

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) FOR MEDI-CAL COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER (CHW) SERVICES

The following FAQs provide additional guidance and clarification to Medi-Cal members and providers regarding CHW services.

General Information

1. What is a CHW?

CHWs are unlicensed, trained health educators who work with individuals who may have difficulty understanding providers due to cultural or language barriers to connect them with the services they need. CHWs include individuals known by a variety of job titles, including promotores, community health representatives, navigators, violence prevention professionals, substance use navigators, and behavioral health navigators, among other titles.

2. What types of services may CHWs provide to a Medi-Cal member?

CHWs may provide the following services:

- Health education to promote the Medi-Cal member's health or address barriers to health care, including providing information or instruction on health topics.
- Health navigation to provide information, training, referrals, or support to assist Medi-Cal members to access health care, understand the health care system, and engage in their own care and to connect members to community resources necessary to promote their health.
- Screening and assessment that assist Medi-Cal members to connect to appropriate services to improve their health.
- Individual support or advocacy that assists Medi-Cal members in preventing the onset or exacerbation of a health condition or preventing injury or violence.

3. How do I receive CHW services?

A licensed provider first determines that a Medi-Cal member would benefit from CHW services and recommends CHW services. The licensed provider could be a physician,

dentist, behavioral health provider, nurse, midwife, or another licensed provider. For example, licensed providers may determine a Medi-Cal member could benefit from CHW services if a Medi-Cal member has one or more chronic health conditions (including behavioral health) or exposure to community or domestic violence and trauma, is at risk for a chronic health condition or environmental health exposure, faces barriers meeting their health or health-related social needs, and/or who would benefit from preventive services.

4. Who is eligible to receive violence preventive services (VPS)?

CHW community VPS are available to a Medi-Cal member who meets any of the following circumstances, as recommended by a licensed provider:

- The Medi-Cal member has been violently injured as a result of community violence.
- A licensed provider has determined that the Medi-Cal member is at significant risk of experiencing violent injury as a result of community violence.
- The Medi-Cal member has experienced chronic exposure to community violence.

CHWs may also provide services to Medi-Cal members experiencing intimate partner and domestic violence.

5. What services may not be provided by a CHW?

Medi-Cal does not reimburse for the following services when rendered by a CHW:

- Clinical case management/care management that requires a license.
- Childcare
- Chore services, including shopping and cooking.
- Companion services
- Employment services
- Helping a member enroll in government programs or insurance that is not related to improving their health as part of a care plan.
- Delivery of medication, medical equipment, or medical supply.
- Personal care services/homemaker services.
- Respite care
- Services that duplicate another covered MediCal service already being provided to a member.
- Socialization
- Transportation

- Services provided to individuals not enrolled in Medi-Cal, except as noted above
- Services that require a license

CHW Qualifications and Supervising Provider Requirements

1. What are the qualifications to become a CHW?

In order to bill for CHW services provided to a Medi-Cal member, a CHW must have lived experience that aligns with and provides a connection between the CHW and the community or population being served and fulfill either the training pathway or experience pathway, as outlined in the [Medi-Cal Provider Manual: Community Health Worker Preventive Services](#). CHWs who enter through the experience pathway must earn a CHW certificate within 18 months of rendering CHW services to a Medi-Cal member.

2. Does the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) have a list of approved organizations that issue CHW certificates?

No. Under current Medi-Cal policy, the supervising provider is solely responsible for determining if the certificate of completion fulfills all Medi-Cal CHW policy requirements, including that the curricula for the CHW certificate of completion attests to demonstrated skills and/or practical training in certain core competencies, as well as field experience, as outlined in the [Medi-Cal Provider Manual: Community Health Worker Preventive Services](#). The certificate of completion can be any certificate issued by the State of California or a State designee and may also be a certificate issued outside of California or United States.

3. Is there any additional required training for CHWs?

Yes. CHWs are required to complete a minimum of 6 hours of additional training annually. Training may be in the core competencies or an area of special focus. The supervising provider is responsible for maintaining appropriate supporting documentation evidencing each CHW they supervise has satisfied all annual training requirements and shall make that information available to DHCS upon request and/or in the event of an audit.

4. Who can supervise CHWs?

The supervising provider is an enrolled Medi-Cal provider who submits claims for services provided by CHWs. The supervising provider ensures each CHW that they supervise meets the qualifications listed in the [Medi-Cal Provider Manual: Community Health Worker Preventive Services](#), and directly or indirectly oversees each CHW and all services delivered to Medi-Cal members. At this time, the supervising provider can be a licensed provider, a hospital, an outpatient clinic, a local health jurisdiction (LHJ), or a non-profit community-based organization (CBO). CHWs may be supervised by a CBO or LHJ that does not have a licensed provider on staff. Starting October 1, 2024, pharmacies may also supervise CHWs and bill for their services. Additionally, DHCS is planning to expand the list to also include other county-based entities, and more information will be released soon.

If you are not currently an enrolled Medi-Cal provider, you can enroll to become one and supervise CHWs by submitting an application through DHCS' [Provider Application and Validation for Enrollment](#) portal.

5. Can a CHW with a violence prevention certificate provide CHW services?

No. A Violence Prevention Professional Certificate issued by Health Alliance for Violence Intervention or a certificate of completion in gang intervention training from the Urban Peace Institute allows a CHW to provide violence prevention services only.

6. Can a CHW provide services for domestic violence prevention?

Yes, if the supervising provider determines that a CHW is qualified to render those services. Please note that domestic violence counselors, as defined in section 1037.1 of the Evidence Code, are not considered CHWs for purposes of Medi-Cal coverage and reimbursement policy.

