

Subject:  
DHCS - LEA BOP Quarterly Newsletter – January 2026



**Local Educational Agency  
Medi-Cal Billing Option Program**



**LEA BOP NEWSLETTER**  
**Program Announcements!**  
January 16, 2026

Subject:

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This LEA BOP Quarterly Newsletter provides important program updates, key reminders, and an overview of topics that will be addressed during the upcoming quarterly meeting, an essential meeting for staying current with program updates. Our goal is to keep you informed and prepared as we move forward together.

## LEA BOP Quarterly Meeting

The LEA BOP QM offers a valuable opportunity for LEAs and program partners to come together, receive important program updates, and engage in targeted training on key topics. The next QM is on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with a one-hour lunch break. Please register to attend [the LEA BOP QM](#).

Some agenda items and updates that the DHCS will cover from 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. are:

- An overview of the new Practitioner Enrollment Requirement
- Specialized Medical Transportation
- Updates on the SPA

The January QM afternoon session starts at 1:00 p.m. and will cover the following topics:

- Impact of 2023 CMS Guidance on the RMTS
- RMTS Foundations
- Key Changes with the New Proposed TSIP

These sessions are designed to help LEAs effectively administer the LEA BOP, including participation in the RMTS, and maintain full program compliance.

## Acronyms Used in this Newsletter

- » Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS)
- » Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI)
- » Cost and Reimbursement Comparison Schedule (CRCS)
- » Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)
- » Fiscal Year (FY)
- » Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- » Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)
- » Local Educational Agency (LEA)
- » Local Educational Agency Medi-Cal Billing Option Program (LEA BOP)
- » Quarterly Meeting (QM)
- » Random Moment Time Study (RMTS)
- » RMTS Administrative Unit (RMTS Unit)
- » School-Based Medi-Cal Administrative (SMAA)
- » State Plan Amendment (SPA)
- » Technical Assistance (TA)
- » Time Study Participant (TSP)
- » Time Study Implementation Plan (TSIP)

Subject:

DHCS - LEA BOP Quarterly Newsletter – January 2026

## New Requirements for FY 2026-27

### Practitioner Enrollment

Historically, LEAs participating in the LEA BOP were considered the enrolled Medi-Cal provider. Qualified rendering practitioners were not required to enroll in Medi-Cal, except for Ordering, Referring, or Prescribing practitioners, who enrolled separately. Now, CMS requires eligible practitioners to separately enroll as a Medi-Cal provider before the LEA can receive reimbursement for that practitioner's services.

Effective July 1, 2026:

- All practitioners in the LEA BOP must enroll in Medi-Cal if an eligible enrollment pathway exists for their practitioner type.
- Enrollment is required for eligible practitioners, even if their employing or contracting LEA is already enrolled in Medi-Cal.
- There will be no application fee for practitioner enrollment in Medi-Cal.
- LEAs may continue billing for services provided by practitioners who do not have an enrollment pathway.

A PPL will be published soon with detailed guidance on enrolling eligible practitioners. To support this transition:

- DHCS is exploring a phased-in enrollment process.
- DHCS sent a survey via E-blast to LEAs on November 19, 2025, to gather information for planning and resource allocation.
- DHCS provided training on this topic on November 20, 2025. Please refer to the [LEA BOP Practitioner Enrollment in Medi-Cal Training](#) for details.
- Frequently asked questions on practitioner enrollment will be reviewed during the January QM.

### Specialized Medical Transportation

Currently, LEAs participating in the LEA BOP can bill for specialized medical transportation services as long as the following conditions are met on the day of service:

- The student must receive a LEA BOP-covered medical service (other than transportation) at the service site.
- The covered medical service (other than transportation) must meet all requirements to be a billable LEA BOP service.
- Both the covered service and the transportation must be authorized in the students' IEP or IFSP.

