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



LEA BOP NEWSLETTER
Program Announcements!
April 23, 2026

LEA BOP Quarterly Meeting | Successfully Coordinating Program Overlap: CYBHI, LEA BOP, and SMAA | New Requirements for FY 2026-27 | Removing Barriers and Expanding the Program with Medicaid State Plan Amendment | Coming Soon: New Data Use Agreement | Action Items for April – June 2026 | Look Ahead: Things to Do for July – September 2026 | Technical Assistance | LEA BOP Reminders, Meetings and Trainings

Acronyms Used in this Newsletter

CMS	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
CYBHI	Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative
CRCS	Cost and Reimbursement Comparison Schedule
DHCS	Department of Health Care Services
DUA	Data Use Agreement
FY	Fiscal Year
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IFPS	Individualized Family Services Plan
LEA	Local Educational Agency
LEA BOP	Local Educational Agency Medi-Cal Billing Option Program
MER	Medi-Cal Enrollment Ratio
ORP	Ordering, Referring, or Prescribing
PPL	Policy and Procedure Letter
RMTS	Random Moment Time Study
RMTS AU	Administrative Unit
SMAA	School-Based Medi-Cal Administrative Program
SELPA	Special Education Local Plan Area
SPA	State Plan Amendment
TA	Technical Assistance
TSP	Time Study Participant

This LEA BOP Quarterly Newsletter edition brings you the latest program updates and a preview of some of the key topics that we will explore during the April 2026 Quarterly Meeting. As we wrap up Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 in this final quarter and look ahead to FY 2026-27, this newsletter also highlights information that you will need to know to help keep your LEA informed, compliant, and prepared.

LEA BOP Quarterly Meeting

The upcoming Quarterly Meeting is an excellent chance for LEAs and program partners to come together to stay current with program updates and through targeted training, learn best practices for your LEA to be successful in the program and maximize potential reimbursement opportunities. The next Quarterly Meeting is on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with a one-hour lunch break. Here's what you can expect:

The morning session launches at 10:30 a.m. with important agenda items and updates including:

- Program Status Updates
- Practitioner Enrollment Updates
- Specialized Medical Transportation Services Updates

In the afternoon session, beginning at 1:00 p.m., we will dive into RMTS training on the following topics:

- Random Moment Time Study (RMTS) Refresher
- Best Practices for Moment Responses
- Audit-Ready RMTS Documentation

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These sessions are designed to help LEAs successfully administer the LEA BOP and maintain full compliance across all program areas. Please [register to attend the upcoming Quarterly Meeting](#).

Successfully Coordinating Program Overlap: CYBHI, LEA BOP, and SMAA

Unlock exciting funding opportunities by optimizing the coordination of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) Fee Schedule Program, LEA BOP, and the School-Based Medi-Cal Administrative Activity (SMAA) Program! Clear roles and streamlined processes ensure you avoid duplicate payments and truly maximize your reimbursement potential. If your LEA is enrolled in both LEA BOP and CYBHI, get ready to boost your impact — LEA BOP covers essential physical and mental health services for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)/Individualized Family Services Plans (IFSPs), while the CYBHI Fee Schedule Program brings added funding for behavioral health and substance use disorder services outside those plans, all through a fee-for-service model. What program works well with both LEA BOP and CYBHI? The SMAA Program! The SMAA Program elevates your administrative support, making it easier than ever to facilitate Medicaid services.

To navigate these exciting programs seamlessly, it is crucial to know exactly which services to bill to which program, maintain top-notch documentation, and ensure your team is well-versed in RMTS rules and billing requirements. Assign dedicated staff for each program and keep communication flowing to prevent billing hiccups and payment overlaps.

As we continue strengthening coordination across CYBHI, LEA BOP, and SMAA, there are two exciting opportunities on the horizon to help LEAs deepen their understanding of how these programs work together. This May, the California Department of Education will host a joint presentation featuring all three programs. This session will provide a high-level overview of each program. More information, including registration details, will be shared through DHCS and CDE communications. Looking further ahead, CDE is also planning a fall training in October that will provide a deeper dive into program specifics.

For LEAs looking to get a head start, DHCS has posted the [LEA Participation in both LEA BOP and CYBHI Fee Schedule Program training](#). This resource is an excellent way for teams to begin preparing early and build a solid foundation for coordinating the three programs.