7. Can a CHW provide asthma preventive services?

CHWs may provide CHW services to individuals with asthma, but evidence-based asthma self-management education and asthma trigger assessments may only be provided by asthma preventive service providers who have completed either a certificate from the California Department of Public Health Asthma Management Academy, or a certificate demonstrating completion of a training program consistent with the guidelines of the National Institutes of Health's Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma. (Note: These services may also be rendered by a licensed provider within their scope of practice.)

8. Can Peer Support Specialists (PSS) provide CHW services?

PSS are a separate provider type and their services cannot be billed as CHW services, or vice versa. However, an individual can be certified as a PSS and as a CHW and separately provide either PSS or CHW services. Their supervisor is responsible for ensuring there is no duplication of services.

9. Can CHWs provide services via telehealth?

Yes, CHWs may provide services via synchronous audio-visual or audio-only that are appropriate for telehealth. CHWs must follow all existing Medi-Cal policies regarding delivery of covered services via telehealth modalities, including consent requirements, as outlined in the [Medicine: Telehealth](#) Provider Manual. Services rendered by text, email, or chat are not eligible for reimbursement.

10. Can CHWs provide public health services?

Medi-Cal coverage and reimbursement policy for CHW services does not include broader public health services and are limited to those services listed in the [Medi-Cal Provider Manual: Community Health Worker Preventive Services](#). Additionally, it is important to remember that CHW services must be specific to an individual Medi-Cal member's health needs and not broader public health concerns.

11. What is a written plan of care? Is it required?

The plan of care is a written document that is developed by one or more licensed providers that describe services a CHW will provide to address a Medi-Cal member's ongoing needs for CHW services. A CHW may assist in developing a plan of care with the licensed provider(s).

Under current Medi-Cal policy, a written plan of care is required for continued CHW services after 12 units (equivalent to six hours) of care per recommendation. Similar to a written plan of care for physical therapy, it must contain goals and services intended to help the Medi-Cal member meet those goals through ongoing CHW services. This requirement does not apply to CHW services provided in the Emergency Department (ED). The written plan of care may not exceed a period of one year.

12. Can CHWs help Medi-Cal members enroll and/or maintain enrollment in housing or health care plan?

CHWs services are limited to those services outlined in the [Medi-Cal Provider Manual: Community Health Worker Preventive Services](#). To that end, CHWs may help a Medi-Cal

member to enroll and/or maintain enrollment in government or other assistance programs that are related to improving their health if such navigation services are provided pursuant to a written plan of care. CHW services that are not related to improving the Medi-Cal member's health are not covered services.

Billing

1. How should a CHW document their services for billing?

CHWs are required to document the dates and time/duration of services provided to Medi-Cal members. Documentation should also reflect a brief description of services rendered, which aligns with visit duration. For example, documentation might state, "Discussed the patient's challenges accessing healthy food and options to improve the situation for 15 minutes. Assisted with SNAP application for 30 minutes. Referred patient to XYZ food pantry." Documentation shall be accessible to the supervising provider upon request of the supervising provider and should be appropriately maintained by the CHW in the event of an audit.

2. What are the billing codes for CHW services?

The following billing codes (i.e., Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes) may be used for all covered CHW services by the supervising provider when submitting claims:

- CPT code 98960 self-management education and training, face-to-face, 30 minutes, 1 patient
- CPT code 98961 self-management education and training, face-to-face, 30 minutes, 2–4 patients
- CPT code, 98962 self-management education and training, face-to-face, 30 minutes, 5–8 patients

For more guidance regarding billing codes, please visit the billing codes section of the [Provider Manual: Community Health Worker \(CHW\) Preventive Services](#).

Additionally, Medicare added Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes G0019 and G0022 as benefits on January 1, 2024, and DHCS is working to add these two HCPCS codes as additional billable codes under Medi-Cal's CHW policy. These HCPCS codes will be billable for individual Medi-Cal members and will be used in lieu of CPT code 98960 in certain circumstances in which CHWs need to more acutely address issues related to Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), which include factors such as housing, education, and income that affect a person's health, and are envisioned to help Medi-Cal members better navigate the health care system and access necessary resources. DHCS will be developing and releasing policy guidance to more clearly articulate how and when these new HCPCS codes may be used for CHW services in a future Provider Manual update.

3. Can a CHW provide group education and training to more than eight Medi-Cal members at once?

Yes, CHWs may render covered services in a group setting to more than eight Medi-Cal members; however, the maximum number of Medi-Cal members for which CHW services can be billed during one session is eight.

4. What is the maximum frequency/limit a CHW can bill for services per Medi-Cal member, per day?

The maximum frequency is four units (two hours) daily per Medi-Cal member, any provider. Additional units per day may be provided with approved prior authorization for medical necessity. Prior authorization may be submitted after the service was provided. Please note that the maximum daily limit does not apply to services rendered in an ED.

5. Does the CHW submit claims for billing?

No. Since CHWs do not enroll with DHCS, claims for their services must be submitted by an enrolled supervising provider to either the Medi-Cal member's managed care plan if the Medi-Cal member is in managed care or to DHCS if the member has fee-for-service Medi-Cal.

6. Does a CHW need to obtain a National Provider Identifier (NPI) in order to bill for services provided to Medi-Cal members?

No. CHWs do not need to obtain an NPI at this time. If this changes, DHCS will inform supervisor providers and CHWs prior to implementing this requirement and provide technical assistance if/as needed.

Additional Questions

1. Whom can I contact if I have questions?

Supervising providers and CHWs may direct questions as follows:

- For questions about Fee-For-Service (FFS) billing, contact DHCS' Telephone Service Center at 1- 800-541- 5555.
- For Managed Care questions, contact your local [Managed Care Plan](#).
- For Medi-Cal policy and benefits-related questions, contact DHCS' Benefits Division at CHWBenefit@dhcs.ca.gov.

