



Michelle Baass | Director

DATE: February 12, 2026

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS Letter No.:26-05
ALL COUNTY WELFARE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY MEDS LIAISONS

SUBJECT: UPDATED GUIDANCE ON ELECTRONIC NOTICES
(Reference: All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL): [23-11](#), Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter (MEDIL) No.: [I 14-19](#), California Department of Social Services (CDSS) All County Letter (ACL): [13-61](#), ACL: [19-39](#))

Purpose

The purpose of this All-County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide counties with updated guidance on providing Medi-Cal members with electronic notice (e-notice) options.

Background

In 2013, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) released [ACL 13-61](#) regarding e-notices and the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approval of waivers to allow households to opt-in to receive e-notices. In 2014, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), in compliance with the Affordable Care Act, Section 435.918(a) of Title 42, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), released [MEDIL I14-19](#) informing the counties of the intent to leverage the electronic Notice of Action (e-NOA) or e-notice process used by CDSS to provide members with notices electronically. The MEDIL informed counties that as the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) moves forward with their effort to provide e-notices to members, DHCS will be leveraging the same e-notice process for the Medi-Cal program.

Updated Medi-Cal E-notice Requirements

In accordance with federal requirements ([42 CFR 435.918](#)), Medi-Cal applicants and members must be given a choice of receiving notices and information in electronic format or by regular mail and must be permitted to change such election. The member may opt-in or out of receiving e-notices by updating their preference on their secure BenefitsCal account for their Medi-Cal case. E-notices generated by CalSAWS are not available in the BenefitsCal Community-Based Organization (CBO) accounts, however, are available through the member's BenefitsCal account and/or California Healthcare Eligibility, Enrollment and Retention System (CalHEERS) account.

If a member calls or goes in person to the local county office to opt-in to receiving e-notices the local county office must direct them to update their preference through their secure BenefitsCal account and if the member does not have an account, the local county office should assist them in opening a BenefitsCal account. The local county office, however, may opt-out of e-notices for members through CalSAWS when necessary. If the applicant/member elects to receive communications from their local county office electronically, the local county office must:

1. Send a notice ([NA 1274](#)) via regular mail to the individual informing them that they have chosen to receive their Medi-Cal notices electronically. Ensure that the individual is informed of their right to change such election to receive notices through regular mail.
2. Post notices to the individual's electronic account within one (1) business day of notice generation.
3. Send an email alerting the individual that a notice has been posted to their account. The local county office may not include confidential information in the email.
4. Send a notice by regular mail within three (3) business days of the date of a failed email communication when the email is returned undeliverable.
5. At the individual's request, provide any notice posted to the individual's electronic account through regular mail. In addition, the local county office is required to ensure that the following conditions are met:

- Upon the individual's opt-in, ensure that BenefitsCal sent out a test email to confirm the email address of the applicant/member is valid.
 - Test message states, "Thanks for signing up for E-Notifications. E-Notifications are e-mail alerts that let you know there is correspondence to be viewed in your BenefitsCal account. Before we can start sending e-mail alerts, we need to verify your e-mail address. Please click the following link to verify your email address."
 - If a test email is rejected, a second attempt should be sent ensuring no typographical errors are made.
 - If the email provided is invalid, the local county office shall contact the applicant/member to confirm the correct email address.
 - The local county office shall document in case files if the test email went through or not. If not, counties shall continue sending hard copies by U.S. mail.
 - If an applicant/member reports a new or updated email address, the local county office must follow the above-described procedures.
- The local county office must only provide e-notices through the member's secure BenefitsCal account.
- The local county office must inform members that their e-notice can only be viewed through their online secure BenefitsCal account.
- The local county office must ensure that every e-notice contains the same information as the corresponding paper notice.
- The local county office must maintain the same records for e-notices including all e-NOAs with errors as the local county office maintains for NOAs that are mailed to applicants and members.
- The local county office must include a link to the Medi-Cal member's secure BenefitsCal account's login page when notifying applicants/members that they have an e-notice available.

Note: Counties are reminded to review the CalSAWS online training resource for additional guidance on e-notification automations.

Member Opt-in and Opt-out

Medi-Cal members may opt-in to receive their notices electronically through their BenefitsCal account instead of by mail. No separate consent form is required to enroll. If a member contacts the local county office to request e-notices, the local county office must document the request in the case file and refer the member to their BenefitsCal account to opt-in to e-notices. The local county office must inform members that they will no longer receive paper notices, and their Medi-Cal information and e-notices will only be accessible through their secure BenefitsCal online account. Members can opt-out of e-notices at any time by contacting the local county office by phone, in person, or through their BenefitsCal account. When a member opts out, the local county office must verify that the member's mailing address on file is correct and update the member's preference in their CalSAWS case file. The members will immediately begin receiving their Medi-Cal correspondence in hard copy through the mail. Whenever a member changes their e-notice status, the local county office must send a confirmation email notifying them of the update.

Types of E-notices

The notices that may be sent to Medi-Cal members electronically through their secure BenefitsCal account include, but are not limited to:

- Notices of action
- Requests for information/verification
- Renewal packets (MC 216, 210RV, and 217)
 - Note: In the event that a member has not responded to the renewal request after the first e-reminder has been sent, a paper reminder notice must be mailed to the member.

E-notices not covered by this letter include any informal county communication that is not mandated by state or federal statute or regulation. For example, counties may send informal messages by email or text, and these do not need to be sent officially to a secure personal online account. However, such communications must not contain any client or case-identifying information.

How to Promote E-notices

DHCS encourages the counties to inform Medi-Cal applicants and members of the significance of establishing a secure BenefitsCal account and the advantages of enrolling in e-notice services. This initiative is particularly vital for vulnerable populations, such as individuals experiencing homelessness and those frequently relocating across counties, as it will enhance communication and keep members informed regarding their case status, reporting requirements, and due dates. These efforts can help foster a stronger connection between counties and members to improve communications and timely response to prevent discontinuances.

Some of the ways to increase Medi-Cal members' participation in a paperless system may include:

- Implementing a communication strategy by sending members notices via various channels—such as mailing flyers, emails, or texts about ability to get their case information faster through e-notices and that it is easy to opt-in.
- Sending reminders directly to Medi-Cal members through their online account to create awareness that it is easy to receive e-notices through their online account, or they may contact their local county Medi-Cal office for assistance.
- Mentioning the option for e-notices during pre-recorded and live-telephone communications with applicants and members.
- Encouraging members that only have a CalHEERS account to sign up for a BenefitsCal account to receive Medi-Cal e-notices.

If you have any questions or if we can provide further information, please send a policy clarification request to MCEDPolicy@dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Sarah Crow, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division
Department of Health Care Services