

CALIFORNIA CHILDREN'S SERVICES (CCS) ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

Agenda

1:00 – 1:05	Welcome and Housekeeping
1:05 – 1:10	Director Remarks
1:10 – 1:20	July Meeting recap
1:20 – 1:50	2025 CCS Priorities
1:50 – 2:05	Break
2:05 – 2:25	Medi-Cal Rx: Pharmacy Benefits
2:25 – 2:40	Program Update
2:40 – 3:00	Public Comment

Housekeeping and Meeting Logistics

- » Meeting information is available on the [CCS Advisory Group](#) webpage.
- » All meeting participants are muted upon entry.
- » Questions and Chat Comments from CCS Advisory Group members will be addressed in the meeting. Attendees and members of the public may ask questions or make comments during the Public Comment period.
- » CCS Advisory Group members: Please "Raise Your Hand" or use the chat feature to submit questions.
- » All other Attendees: The raise hand feature will be available during the public comment period.
- » Live Closed Captioning will be available during the meeting.
- » The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is recording the meeting for internal note-taking purposes only.

DIRECTOR REMARKS

Director Remarks

» New Member Introductions

- Jaime Ordonez, CCS Administrator, Yolo County
- Tanesha Castaneda, CCS Administrator, Santa Barbara County
- Paloma Barazza, Family Advisory Committee, Central California Alliance for Health

CCS Advisory Group Members

- » **Paloma Barazza**, Family Advisory Committee Member, Central California Alliance for Health
- » **Katherine Barresi**, Chief Health Services Officer, Partnership Health Plan of California
- » **Tanesha Castaneda**, CCS Program Administrator, Santa Barbara County CCS Program
- » **Lianna Chen**, Family Advisory Committee Members, Health Plan of San Mateo
- » **Jerry Cheng, MD.**, Chief of Pediatrics LA & Pediatrics Specialties Lead, Kaiser Permanente SCAL
- » **Whitney Clark**, Service Line Director – Women's and Children's Services, Sutter Health
- » **Janis Connallon**, Project Director, Family Voices
- » **Stephanie Dansker**, Board Member/Patient, Bleeding Disorders Council of California
- » **Kristen Dimou**, California Children's Branch Chief, San Diego County HHS
- » **Mary Giammona, MD.**, Medical Director, Molina Healthcare California
- » **Michelle Gibbons**, Executive Director, County Health Executives Association of California
- » **Allison Gray**, Program Officer, Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health

CCS Advisory Group Members

- » **Kelly Hardy**, Senior Managing Director, Children Now
- » **Dominique Hensler**, Director, Rady Children's Hospital and Health Center
- » **Michael Hunn**, CEO, CalOptima
- » **Erin Kelly**, Executive Director, Children's Specialty Care Coalition
- » **Ann Kinkor**, Coordinator State Legislative Agency, Epilepsy California
- » **Linnea Koopmans**, CEO, Local Health Plans of California
- » **Ann Kuhns**, President and CEO, California Children's Hospital Association
- » **Beth Malinowski**, Governmental Affairs Advocate, SEIU California
- » **Carol A. Miller, MD.**, Medical Consultant, CCS Medical Advisory Committee
- » **Dianna Myers, MD.**, Medical Director, Central California Alliance for Health
- » **Jolie Onodera**, Senior Legislative Analyst, California State Association of Counties

CCS Advisory Group Members

- » **Jaime Ordonez**, CCS Program Administrator, Yolo County CCS Program
- » **Miriam Parsa**, Chief Pediatric Medical Officer, Cottage Children's Medical Center
- » **Mona Patel, MD.**, Department of Pediatrics, Children's Hospital Los Angeles Medical Group
- » **Kristen Rogers**, Family Advisory Committee Member, CalOptima
- » **Michelle Schenck-Soto**, Program Supervisor – PH Nursing, Imperial County CCS Program
- » **Laurie Soman**, Director, Children's Regional Integrated Service System (CRISS)
- » **Gina Stabile**, Family Advisory Committee Member, CenCal Health
- » **Jim Stein, MD.**, Board President, Children's Specialty Care Coalition
- » **Shelby Stockdale**, Whole Child Model Program Manager, CenCal Health
- » **Amy Westling**, Director of Policy, Association of Regional Care Centers
- » **Katrina Whitaker**, Director of Public Health Nursing, Sutter County CCS Program

JULY MEETING RECAP

July Meeting Recap

- » 2025 Priorities
- » Pediatric Integration: Pharmacy Benefits
- » Enhanced Care Management
- » County Compliance Monitoring and Oversight

2025 CCS PRIORITIES

2025 Priorities Update

- » Transition to Adulthood
- » CCS Panel Provider Expansion
- » CCS Quality Metrics Performance Measures
- » 2025 CCS Whole Child Model (WCM) Expansion
- » CCS Compliance, Monitoring and Oversight
- » Enhanced Care Management
- » Referral and Enrollment Analysis

Discussion

Email CCSProgram@dhcs.ca.gov



BREAK

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Pharmacy Benefits Updates

Bassant Khalil
Assistant Division Chief
Pharmacy Benefits Division

Agenda

- » State Budget Policy Updates
- » Medi-Cal Rx Operational Updates
- » Support for Members Aging Out of Pediatric Care

State Budget Policy Updates

- » Pursuant to the enacted [2025-26 State Budget](#), the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) will be implementing a series of Medi-Cal Rx policy updates to:
 - Reduce pharmacy spending,
 - Improve program integrity, including addressing fraud, waste, and abuse,
 - Ensure continued, equitable access to medically necessary, high-quality pharmacy benefits and services.
- » Changes will be effective on January 1, 2026.
- » As some will have no impact to the pediatric population, we will focus only those proposals that do have an impact.

