



News Release

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STATE LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO HELP CALIFORNIANS RETAIN HEALTH COVERAGE

***State Seeks Coverage Ambassadors to Reach Medi-Cal Beneficiaries in Culturally
and Linguistically Appropriate Ways***

SACRAMENTO — California is launching a statewide effort to help Medi-Cal beneficiaries keep their Medi-Cal coverage or be enrolled in other coverage.

During the national public health emergency (PHE), the annual reevaluation of ongoing eligibility was temporarily paused to ensure vulnerable Californians had ongoing access to health coverage. When the PHE ends, the state will resume normal Medi-Cal eligibility operations and the annual eligibility review. As a result of that process, two to three million beneficiaries could no longer be eligible for Medi-Cal. The state, along with its partners, are engaging in a comprehensive campaign to reach beneficiaries with information about what to expect and what they need to do to keep their health coverage.

“With Medi-Cal enrollment at an all-time high, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has been actively preparing for this unprecedented event for many months, and has implemented a coordinated campaign to reach beneficiaries with important messages across multiple channels using trusted partners called DHCS Coverage Ambassadors,” said State Medicaid Director Jacey Cooper.

DHCS has launched a customizable [Medi-Cal Continuous Coverage toolkit](#) and [webpage](#) to help trusted entities and individuals act as DHCS Coverage Ambassadors to push communications to Medi-Cal beneficiaries to encourage them to update their contact information with their counties to ensure they receive important information about keeping their Medi-Cal coverage.

The effort is one of many being launched across the nation as Medicaid (known as Medi-Cal in California) and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) will soon begin the process of redetermining eligibility for about 85 million people nationally who use these programs to access health care. National estimates place the number of individuals who might lose Medicaid or CHIP coverage at about 16 million.

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In California, Medicaid enrollment has increased roughly 16 percent, from 12.5 million in March 2020 (the start of the pandemic) to 14.5 million today. Beneficiaries no longer eligible for Medi-Cal may qualify for tax subsidies that allow them to access affordable coverage through Covered California, or they may be eligible through their employer-based health coverage.

Additionally, Covered California, in partnership with DHCS, will launch a program to ensure that eligible individuals losing Medi-Cal will not experience a gap in coverage by enrolling in Covered California with financial help. Eligible consumers will need to confirm their selection of a Covered California health plan and pay any required premium within a month of their disenrollment from Medi-Cal.

“Our primary goals through the DHCS Coverage Ambassador campaign are to help our beneficiaries keep their current Medi-Cal coverage, get free or low-cost coverage from Covered California or other government programs, or transition to their employer-sponsored health coverage,” said Cooper. “We will look to do warm handoffs of individuals who no longer qualify for Medi-Cal to programs that can help.”

The eligibility redeterminations will be conducted by counties based upon a beneficiary’s next annual renewal date (done on a rolling basis and not all at once). Before the PHE, California would review information provided by beneficiaries annually and renew their coverage if they still qualified. When the COVID-19 continuous coverage requirement expires at the end of the PHE, California will need to conduct a full redetermination for all beneficiaries. States will have up to 12 months, plus two additional months due to renewal processing policies, to return to normal eligibility and enrollment operations, which includes conducting a full renewal for all individuals enrolled in Medi-Cal and CHIP.

DHCS will shift the focus of the campaign 60 days prior to the end of the COVID-19 PHE and will encourage beneficiaries to report any changes in their personal circumstances, and check their mail for upcoming renewal packets, should the county be unable to complete the renewal using information already available to them without having to contact the beneficiary.

Updated toolkits will be posted on the [DHCS website](#) and be distributed to people who signed up to serve as DHCS Coverage Ambassadors. DHCS encourages everyone to join the mailing list to receive the latest information and updated toolkits.

“As additional toolkits or resources become available, DHCS will also email critical updates to keep DHCS Coverage Ambassadors informed so they can spread the word to their community,” said Cooper.

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