

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

**Suspend Medical Interpreters Pilot**

**FACT SHEET**

**Issue Title: Suspend Medical Interpreters Pilot.** The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) proposes to suspend the implementation of the medical interpreters pilot no later than July 1, 2020, and revert the corresponding appropriation of \$5 million to the State General Fund.

**Background:** Senate Bill (SB) 165 (Chapter 365, Statutes of 2019) amended Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code Sections 14146 and 14146.5 to require the DHCS to establish a pilot project, in consultations with stakeholders, in up to four separate sites, to evaluate the provision of medical interpretation services for limited English proficient (LEP) Medi-Cal beneficiaries. Assembly Bill (AB) 74 (Chapter 23, Statutes of 2019) appropriated \$5 million from the General Fund (GF) in 2019-20 for this purpose. Existing statute outlines evaluation criteria in exploring and comparing various modalities of coordinating and providing medical interpretation services, including beneficiary satisfaction, medical professional satisfaction, compliance with treatment regimens, reduction of disparities in care, improvements in quality of care within Medi-Cal managed care plans, and utilization rates of medical interpreters.

**Justification for the Change:** This change is needed to address the state's budget deficit. To date, DHCS has not executed a contract to implement the medical interpreters pilot program. Activities involving the program have been limited to stakeholder engagement and focused on developing the framework of the Request for Applications/Request for Proposals. Due to this project still being within the development phase, the appropriated \$5 million remains unspent. Reverting the \$5 million to the General Fund in 2019-20 will disencumber the funds and allow the State to meet immediate financial needs both during, and in the aftermath of, the COVID-19 public health emergency.

**Summary of Arguments in support:** Reduces Medi-Cal program expenditures by \$5 million GF in 2019-20.

**BCP or Estimate Issue # and Title:** Regular PC 49 - Medical Interpreters Pilot Project (removed from the estimate)