November 9, 2001

MMCD Policy Letter 01-02

TO: [ ] County Organized Health System Plan (COHS)  
[X] Geographic Managed Care (GMC) Plans  
[X] Prepaid Health Plans (PHP)  
[X] Primary Care Case Management (PCCM) Plans  
[X] Two-Plan Model Plans

SUBJECT: Conversion of MESH to the Medi-Cal Web Site

PURPOSE

The purpose of this letter is to inform the Medi-Cal managed care plans (MCPs) that the Medi-Cal Extranet for State Healthcare (MESH) system will be phased out, beginning in December of 2001. The existing secure Medi-Cal web site will replace MESH. Fiscal Intermediary Access to MEDS Eligibility (FAME) file downloads, encounter data uploads, and all related transactions for current MESH users will move from MESH to the Medi-Cal web site. The Medi-Cal Managed Care Division (MMCD) is requesting confirmation of each affected plan’s ability or inability to access FAME files and upload encounter data at the new site, and specific reasons for any plan’s inability to access the new site. In addition, MMCD is asking for any comments, concerns, or questions your plan has about this change on the enclosed MESH conversion response form. The response form also lists the minimum system requirements necessary to obtain files from the site. If MMCD does not receive a response from your plan by November 15, 2001, MMCD will assume that you have no significant issues with the MESH-to-Internet conversion. Receiving responses by this date will give MMCD two to four weeks to address your concerns before the December Implementation.

BACKGROUND

Currently, all managed care plans, except County Organized Health Systems (COHSs), are obtaining Medi-Cal beneficiary information and uploading encounter data via MESH through daily and/or monthly downloads and uploads. Electronic Data Systems Corporation (EDS) maintains MESH. EDS recently proposed making the FAME file and encounter data transmissions accessible through Medi-Cal’s Public Internet Infrastructure. This is consistent with the Department of Health Service’s (DHS) desire
to have a single entry point to Medi-Cal related sources. DHS agreed to EDS’ proposal regarding the design aspects of the conversion. The development, testing and implementation phases are the next steps in the conversion process.

The new file upload and download site will reside on the current secure Medi-Cal website. The site was developed using the existing infrastructure and is currently in production for other Medi-Cal related transactions. Cosmetic changes are being made to the new site to bring it into conformance to the State’s Style Implementation Guidelines for State-related web sites. MMCD does not anticipate any problems during the conversion, but please keep in mind the possibility of unforeseen difficulties occurring during the testing phase which may affect the development, testing, or implementation timelines.

The conversion will occur as follows:

**October 31, 2001** Development phase is expected to be completed.

**November 1, 2001** Testing phase is expected to begin and continue through November 30, 2001 for current MESH users that want to test the change prior to the implementation. Test phase participants will be notified via email of the official testing start date, as well as the process of accessing the site. Log-on procedures, including user names and passwords, are expected to change.

**December 2001** Implementation into Production is expected to begin. All MCPs can begin accessing the new web site through the Public Internet using their Internet Service Provider (ISP). A 90-day transition period is tentatively scheduled to start. For those MESH users that were unable to test prior to the implementation, the test region will be available during this period.

**March 1, 2002** Termination of DHS’ contract with Sprint for the private network which supported MESH is expected to occur.

**DISCUSSION**

Attendees of the March 21, 2001 MIS Workgroup reviewed EDS’ proposal for the conversion from MESH to the existing secure Medi-Cal website. All attendees expressed approval for the MESH conversion, primarily because of reduced costs to the plans and greater ease of access to the FAME files and encounter data services. MMCD requested meeting attendees to submit questions about the proposal. DHS staff responded to those questions as follows:
• What Protocol will be used? Will a secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP) be used and will the security level be HIPAA compliant?
   The HTTP (HyperText Transfer Protocol) protocol will be used. The file transfer protocol will not be allowed after conversion is complete. The new system will have a front end and back end Firewall Server for security and will be HIPAA compliant.

• Will a Third Party validate the security of the Firewalls?
   No third party will be validating the security of the firewall. This website has been functional for quite a while. MESH will be added to the Medi-cal website. The site has been tested significantly since it was implemented. The testing document will be presented to DHS at a walkthrough with the results.

• Are any Health Plans performing Beta Testing?
   Yes, a test site will be up and will run concurrently with the current MESH website. Plans will be asked to submit test files.

