

MEMORANDUM



DATE: January 24, 2025

TO: Los Angeles Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans

FROM: Bambi Cisneros, Acting Division Chief
Managed Care Quality & Monitoring Division
Department of Health Care Services

Signed by:
Bambi Cisneros
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SUBJECT: Resources to MCPs In Response to the Los Angeles County
Wildfires

***** This document will continue to be updated during the LA wildfires public health emergency *****

PURPOSE: The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) issues this memorandum and resources to Medi-Cal managed care plans (MCPs) in response to the public health emergency in Los Angeles County. Medi-Cal members are particularly vulnerable and may benefit from proactive outreach and support from MCPs, especially as it relates to care management (including Enhanced Care Management), transitional care, and Community Supports services. This guidance is intended to support MCPs in ensuring that impacted members receive timely, coordinated, and comprehensive services to address both immediate and long-term needs.

BACKGROUND: On January 7, 2025, Governor Gavin Newsom declared a State of Emergency, as outlined in [Executive Order N-2-25](#), in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties in response to the wildfires. On January 8, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. [declared](#) that a major disaster exists in the State of California in the areas affected by wildfires. On January 10, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra declared a Public Health Emergency (PHE) for California granting CMS additional flexibility to address the health needs of impacted individuals. These measures were made possible through extensive preparedness planning and proactive emergency response protocols. These efforts underscore a strong state and federal partnership, ensuring uninterrupted care and services during this emergency. The wildfires have caused significant displacement and hardship for Medi-Cal members. Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and Community Supports are integral components of the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) initiative and are designed to address the complex health and social needs of members. MCPs play a critical role in deploying these services effectively, including to members impacted by the wildfires, as medically appropriate.

Care Management, Transitional Care, and Community Supports Service Eligibility and Proactive Member Outreach and Support

Medi-Cal members impacted by the wildfires may have new needs for health services, health-related social needs, and care coordination. Wildfires may worsen or cause new health conditions, and members may become eligible for care management programs. Physical displacement or other wildfire-related factors may also create additional care coordination needs. For instance, members who are physically displaced from their homes due to wildfires may require additional transitional care services when leaving the hospital, need assistance accessing a new pharmacy, and may benefit from housing-related Community Supports.

DHCS expects MCPs and their contracted ECM and Community Supports providers to work closely with members impacted by the wildfires, including those experiencing homelessness, to determine eligibility and connect members with needed resources. Proactive outreach from MCPs is expected to ensure members are aware of available services including but not limited to Complex Care Management (CCM), ECM, Transitional Care Services, and Community Supports.

The ECM Policy Guide and Community Supports Policy Guide outline the framework and permissible uses of these services. The Population Health Management Policy guide outlines requirements for Plans' CCM and Transitional Care Services programs. MCPs are encouraged to reference these guides as well as relevant All Plan Letters, and the MCP contract for additional details:

- ECM Policy Guide: [ECM Policy Guide](#)
- Community Supports Policy Guide: [Community Supports Policy Guide](#)
- Population Health Management Policy Guide: [Population Health Management Policy Guide](#)
- All Plan Letters (APLs):
 - ECM APL [23-032](#)
 - Community Supports APL [21-017](#)
- 2024 Managed Care Boilerplate: [Contract](#)

Emergency Protocols and Flexibilities

Managed care plans must adhere to the requirements as outlined in the 2024 Managed Care Boilerplate Contract [Exhibit A, Attachment III, Article 6.0 Emergency Preparedness and Response](#) that became effective on January 1, 2025. Article 6.0 includes but is not limited to provisions for member communication and continuity of covered services. Managed care plans are required to ensure access to all covered services, including allowing members to access appropriate out-of-network providers if network providers are unavailable due to an emergency or if the member is outside of the service area due to displacement. Additionally, MCPs must also refer and coordinate care for members who need access to services carved out of the MCP Contract, such as specialty mental health services. Further, MCPs must offer Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) or Non-Medical Transportation (NMT) to

out-of-network providers at no cost to the member, including NMT to non-covered services. Finally, MCPs must ensure that members are not charged for services provided out-of-network and are not balance-billed for any such services. Provisions outlined in Article 6.0 may apply to subcontracted entities.

