



MICHELLE BAASS
DIRECTOR

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

November 10, 2022

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS Letter No.: 22-27
ALL COUNTY WELFARE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY MEDS LIAISONS
ALL COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES/COUNTY JAILS
ALL COUNTY YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

SUBJECT: CALAIM MANDATORY PRE-RELEASE MEDI-CAL APPLICATION
PROCESS FOR INMATES AND YOUTH OF COUNTY CORRECTIONAL
FACILITY AND COUNTY YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

(Reference: All County Welfare Directors Letters [14-24](#), [18-02](#), [18-02E](#), [18-26](#), [18-26E](#),
[19-16](#), [20-28](#), [21-22](#), [22-12](#), and [22-26](#) and Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information
Letters I [20-05](#), and I [22-40](#))

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide County Welfare Departments, County Correctional Facilities and County Youth Correctional Facilities with information and directives to implement the mandatory Pre-Release Medi-Cal Application Process, as codified by Assembly Bill 133 (Chapter 143, Statutes of 2021), entitled the “California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) Initiative”. This requirement will help to ensure that, if determined eligible, all juvenile and adult inmates of County Correctional Facilities and County Youth Correctional Facilities have access to needed Medi-Cal covered services and care upon their re-entry into the community.

This letter is intended to establish policy for both County Correctional Facilities and County Youth Correctional Facilities and/or their designated entity or entities, and update existing policy for County Welfare Departments (CWDs). For the purposes of this letter, “CCF” describes County Correctional Facilities, and County Youth Correctional Facilities, and “designated entity or entities” refers to CWDs, CCFs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), and/or other contracted entities designated by the applicable County Board of Supervisors to assist with submitting the Medi-Cal pre-release applications.

Note: Designated entities may not perform a Medi-Cal eligibility determination unless they are the CWD.

Effective January 1, 2023, this ACWDL obsoletes ACWDLs [07-34](#) and [14-24E](#) in their entirety. Additionally, this letter shall supersede ACWDLs [14-24](#), [14-26](#), and [14-26E](#) regarding **ONLY** the specific policies and instructions below:

- Processing pre-release applications submitted to the CWDs for incarcerated individuals residing in County Correctional Facilities and County Youth Correctional Facilities; and
- Details on communication policy and procedures when processing pre-release applications for incarcerated individuals in County Correctional Facilities and County Youth Correctional Facilities.

Policies and procedures for state inmates remain unchanged for the Pre-Release Medi-Cal Application Process for CWDs and within CDCR state prison facilities as outlined in [ACWDL 14-24](#). Policies and procedures outlined within ACWDLs [14-26](#), and [14-26E](#) pertaining to the Medi-Cal Inmate Eligibility Program (MCIEP) remain in effect.

BACKGROUND

The CalAIM Justice-Involved Initiative includes several provisions to improve access to, and quality of health care for, the justice-involved populations. Effective January 1, 2023, CalAIM requires all counties to implement a Pre-Release Medi-Cal Application Process to ensure all inmates and youth who are released from County Correctional Facilities and County Youth Correctional Facilities receive timely access to Medi-Cal services, if otherwise eligible.

As outlined in Penal Code section 4011.11, the board of supervisors in each county, in consultation with the county sheriff and chief probation officer (respectively), shall designate an entity or entities to assist county jail inmates and youth with submitting an application for, or otherwise assisting their enrollment in, a health insurance affordability program consistent with federal requirements.

The designated entity or entities (CWDs, CCFs, CBOs, etc.) must work together to facilitate the enrollment of inmates and youth in health insurance affordability programs on or before their date of release. CCFs and CWDs are also required to develop a process to inform CWDs of the incarceration status of CCF inmates and youth, in order for CWDs to appropriately suspend and activate (unsuspend) Medi-Cal coverage for beneficiaries.

History of Pre-Release Application Processes

In 2004, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a letter entitled “Ending Chronic Homelessness.” In the letter, CMS encouraged states to take steps necessary to ensure that applications for Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California) are processed in a timely manner so that individuals released from incarceration can receive Medicaid-covered services upon release from the public institution. This “pre-release” guidance was implemented for juveniles in California by Senate Bill 1469 (Cedillo, Chapter 657, Statutes of 2006), which requires county welfare departments (CWDs) to determine the Medi-Cal eligibility of youth who are incarcerated for 30 days or more and wish to receive Medi-Cal benefits prior to release.