New Requirements for FY 2026-27

Practitioner Enrollment

With the release of the 2023 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) guidance, a new requirement will be effective for practitioners providing services in a school-based setting. Effective FY 2026-27, all eligible practitioners must separately enroll as a Medi-Cal provider for the LEA to be eligible to receive funding for that practitioner's services. 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 practitioners that ordered, referred, or prescribed services (referred to as ORP practitioners).

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.
 - Note that practitioners who utilize the ORP enrollment option may receive up to a one-year retroactive effective date, allowing them to apply through June 30, 2027, and be in full compliance. Practitioners who choose to submit a different application type must apply by June 30, 2026, and will receive an effective date no earlier than the date their application is received by DHCS.
- 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.
- Practitioners who hold a license and a credential are not required to enroll in Medi-Cal under their license if they were hired specifically for their credential and only perform duties associated with that credential.
- LEAs may continue billing for services provided by practitioners **who do not have an enrollment pathway**.

[Policy and Procedure Letter \(PPL\) 26-001](#) contains detailed guidance on enrolling eligible practitioners, including a list of practitioners with an eligible enrollment pathway.

To support this transition:

- DHCS provided training on this topic on November 20, 2025. Please refer to the [LEA BOP Practitioner Enrollment in Medi-Cal Training](#) for details.

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- [Practitioner Enrollment Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) were sent out via E-blast on March 19, 2026, and published to the LEA BOP FAQs webpage.

DHCS implemented a phased-in approach to provide a suggested timeline for each practitioner type to submit an ORP application, which provides a smooth transition and allows ample time for practitioners to enroll while supporting the workload management for our partners at DHCS. The phased-in approach was sent out via E-blast on April 2, 2026.

No changes will be made to the RMTS in relation to the upcoming practitioner enrollment requirement! LEAs should continue to include Time Study Participants (TSPs) as they normally would.

Specialized Medical Transportation

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

- The student receives a LEA BOP-covered medical service (other than transportation) at the service site.
- The service (other than transportation) must meet all requirements to be billable to LEA BOP.
- Both the covered service and the transportation must be authorized in the students' IEP or IFSP.
- ***NEW*** The medical need for the specific adaptations must be documented in the IEP or IFSP.

With the release of the 2023 CMS guidance, a new requirement will be effective to bill LEA BOP for specialized medical transportation services. In addition to the criteria noted above, effective July 1, 2026, LEAs must also document the medical need for physical or environmental adaptations required during transport in the students' IEP/IFSP. DHCS is working with the LEA BOP Ad Hoc Workgroup Policy Subcommittee and Special Educational Local Plan Areas (SELPAs) to gather feedback to assist LEAs with meeting this new requirement and will publish a new specialized medical transportation PPL and claiming guide soon. In the meantime, DHCS encourages LEAs to begin reviewing and updating their IEP/IFSP documentation processes to include a designated area that can be used to identify the specific adaptation and medical need for the adaptation.

Removing Barriers and Expanding the Program with Medicaid State Plan Amendment (SPA)

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 will first post the SPA for a public comment period. DHCS will notify LEAs with an e-blast once the public notice period begins. Once the public comment period ends DHCS will submit it to CMS for review and approval. The SPA features service expansions and updates designed to remove participation barriers.

Key changes include:

- Expansion of qualified practitioners.
- Addition of new rate for vaccine administration.
- Addition of photoscreeners as a valid screening tool for vision screening.
- Addition of payment methodology language for the new 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, which is especially impactful for community colleges and public institutes of higher education.
- Removal of the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals requirement for Orientation and Mobility Specialist.
- Update to specialized medical transportation calculation of the one-way trip ratio when LEAs can directly identify specialized transportation costs.
- Established proxy rates for Community Health Workers and Certified Wellness Coaches.
- Update to payment methodology for practitioners that have “proxy” rates, in cases where DHCS now has sufficient cost data to establish cost-based rates for these practitioner types.

Exciting News: LEAs will be able to add these four new practitioners to their Q1 TSP List!

**Licensed Professional
Clinical Counselors**

Community Health Workers

**Associate Professional
Clinical Counselors**

Certified Wellness Coaches

Coming Soon: New Data Use Agreement (DUA)

The DUA is required for LEAs to obtain data from DHCS for the LEA BOP. Historically, this has included obtaining data to calculate the Medi-Cal Enrollment Ratio (MER), which is a key component of the LEA BOP payment methodology.

Following the publication of the 2023 CMS guidance, DHCS started working in collaboration with the California Department of Education. Going forward, DHCS will provide the MER for participating LEAs. The current DUA, the data match and its authorized processes will no longer be effective after June 30, 2026. A new DUA will be released soon for LEAs to complete.