We understand, based on regular reporting from MCPs that those Plans that operate in the areas subject to the emergency, including L.A. Care, Health Net, Molina, Gold Coast Health Plan, Kaiser Permanente, Anthem, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan, Positive Health Care (AIDS Healthcare Foundation), and Senior Care Action Network, have activated their emergency response protocols. Protocols include deploying care management teams to conduct member outreach, especially for high needs populations; waiving prior authorization requirements; working to provide transportation to care; and ensuring members do not face any out-of-pocket costs for getting care from out-of-network providers, as needed. Plans must ensure that members impacted by a federal, State, or county declared state of Emergency continue to have access to Covered Services.

Filling Prescriptions

Managed care plans should advise contracted providers and members that members can go to any Medi-Cal enrolled pharmacy. System emergency overrides have been activated for members in pharmacies in the impacted counties to allow the bypassing of specific pharmacy claim submission edits (i.e. early refill, duplicate fill, etc.). To assist displaced members, the Medi-Cal Rx Call Center Team has been provided with links to an emergency [pharmacy locator](#). Further, during evacuations, MCPs members in counties affected by an emergency can obtain an emergency supply from the drug store where they originally filled their prescription.

Medi-Cal Providers

Medi-Cal providers can assist members who show up to receive health care services and are in need of eligibility assistance by instructing them to contact a local clinic navigator in their area to restore Medi-Cal eligibility if needed. Managed care plans should advise contracted providers that information on how to find a local clinic navigator is available at DHCS' [Community Health Center Local Assistance](#) web page.

Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs)/Adult Residential Facilities (ARFs)

State licensing regulations require that all RCFEs/ARFs must have a disaster and mass casualty plan of action in place. Staff and residents must follow the facility's relocation protocols to ensure client safety and limited disruption in services. Information regarding impacted RCFEs/ARFs' relocation status can be found on the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) website, [CCLD Disaster Information](#), which is updated daily.

Assisted Living Waiver members and providers should work with their Care Coordination Agency (CCA) if their facility has been evacuated. [Contact information for all CCAs is included at this link.](#)

Additional Resources for Community Partners

Below are resources MCPs can share for members and providers impacted by the wildfires:

- [California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and Department of Rehabilitation Emergency Preparedness Guide/Toolkit](#): Includes tips for individuals with disabilities.
- [CA.gov/LAfires](#): Centralized resources for wildfire-impacted residents.
- [Listos California](#): Offers an Emergency Alerts sign-up page to help connect Californians with their local alerts systems based on a provided zip code or location.
- [Ready.Gov](#): Guidance for preparing, responding to, and recovering from wildfires. The resource includes tips for staying safe during wildfires and returning home once an area is declared safe.
- [SAMHSA Wildfire Resources](#): Supports survivors, family members, responders, and recovery workers affected by wildfires and other disasters. Information includes signs of emotional distress, populations who may be at greater risk for distress after a wildfire, and links to resources for more information and support.
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#): Provides information on hazards, including wildfires, and offers links to information about staying safe after a wildfire and learning about and coping with hazards linked to wildfires and other disasters.
- [American Red Cross](#): Suggests ways for people who have experienced a residential fire to take care of themselves and their loved ones and to help people who may need assistance. The site lists four steps to take right after a fire and includes links to more information about returning home safely after a fire and recovering emotionally and financially.

Additional Resources:

- Visit [CA.gov/LAfires](#), a hub for information and resources from state, local, and federal governments.
- Individuals and business owners sustaining losses from wildfires can apply for disaster assistance:
 - Online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](#).
 - By calling 800-621-3362.
 - By using the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) smartphone [application](#).
 - Assistance is available in more than [40 languages](#).
 - If you use a relay service, such as video relay service, captioned telephone service, or others, give FEMA the number for that service.

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please email the CalAIMECMILOS@dhcs.ca.gov inbox.