In January 2014, CDCR implemented a pre-release application process for state inmates who were potentially Medi-Cal eligible to ensure they had access to care upon release. Later that year, DHCS provided guidance that the pre-release application and eligibility determinations processes were applicable to incarcerated adults and youth in both state and county facilities who apply for Medi-Cal coverage.

MEDI-CAL BENEFIT SUSPENSION POLICY FOR INMATES

As of October 1, 2020, the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities (SUPPORT) Act and Welf. & Inst. § 14011.10 required CWDs to suspend an “eligible juvenile’s” Medi-Cal benefits for the duration of their incarceration, to activate Medi-Cal benefits upon release from the public institution, and to process eligible juvenile pre-release applications submitted to the CWD who were not enrolled in Medi-Cal immediately before incarceration.

State law requires the suspension of Medi-Cal benefits for any individual, regardless of age, who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary at the time of their incarceration. An individual is considered incarcerated or an “inmate of a public institution” when that individual is booked into a correctional facility. The suspension is effective on the date they become an inmate of a public institution. (Welf. & Inst. Code § 14011.10, Pen. Code § 4011.11)

Although the suspension of Medi-Cal benefits is effective as of the date of incarceration, pursuant to federal law and clarification provided from CMS in [SMD#21-002](#), a 10-day notice is required for the suspension of Medi-Cal benefits for adult inmates and eligible youth. (Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §§ 431.211-214; see also California Code of Regulations Tit. 22, § 50179.) Therefore, in practice, suspension of benefits for adult and juvenile inmates will not occur until such notice requirements have been fulfilled, as outlined herein.

New Suspension Policy

Effective January 1, 2023, the suspension of Medi-Cal benefits for all inmates and youth is to remain in effect for the duration of their incarceration, as long as they remain otherwise eligible for Medi-Cal, as outlined in [ACWDL 22-26](#). The suspension policy for incarcerated “eligible juvenile” youth is outlined in [ACWDL 21-22](#) and [MEDIL I 22-40](#). The suspension shall end on the date the individual is no longer an inmate of a public institution. (WIC 14011.10(e))

Notification of Release Dates and Immediate Need Policy

CCFs are to notify CWDs as soon as they become aware of the expected release date for an inmate or youth. The CCF shall make every effort to submit confirmation of release information to the CWD within a week of the expected release date, and no later than one business day, except in the case of unplanned releases. In those situations, the CCF shall provide as much notice as possible, so that the CWD can close the incarceration period and activate (unsuspend) available benefits, as appropriate.

In cases where an immediate need for services must be established, the CWD shall follow the standard Immediate Need process by utilizing the EW15 transaction in addition to the EW32 transaction to activate Medi-Cal coverage. The CWD shall activate coverage within 1 business day of notification with the ultimate goal of ensuring the inmate can obtain immediate need services upon release. The EW15 transaction allows immediate need benefits to be issued when a MEDS record is indicated as incarcerated. In order to have eligibility reflected for the remainder of the month, the EW32 transaction must be submitted on the same day as the EW15.

Short-Term Stays Suspension Policy

Effective January 1, 2023, for situations in which an inmate or youth is subject to a short-term stay of incarceration with a release date within 28 days, the CWD will not report the incarceration in MEDS. Given the inmate or youth will be released within 28 days, a suspension of benefits is not necessary.

- Example: On 4/5/2023, the CWD becomes aware of a Medi-Cal beneficiary who was incarcerated on 4/1/2023. The CWD will not record this incarceration in MEDS but will check on the incarceration status after 28 days. On 4/29/2023, the CWD becomes aware that the inmate or youth was released from incarceration on 4/25/2023. Suspension of Medi-Cal benefits is not applicable and no action in MEDS is required.

For inmates or youths incarcerated beyond 28 days (and anticipated to be incarcerated beyond the 10-day Suspension noticing requirement), the CWD will record the

incarceration in MEDS via the EW32 transaction on or after the 29th day, and suspend benefits accordingly.

- Example: On 4/5/2023, the CWD becomes aware of a Medi-Cal beneficiary who was incarcerated on 4/1/2023. On 4/29/2023, the inmate or youth remains incarcerated; therefore, the CWD submits the EW 32 transaction to report Incarceration Date of 4/1/2023 and sends the Suspension Notice Of Action with effective date of 5/5/2023 (10-day notice requirements from the date of the EW 32 transaction).

