



## NOTICE OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 31, 2024

### **PROPOSED STATE PLAN AMENDMENT TO ADD CERTIFIED WELLNESS COACH SERVICES AS A PREVENTIVE SERVICE**

This notice is to provide information of public interest about a proposed State Plan Amendment (SPA) 25-0014 by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). SPA 25-0014 proposes to add Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) services as a preventive service, to support non-clinical behavioral health needs and promote physical and mental health. CWC services are tailored preventive services for Medi-Cal members living with behavioral health needs.

DHCS will submit SPA 25-0014 to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to seek federal approval to adopt CWC as a new state plan benefit. The proposed effective date of this SPA is January 1, 2025. All proposed SPAs are subject to approval by CMS.

The CWC benefit will be available in the Medi-Cal managed care and Fee-For-Service (FFS) delivery systems. The purpose of the SPA is to seek federal approval to add CWC as a covered Medi-Cal benefit. These changes will help increase the state's overall capacity to provide prevention and early intervention supports and services that can support the behavioral health and well-being of Medi-Cal members in California in a wide variety of settings, such as health centers, schools, and in the community. CWCs support the development of a larger, more representative behavioral health workforce, providing Medi-Cal members with increased support from people who they can connect with, who speak their language, understand their communities, and work in places that are convenient to Medi-Cal members. Through wellness promotion, screening, and crisis referral, CWCs help make behavioral health supports more inclusive and readily available to Medi-Cal members, bridging the crucial gap between need and accessibility. These changes also support the objectives of the California Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI). More information about the CYBHI can be found at <https://cybhi.chhs.ca.gov/>.



Additionally, DHCS is proposing to reimburse Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), Rural Health Clinic (RHC), and Tribal FQHC providers a supplemental reimbursement amount through an Alternative Payment Methodology (APM) for services provided by CWCs. Pursuant to Welfare & Institutions Code (WIC) section 14132.100(g) and Attachment 4.19-B of the California State Plan, only FQHC visits with specified physicians and other non-physician health professionals are eligible for Prospective Payment System (PPS) or an All-Inclusive Rate (AIR) reimbursement. A CWC visit does not constitute a PPS-eligible visit under current law and the State Plan.

Under this APM, FQHCs, RHCs, and Tribal FQHCs may elect to receive a supplemental reimbursement equal to the established Medi-Cal FFS rate when CWC services are provided on the same or different day as a PPS-eligible visit subject to the requirements of 42 U.S. Code 1396a(bb)(6). The Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan (MCP) reimbursement for CWC services in an amount not exceeding the applicable Medi-Cal FFS rate will be excluded from the annual reconciliations.

For FQHCs, RHCs, and Tribal FQHCs that have agreed to participate in this APM and undergoing a scope-of-service rate change, the calculation of the newly established per visit rate shall exclude the amount of the reimbursement for CWC services paid under this APM at the applicable FFS rate or reimbursement received from Medi-Cal MCPs in an amount not exceeding the applicable FFS rate.

DHCS estimates the annual aggregate Medi-Cal expenditures for CWC services will increase by approximately \$750,000 in total funds.

## **Public Review and Comments**

Upon submission to CMS, a copy of the proposed SPA 25-0014 will be published on <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/laws/Pages/Pending-2025.aspx>.

If you would like to view the SPA in person once it becomes available, please visit your local county welfare department. You may also request a copy of proposed SPA 25-0014 or a copy of submitted public comments related to SPA 25-0014 by submitting a request in writing to the mailing or email address listed below. Please identify SPA 25-0014 in the subject line or message making this request.

Written comments may be sent to the following address:

Department of Health Care Services  
Office of Strategic Partnerships  
ATTN: Tisha Montiero  
P.O. Box 997413  
Sacramento, California 95899-7417

Comments may also be emailed to [PublicInput@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:PublicInput@dhcs.ca.gov). Please indicate SPA 25-0014 in the subject line or message including the comments.

A copy of submitted public comments to SPA 25-0014 may be requested in writing to the mailing or email addresses identified above.