



Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans in California

February 3, 2021

What is a Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan (D-SNPs)?

D-SNPs are Medicare Advantage (MA) health plans which provide specialized care for dual eligibles that must have a State Medicaid Agency Contract (SMAC) with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). DHCS can choose whether to contract with D-SNPs.

What is aligned enrollment?

Under aligned enrollment, beneficiaries can enroll in a Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan (MCP) and D-SNP that are operated by the same parent organization for better care coordination and integration. The aligned enrollment will take place at different times depending on the county. In the Coordinated Care Initiative (CCI) counties, aligned enrollment begins in 2023. In non-CCI counties, aligned enrollment will phase in as plans are ready and able, but not later than contract year 2025.

How is a D-SNP different from a Cal MediConnect (CMC) plan?

CMC is a demonstration project (part of the Coordinated Care Initiative) that combined both Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits (acute, primary, institutional, and home and community-based) services into a single benefit package for individuals who are fully eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. CMC plans coordinate dual eligible members Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits under a single health plan.

CMC Transition to D-SNP Structure under CalAIM

CMC members will transition to aligned MCPs and D-SNPs operated by the same parent organization as their CMC plan. The goal is to ensure that CMC members transition into a D-SNP operated by the same parent organization to ensure continuity of care from their current providers.

California decided to use this D-SNP model to expand the care coordination and integration that duals in CCI counties were receiving from CMC plans on a statewide scale. This model meets the statewide goals of improved care integration and person-centered care, under both CalAIM and the California Master Plan for Aging.