For situations in which a pre-release application is provided for an individual expected to be released within 28 days, or no known expected release date is provided, the CWD will approve the application, if otherwise eligible, and not suspend the individual's benefits (unless or until a release date is communicated on or after the 29th day).

- Example: On 4/5/2023, the CWD receives a pre-release application for an applicant who was incarcerated on 4/1/2023 with no expected release date. On 4/14/2023, the CWD determines the applicant is eligible for Medi-Cal and has not received an updated release date beyond 4/29/2023, so the inmate's Medi-Cal is approved ongoing without suspension. No further action is needed, unless:
 - The CCF communicates to the CWD that this inmate or youth has an updated release date on or after 4/29/2023 (and will remain incarcerated beyond the 10-day Suspension noticing requirement). The CWD submits the EW 32 transaction to report the Incarceration Date of 4/1/2023 and sends the Suspension Notice Of Action with an effective date 10 days from the date of the EW 32 transaction.

For situations in which a pre-release application is provided for an individual expected to be incarcerated for more than 28 days, the CWD will approve the application, if otherwise eligible, and then suspend the individual's benefits.

- Example: On 4/5/2023, the CWD receives a pre-release application for an applicant who was incarcerated on 4/1/2023, with a release date beyond 28 days. On 4/29/2023, the CWD determines the applicant is eligible for Medi-Cal, approves the application and suspends the individual's benefits. The CWD submits the EW 32 transaction to report Incarceration Date of 4/1/2023 and sends the Suspension Notice Of Action with effective date of 5/5/2023 (10 day notice requirements from the date of the EW 32 transaction).

The functional process for reporting incarceration and suspension in MEDS, as outlined in [MEDIL I 20-05](#) and noticing requirements for suspension of Medi-Cal benefits, as

described in [ACWDL 21-22](#) remain unchanged. Updated Notices of Action for use beginning January 1, 2023, are included as enclosures in [ACWDL 22-26](#).

Note: *If the CWD receives information about the inmate or youth that would affect their eligibility for Medi-Cal, the suspension of benefits does not prevent the CWD from taking the appropriate action, following Medi-Cal rules.*

Upon an inmate or youth's release from incarceration, a redetermination is only required if one has not been completed within 12 months prior to the release date, barring any other known changes in circumstance affecting eligibility. Their eligibility must be activated without submitting a new application if the information available to the CWD is sufficient to determine that the former inmate or youth is still eligible. If otherwise eligible, the individual must be notified that their Medi-Cal benefits are no longer suspended and the benefits are activated on the day of release from incarceration. If a redetermination is needed, CWDs shall perform an ex parte review using available information to conduct the change in circumstance redetermination, including the information available in the inmate or youth's case record and through electronic data sources. CWDs may contact the beneficiary once they have been released if they are unable to complete the redetermination via ex parte review.

Additionally, the suspension of benefits does not interfere with the administration of either county or state Medi-Cal Inmate Eligibility Program (MCIEP) aid codes. For more information on suspension policy for incarcerated individuals, refer to ACWDLs [21-22](#) and [22-26](#).

MANDATORY COUNTY PRE-RELEASE MEDI-CAL APPLICATION PROCESS

As authorized by Penal Code § 4011.11, this ACWDL establishes the requirement to have policies and procedures in place for a CalAIM Mandatory Pre-Release Medi-Cal Application Process for CWDs and CCFs to ensure that all eligible county inmates and youth have Medi-Cal coverage upon release from correctional facilities.

DHCS recommends that each county's CWD, the County Sheriff for County Correctional Facilities, and the County Probation Officer for County Youth Correctional Facilities, work together with their respective county board of supervisors to identify the best way to implement a county pre-release Medi-Cal application process, in compliance with this mandate.

DHCS published "[Strategies for Conducting Pre-Release Medi-Cal Enrollment in County Jails](#)" to provide support to CWDs and CCFs as they develop their pre-release Medi-Cal application processes by sharing recommended and alternative approaches to

identifying Medi-Cal eligible individuals, partnering with application assisters, submitting applications to CWDs, and coordinating across Medi-Cal and county justice agencies.

If CWDs and CCFs have existing pre-release application processes that meet the requirements of the CalAIM Pre-Release Medi-Cal Application mandate, such processes can be leveraged and built upon, if necessary, to comply with this mandate. However, if any CWDs or CCFs experience difficulties collaborating to develop or enhance their pre-release application process, or are in need of technical assistance in meeting this mandate, they should contact DHCS for assistance.