• What is the contingency plan in case there are problems with the crossover from MESH to Internet?
   If the crossover were to fail during the trial period, Plans would still have the current MESH access to FAME files.

• Will the Internet access match the current site regarding file availability and encounter data?
   Yes.

• Will it have at least the same functionality as MESH currently has? If not, what will be lost? If it has more, what are the new functions?
   The new site will have the same file upload and download capability. In addition, providers can check share of cost information, upload claims, check Medicare drug pricing, etc.

• What will the end-user cost be (from the plan’s perspective)? Will the State pass any additional charges onto the plans?
   The only cost to the plans will be the cost of their Internet Service Provider (ISP). The State will impose no additional charges.
PLAN RESPONSE REQUESTED

MMCD is requesting each current MESH user to either confirm its readiness for, or describe any problem it expects to encounter with, the conversion from MESH to the secure Medi-Cal web site. Any anticipated inability to access the web site for purposes of FAME file downloads, encounter data uploads, and related transactions must be described. DHS will address any stated difficulties as soon as possible so as not to delay the conversion. Please complete and return the enclosed response form that is applicable to your plan by November 15, 2001. Again, no response from a plan by that date will be interpreted as indicating full readiness for the conversion. If you have any questions, please contact Roy Johnson, Chief of the Systems Support Unit at (916) 651-6639.

Sincerely,

Cheri Rice

Cheri Rice, Chief
Medi-Cal Managed Care Division

Enclosure
bcc: Ms. Linda Minamoto  
Associate Regional Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
Division of Medicaid  
75 Hawthorne Street, Fifth Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105-3903

Mr. Byron Chell, Executive Director  
CA Medical Assistance Commission  
770 L Street, Suite 1000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Kevin Aslanian  
C.C.W.R.O.  
1901 Alhambra Blvd.  
Sacramento, CA 95816

Lorraine Brown, Deputy Director  
Benefits & Quality Monitoring  
Medical Risk Management Insurance Board  
1000 G Street, Suite 450  
Sacramento, CA 95815

Carol Freels, Acting Chief  
Office of Long Term Care  
1800 Third Street, Suite 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Jerry Stanger, Chief  
Payment Systems Division  
9800 Old Winery Place  
Sacramento, CA 95827

Roberto Martinez, Chief  
Medi-Cal Policy Division  
8/1561

Ben Thomas, Acting Chief  
Medi-Cal Operations Division  
600 North 10th St., Suite 230C  
Sacramento, CA 95814
Robert P. Pierson, Chief
Office of Medi-Cal Dental Services
11155 International Drive, Bldg. C
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Vivian Auble, Acting Chief
Third Party Liability Branch
Payment Systems Division
591 North 7th Street, 2nd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Maridee Gregory, M.D., Chief
Children’s Medical Services Branch
Primary Care & Family Health Division
8/350

Jan Inglish, Chief
Medical Review Branch
Audits and Investigations
591 N. 7th Street, 1st Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Winston Mesaku, Chief
Medical Review Branch – San Francisco
Audits and Investigations
185 Berry Street, Room 280
San Francisco, CA 94107

Janet Olsen-Coyle, Chief
Headquarters Management Branch
Payment Systems Division
9800 Old Winery Place
Sacramento, CA 95827

Ted Spelis, Chief
Health Care Options Section
Payment Systems Division
10365 Old Placerville Road, Room 230
Sacramento, CA 95827

Mickey Richie
Local Liaison
Executive Office
8/1253
To utilize the web site, the minimum system requirements are Windows 95 or higher, a Web browser, and a 28.8 kbps or faster modem.

OUR PLAN CURRENTLY HAS ACCESS TO THE INTERNET. ACCESS IS VIA:
- ______ kbps (speed) MODEM
- ISDN
- Cable MODEM
- DSL
- T1 or T3
- OTHER: ____________________________

OUR PLAN WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET BY (DATE): ________________

OUR PLAN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCESS FAME FILES AND ENCOUNTER DATA SERVICES VIA THE SECURE MEDI-CAL WEBSITE.
REASON: ____________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

COMMENTS, CONCERNS, OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONVERSION:
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

Information Systems Officer Signature/Date

Plan CEO Signature/Date

If you specified that you are unable to utilize the new site, or you posted questions, who would you like a response directed to?

Name: ____________________________ Title/Position: ____________________________

email: ____________________________ Phone: (____) ____________________________