Subject:

DHCS - LEA BOP Quarterly Newsletter – January 2026

With the release of the 2023 CMS guidance, there has been a new requirement added to specialized medical transportation services. Effective July 1, 2026, LEAs participating in the LEA BOP must document specialized medical transportation and the specific adaptation in the students' IEP/IFSP as a medically necessary service in order to bill for specialized medical transportation services. DHCS is here to assist LEAs in meeting this new requirement and will be publishing a new specialized medical transportation PPL soon to provide LEAs with further guidance. Additionally, DHCS encourages LEAs to begin reviewing and updating their IEP/IFSP documentation processes to meet the new requirement.

## **Quarter 1 Random Moment Time Study Implementation**

Effective July 1, 2026, all LEAs participating in the LEA BOP and SMAA Program must participate in a July through September (Quarter 1) time study to claim federal reimbursement. This marks a shift from current practice, where RMTS is only conducted in Quarters 2 – 4, and Quarter 1 costs are reimbursed using an average of RMTS results from the other three quarters. Beginning with FY 2026-27, failure to participate in the RMTS for Quarter 1 will result in the loss of reimbursement for that quarter, potentially reducing final settlements by 20–25 percent.

CMS is the federal agency that provides funding for LEA BOP and requires these changes to ensure compliance and accurate claiming. LEAs are strongly encouraged to begin preparing now by collaborating with their RMTS Unit to meet deadlines and ensure compliance. Accurate TSP list management, proactive coordination with RMTS Units, and awareness of staffing changes are essential for success. Active participation in quarterly meetings, [trainings](#), and RMTS & SMAA calls will keep LEAs informed and ready. While CMS approval is still pending, early preparation will help LEAs navigate the transition smoothly and maximize reimbursement.

## **SPA Updates**

Any changes to the LEA BOP (i.e., new services, new practitioners, or a new payment methodology) require a SPA to be submitted and approved by CMS. DHCS will be submitting a SPA to CMS with an intended effective date of July 1, 2026. DHCS is currently working on posting the SPA for public comment and submitting it to CMS soon for review and approval. DHCS will notify LEAs with an e-blast once the public notice period begins. The SPA features service expansions, refined language, and updates designed to remove participation barriers. Key changes include:

Subject:

DHCS - LEA BOP Quarterly Newsletter – January 2026

- Expansion of qualified practitioners
  - Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors
  - Associate Professional Clinical Counselors
  - Community Health Workers
  - Certified Wellness Coaches
- Established proxy rates for Community Health Workers and Certified Wellness Coaches
- Addition of new rate for vaccine administration
- Addition of photoscreeners as a valid screening tool for vision screening
- Addition of payment methodology language for Quarter 1 RMTS
- Exemption of colleges from the Pupil Personnel Services credential supervision requirement
- Clean-up language around Medi-Cal Enrollment Ratio regarding student enrollment count
- Removal of the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals requirement for Orientation and Mobility Specialist
- Update to payment methodology rates that used to be based on proxy rates, since DHCS now has cost data to establish cost-based rates that align with LEA costs
- Update to specialized medical transportation calculation for one-way trip ratio when LEAs can directly identify specialized transportation costs

## Action Items for January – March 2026

- **Submit the PPA and AR (Now Overdue):** The PPA and AR are required for participation in the program. If your LEA has not yet submitted these, submit the form(s) as soon as possible for your LEA to return to full compliance with the program.
- **Facilitate the Time Study Process:** Continue to complete required actions related to the RMTS for FY 2025-26.
  - Work closely with your RMTS Unit to ensure that deadlines for the RMTS are met.
  - Review your TSP List to prepare for Quarter 4, which begins on April 1, 2026.
    - Need guidance on what is the best way to develop your TSP list? The [October 2024 TSP Training](#) has detailed information and best practices.

Subject:

DHCS - LEA BOP Quarterly Newsletter – January 2026

- Work with your TSPs to ensure that moments are responded to timely and that TSPs provide detailed descriptions of who they were with, what they were doing, and why they were doing the activity at the time of their sampled moment.
- **Submit the CRCS:** The CRCS for FY 2024-25 is due Monday, March 2, 2026 (the usual due date of March 1 is a Sunday in 2026).
  - The CRCS Check-In meeting will be held on February 4, 2026.
  - For LEAs that bill to the CYBHI Fee Schedule in FY 2024-25, there is an LEA BOP Provider Check-In meeting on February 11, 2026, to go over how to include practitioners rendering services in both programs on the LEA BOP CRCS.

