary mobile crisis team; and
- As appropriate, include screening and assessment, stabilization and de-escalation, coordination with and referrals to, health, social and other services and supports as needed.

**Justification for the Change:** DHCS is committed to making mobile crisis services available to all Medi-Cal beneficiaries, statewide, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in the least restrictive setting, to continue to build on California's crisis and behavioral health systems of care. Adopting qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services as a new benefit is a necessary element for California to build a sustainable crisis system for people experiencing a behavioral health crisis and suicidality. Many people in acute crisis due to mental health or SUD conditions have encounters with law enforcement, which lead to unnecessary incarceration in lieu of treatment, and have an unacceptably high risk of accidental death, especially for people of color.

ARPA offers a time-limited opportunity for 85 percent enhanced federal match for a three-year period. DHCS seeks to take advantage of this opportunity to add a new Medi-Cal mobile crisis intervention benefit, no sooner than January, 1, 2023 over a five-year period.

Under the Specialty Mental Health Services Program, all Mental Health Plans are required to provide Crisis Intervention, which may be provided anywhere in the community. However, these are not currently required to be “mobile” services and do not meet all of the requirements in the new federal definition for qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services.

California plans to establish: 1) statewide alternatives to calling 911; 2) alternatives to dispatching law enforcement personnel in response to mental health and SUD crises; and, 3) mobile crisis and respite services with the expertise to manage mental health and SUD conditions in a manner that facilitates recovery and reduces hospitalization, involvement in the criminal justice system, and homelessness.

Establishing qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services in California will provide statewide access to behavioral health care for even the most vulnerable populations, reduce the pressure on the county behavioral health system by reducing emergency department visits and hospital admissions, and promote cost-effectiveness. The team approach supports resolving behavioral health crises that occur in the community.

**Specifically, this proposal would:**

- Require DHCS to seek all necessary federal approvals to exercise the option to provide qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services as a Medi-Cal benefit over a five-year period available to eligible Medi-Cal beneficiaries exclusively through the Medi-Cal behavioral health delivery system, which includes the Specialty Mental Health Services, Drug Medi-Cal Treatment, and Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System programs.
- Require DHCS to comply with federal regulations and/or guidance. Require DHCS to establish requirements for the delivery of qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services as a new Medi-Cal benefit to eligible Medi-Cal beneficiaries experiencing a mental health or SUD crisis, including but not limited to utilization controls.
- Require DHCS to establish requirements for authorized providers of qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services.
- Require DHCS to oversee and enforce the requirements and guidelines of the benefit.
- Allow DHCS to enter into exclusive or nonexclusive contracts, or amend existing contracts, on a bid or negotiated basis, as specified, for technical assistance and training.
- Require the benefit to be implemented no sooner than January 1, 2023.
- Authorize DHCS to implement the benefit by means of plan or county letters, information notices, plan or provider bulletins, or similar instructions, without taking any further regulatory action.
- Require DHCS, to the extent practicable, to consult with interested stakeholders when issuing guidance.
- Define "qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services."

**Summary of Arguments in support:**

- The proposed comprehensive new statewide benefit will stabilize individuals in crisis, connect them to follow up behavioral health services, reduce the stigma associated with behavioral health crisis, redirect the community's reliance on police as first responders for behavioral health crises, and reduce incarceration rates for beneficiaries facing acute crisis.
- The proposal takes advantage of an opportunity for 85 percent enhanced federal match.

**Estimate # and Title:** Regular PC 252. Qualifying Community-Based Mobile Crisis Services.