Step Therapy for Select Medications

- » Part of the existing utilization management, including prior authorization (PA) request review process.
- » Providers may be asked for additional justification for unlisted Contract Drug List (CDL) medication approval.
- » Not expected to impact California Children Services (CCS) Panel Providers who currently have authority to prescribe most medications without a PA.
- » Providers without CCS Panel Provider status will need to submit justification for use of a non-CDL product when requesting PA approval. Continuing care will not be sufficient justification.

Changes to Continuing Care for Select Products

- » For medications that had been on the CDL, but are no longer included, continuation of therapy will not be automatically granted.
 - These medications will now require a PA for medical necessity.
- » CCS Panel Providers who have Panel Authority will not be impacted assuming the claim is not denied for other UM edits such as quantity or cost limits.
- » For non-paneled CCS providers:
 - PAs for non-CDL medications will be required, even when the member has a history with that medication while it was on the CDL.
- » DHCS will issue letters to impacted members to inform them of the change in coverage.
- » For the lists of drugs, refer to the State Budget Policy Updates tab on the [Medi-Cal Rx Education and Outreach webpage](#).

Coverage for Over-the-Counter (OTC) Covid-19 Antigen Tests

- » OTC Covid-19 Antigen Tests will require prior authorization approval for Medi-Cal Rx coverage.
 - PA requests are for one-time only approval and restricted to up to 4 tests per member, per 30 days.
 - Medical necessity must demonstrate a clinical need for testing.
- » When prescribed by CCS Panel Provider with Panel Authority, no PA will be required.

Exclusion of GLP-1 Drugs for Weight Loss

- » GLP-1 drugs indicated for weight loss and weight loss-related indications will be excluded from Medi-Cal Rx coverage for all Medi-Cal members.
- » GLP-1 drugs indicated for Type 2 diabetes or other non-weight loss related indications will continue to be a benefit with an ICD-10 code diagnosis.
- » DHCS will issue letters to all members to inform them of the change in coverage.

Resources

- » [90-Day Countdown: Upcoming Changes to Medi-Cal Rx](#) – Published October 1, 2025
- » [Upcoming Changes to Medi-Cal Rx](#) – Published August 19, 2025
- » [DHCS-FY-2025-26-Budget-Act-Highlights](#) – Released July 1, 2025
- » [2025-26 State Budget](#) – Enacted June 27, 2025
- » State Budget Policy Updates tab located on the [Medi-Cal Rx Education and Outreach webpage](#)

Medi-Cal Rx Operational Updates

- » Implementation of a “Clinical Literature Repository” for citation of clinical literature in PA requests – eliminates need to upload articles with PA request submission
- » Confirmation of holistic review of PA requests to enable override of cost limit when approving exemption from quantity limit for medical necessity – eliminates need for multiple PAs

Support for Members Aging Out of Pediatric Care

- » DHCS is exploring a policy change to allow prescriptions written by CCS Panel Providers with Panel Authority, for any pediatric member, to be eligible for a 100-day PA extension when the member becomes 21 years of age.
 - This provides a grace period while the member establishes relationship with an adult care provider.
 - This policy also aligns with the intent of the CCS Panel Provider Authority – to recognize the status of paneled providers and eliminate administrative burden for those caring for the most vulnerable pediatric patients.

Discussion

Email: Medi-Cal.PharmacyBenefits@dhcs.ca.gov



PROGRAM UPDATES

CCS Guidance Documents

Policy Document	Status	Next Steps
Low Protein Therapeutic Foods NL and Order Processing Manual	Posted on August 15th	
Special Care Centers Core Standards	Final executive review	Distribute and post to website
Community Health Worker Information Notice	Final executive review	Distribute and post to website
Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) Services for Private Duty Nursing (PDN) - Case Management NL	Final executive review	Distribute and post to website
Intercounty Transfer (ICT) NL	Being updated and finalized	Final executive review

CCS Guidance Documents

Policy Document	Status	Next Steps
Guidelines for the Recommendation and Authorization of Rental or Purchase of Durable Medical Equipment—Rehabilitation (DME-R)	DHCS internal review	Leadership review
Establishing Medical Necessity for Cochlear Implants and Related Services	DHCS internal review	Leadership review
Other Health Coverage	Preparing for external stakeholder review	External stakeholder review

PUBLIC COMMENT

Thank You

Next Meeting: January 21, 2026