## Look Ahead: Things to do for April – June 2026

- Attend the April QM and the upcoming LEA BOP trainings (see dates below).
- Prepare your Quarter 1 TSP List and work with your RMTS Unit to prepare for the July to September time study.

## Technical Assistance

DHCS is committed to supporting LEA BOP Providers in every aspect of the program, helping maximize billing opportunities and maintain compliance, including accurate completion and timely submission of the CRCS. TA visits go beyond compliance; they demonstrate the Provider Relations Unit's dedication to empowering providers through comprehensive, hands-on support.

During FY 2024–25, the Provider Relations Unit successfully completed over 69 TA visits, covering a wide range of topics, from general enrollment guidance to complex settlement adjustments. Building on this momentum, 25 TA visits have been completed since November 2025, with 14 additional visits currently scheduled or in progress. If you are interested in TA, please fill out the [TA Form](#) and submit it to [LEA@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:LEA@dhcs.ca.gov). Once submitted, DHCS will reach out to schedule a virtual meeting with you to answer any questions and provide the support that is needed for your LEA.

## LEA BOP Reminders, Meetings, and Trainings

Subject:

DHCS - LEA BOP Quarterly Newsletter – January 2026

<b>Date/Time:</b>	<b>Reminders/Meetings/Trainings:</b>
January 28, 2026 (10:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)	LEA BOP Quarterly Meeting Afternoon Session (beginning at 1:00 p.m.): TSIP Training
February 4, 2026 (2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.)	FY 2024-25 CRCS Check-In Meeting
February 11, 2026 (10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)	FY 2024-25 CYBHI Fee Schedule Provider Check-In Meeting: How to Include Practitioners Rendering Services in Both Programs on the LEA BOP CRCS
February 18, 2026 (9:00 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.)	RMTS/SMAA Quarterly Call
March 2, 2026	<b>DUE:</b> CRCS for FY 2024-25
March 4, 2026 (1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.)	TSP Quarter 1 List Development Training
March 18, 2026 (1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.)	TSP Quarter 1 List Development Check-In Training
April 29, 2026 (10:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)	LEA BOP Quarterly Meeting Afternoon Session (beginning at 1:00 p.m.): Documentation and Audit Readiness
May 20, 2026 (9:00 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.)	RMTS/SMAA Quarterly Call
July 1, 2026	<b>NEW:</b> Quarter 1 Time Survey Begins (July to September RMTS)

**Please note these training dates and times are tentative and subject to change.** DHCS will send e-blasts to confirm each training date in advance. Sign up [LEA BOP list serv](#) to receive updates and additional information on meetings, program policy updates, and reminders.

Subject:  
DHCS - LEA BOP Quarterly Newsletter – January 2026

## Meet the LEA BOP Staff

### Local Governmental Financing Division

Charles (Chuck) Anders, Division Chief

### Medi-Cal Claims and Services Branch

Regina Zerne, Chief

### School-Based Claiming and Services Section

Stephanie Magee, Chief

LEA BOP Policy & Fiscal Unit	LEA BOP Provider Relations Unit
<b>Areas of expertise:</b> Policy Claims processing	<b>Areas of expertise:</b> Outreach and enrollment Technical assistance RMTS participation Program compliance
<b>Staff:</b> Toua Vang, Chief Tiffany Lai Mindy Vang Danna Ramos	<b>Staff:</b> Sarah Borkowski, Chief Lacey Allred Trung Tran Sherri Crandley Leilany Perez Luke Foster

### LEA Medi-Cal Billing Option Program | Department of Health Care Services

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Subject:

DHCS - LEA BOP Quarterly Newsletter – January 2026

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