

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

Medi-Cal Screening for Misuse of Opioids and Other Drugs

FACT SHEET

Title: Medi-Cal Screening for Misuse of Opioids and Other Drugs. The proposed statutory changes repeal the section for Medi-Cal adult primary care screenings, brief intervention, and referral for treatments of misuse of opioids and other drugs and associated December 31, 2021 suspension date because it is a federally required Medicaid State Plan benefit for all adults as of June of 2020.

Background: Pursuant to federal requirements, the Medi-Cal Program covers all preventive services consistent with the following: 1) United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) Grade A and B recommendations, as well as Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended vaccines; 2) preventive care and screening for infants, children, and adults recommended by Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Bright Futures program/project, including conducting an assessment of children aged 11 and over at well-child visits for tobacco, alcohol and drugs; and 3) additional preventive services for women as recommended by the Institute of Medicine (IOM). Since 1996, the USPSTF assigned a Grade B recommendation for Alcohol Misuse Screening and Behavioral Counseling Interventions in Primary Care, and recommends that clinicians screen adults ages 18 years or older for alcohol misuse and provide adults ages 18 years or older engaged in risky or hazardous drinking with brief behavioral counseling interventions to reduce alcohol misuse.

SB 78 (Chapter 38, Statutes of 2019) required DHCS to expand the Medi-Cal benefit for adult Alcohol Misuse Screening and Behavioral Counseling Interventions in Primary Care to include screening for misuse of opioids and other drugs, in order to strengthen linkages and referral pathways between primary care and specialty substance use disorder treatment. The expanded benefit is subject to suspension on December 31, 2021.

Justification: In June of 2020, the Medi-Cal benefit to screen for misuse of opioids and other drugs was assigned a Grade B recommendation by the USPSTF, making it a required Medicaid State Plan benefit for all adults. To align with the new federal requirement, the proposed statutory changes repeal the department's obligation to seek federal approval to expand the Medi-Cal benefit for adult Alcohol Misuse Screening and Behavioral Counseling Interventions in Primary Care to include screening for misuse of opioids and other drugs and the existing suspension date. Specifically, DHCS proposes to repeal

Welfare and Institutions Code section 14021.37, which would be effective July 1, 2021.

Summary of Arguments:

- Avoids a conflict between federal requirements and state law.

Estimate Issue # and Title: Regular Policy Change Number 42, Expansion to Screening for Additional Substances