More information and training will be provided on these changes in the near future. Subscribe to the [LEA BOP Listserv](#) and be on the lookout for more information to come!

Action Items for April – June 2026

- **Submit the CRCS (Now Overdue):** Submitting the LEA BOP Cost and Reimbursement Comparison Schedule (CRCS) cost report is the final step of cost-reconciliation and is essential for continued participation in the program. If your LEA has not yet submitted the FY 2024–25 report (due March 2, 2026), submit it as soon as possible so your LEA can return to full compliance.
- Stay informed on the latest program updates and take advantage of the upcoming April QM on Wednesday, April 29. The afternoon session is focused on Best Practices for Moment Responses and Audit-Ready RMTS Documentation. Please [register to attend the upcoming Quarterly Meeting](#).
- **Facilitate the Time Study Process:** Continue to complete required actions related to the RMTS for FY 2026-27.
 - This is the first time LEA BOP has done a time study in Q1. Keep in mind that your RMTS Administrative Unit (RMTS AU) has specific deadlines for the TSP List. Reach out to your RMTS AU to confirm these dates and ask questions about what will be different this year.
 - Review your TSP List to prepare for Quarter 1, which occurs from July through September.
 - Need guidance on developing your TSP list? The [October 2024 TSP Training](#) has detailed information and best practices.

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- 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.

Look Ahead: Things to do for July – September 2026

- Mark your calendar for the August QM and upcoming LEA BOP trainings (see dates below). These sessions will offer important guidance and updates.
- Update your Quarter 1 list and work with your RMTS AU to confirm the approved personnel that need to be on the TSP list for FY 2026–27 Quarter 2, ensuring your LEA is ready well before the quarter begins.
- Help your TSPs successfully participate in the first Quarter 1 time study!

Technical Assistance (TA)

DHCS is dedicated to helping LEA BOP Providers thrive in every aspect of the program, from maximizing billing opportunities to maintaining compliance with program requirements. Behind every successful TA visit is the LEA BOP Provider Relations Unit’s commitment to supporting providers through personalized, hands-on assistance.

In the last fiscal year (FY 2024–25), the LEA BOP Provider Relations Unit successfully completed 70 TA visits, covering a variety of topics, ranging from enrollment guidance to helping LEAs understand their audit settlement adjustments. This FY has been even busier! As of April 2026, the LEA BOP Provider Relations Unit has already completed 80 TA visits, with more on the way for the remaining months of FY 2025-26 (May through June). Interested in a TA visit? Simply complete and submit a [TA Request Form](#) to LEA@dhcs.ca.gov. A team member will follow-up with you to schedule a virtual meeting to provide the necessary support to help your LEA succeed in the program with confidence.

LEA BOP Reminders, Meetings, and Trainings

Date/Time:	Reminders/Meetings/Trainings:
April 29, 2026	LEA BOP Quarterly Meeting

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Date/Time:	Reminders/Meetings/Trainings:
(10:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)	Afternoon Session (beginning at 1:00 p.m.): RMTS Refresher, Best Practices for Moment Responses, and Audit-Ready RMTS Documentation
May 20, 2026 (9:00 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.)	RMTS/SMAA Quarterly Call
July 1, 2026	NEW: Quarter 1 Time Study Begins (July to September RMTS)
August 5, 2026 (10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.)	LEA BOP Quarterly Meeting Afternoon Session (beginning at 1:00 p.m.): Topic TBD

Please note these training dates and times are subject to change, so keep an eye out for e-blasts that will confirm each session. To stay informed on meetings, program policy updates, and reminders, [sign up online to receive notifications from DHCS](#).

Meet the LEA BOP Staff

Local Governmental Financing Division

Charles (Chuck) Anders, Chief

Medi-Cal Claims and Services Branch

Regina Zerne, Chief

School-Based Claiming Services Section

Stephanie Magee, Chief

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LEA BOP Policy & Fiscal Unit	LEA BOP Provider Relations Unit
Areas of expertise: Policy Claims processing Fiscal Analysis	Areas of expertise: Outreach and enrollment Technical assistance RMTS participation Program compliance
Staff: Toua Vang, Chief Tiffany Lai Mindy Vang Danna Ramos Andrew Khang *NEW*	Staff: Sarah Borkowski, Chief Lacey Allred Trung Tran Leilany Perez Luke Foster Phoebe Lam *NEW*

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