The following are examples of the varied approaches counties have taken with respect to their Medi-Cal application partnerships:

- Some CWDs contract with CBO's to enroll eligible individuals. The CBO works within the county jail system, allowing them to have access to jail facilities, security clearance, and safety assurances. The CWD screens for Medi-Cal during booking, allowing the CBO to begin the application process during intake, which enables the CWD to process the application and effectuate coverage in the event there is an early release.
- Some CCFs contract with a third-party vendor to complete pre-release applications. The contractors are health care professionals who have been trained on pre-release application processes and have jail security clearance, allowing them to access inmates in a classroom-like setting on set days/times during the week to complete the application process.
- Some CWDs are able to enroll eligible individuals through close collaboration between the CWD and the CCF. The CCF provides a roster of individuals pre-release to the CWD. The CWD identifies individuals from the list who are not enrolled in Medi-Cal and provides a list of these individuals to rehabilitation officers within the CCF to complete the Medi-Cal applications. The rehabilitation officers then send the completed Medi-Cal applications to eligibility workers dedicated to justice-involved enrollment, staffed within the CWD for processing.
- One county's CCF staff are trained to complete and submit Medi-Cal applications to the CWD.

CWDs are reminded that, regardless of the date when an application for Medi-Cal is received, CWDs must follow standard Medi-Cal application policy and determine eligibility within 45 days of receipt, or 90 days of receipt for individuals being determined eligible on the basis of a disability.

DATA SHARING BETWEEN CCFs AND CWDs

Successful pre-release Medi-Cal application processes will require on-going communication between the CCFs and the CWDs. Penal Code § 4011.11 authorizes the sharing of records and other data among CCFs and CWDs. However, all beneficiary/applicant information communicated between the CCF and CWD, regardless of the transfer method and format (paper, electronic, or other) must comply with state and federal requirements to protect the information of the beneficiary/applicant.

CWDs and their local CCFs shall enter into written agreements that impose, at a minimum, the same restrictions and conditions with respect to Medi-Cal Personally Identifiable Information (Medi-Cal PII) that apply to the CWD through the Medi-Cal Privacy and Security Agreement between the CWD and DHCS, released via [ACWDL 19-16](#) or any applicable superseding ACWDL. These shall include, (1) restrictions on disclosure of Medi-Cal PII, (2) conditions regarding the use of appropriate administrative, physical, and technical safeguards to protect Medi-Cal PII, and, where relevant, (3) the requirement that any breach, security incident, intrusion, or unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of Medi-Cal PII be reported to the CWD.

If the following language is included in the CWDs written agreement with their local CCF, the CWD will be authorized by DHCS to share data with any CCF in other counties even when they are not a direct party to the CWD's agreement with their local CCF.

“To address situations where an individual in custody of (enter County Correctional Facility name) will be a resident of a county other than the County that is signatory to this agreement, the commitments of (enter County Correctional Facility name) under this agreement to protect confidential information shall also apply to confidential information exchanged with such other county. This provision is not intended to impose any new obligation on the County signing this agreement, with regard to any inter-county transactions.”

Release of Information (ROI)

A ROI is not required for a CCF to submit an application on behalf of an inmate or youth, or for any communication between the CCF and CWD in order to complete pre-release application processes.

Authorized Representative (AR)

An AR is not required for a CCF to submit an application on behalf of an inmate or youth as part of the pre-release application process. However, during the application process,

the inmate or youth may designate an individual or an organization as an AR to act responsibly on their behalf in assisting with their application, renewal of eligibility, and other ongoing communications with the CWD. More information about ARs can be found in ACWDL [18-26](#), [18-26E](#), and [20-28](#).

Statewide Medi-Cal Pre-Release Contacts

Within 30 days of the date of this letter, CCFs and CWDs must provide DHCS with the name, address, phone number, fax number, and email address of a contact person and a designated back-up(s) from their respective organizations who are responsible for CalAIM Mandatory Pre-Release Application Processes to CalAIMJusticePreReleaseApps@dhcs.ca.gov. Current Statewide Medi-Cal Pre-Release Contact lists can be requested using the same email address.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRE-RELEASE APPLICATION MANDATE

The entity designated by the county Board of Supervisors (CWDs, CCFs, contracted entity, or other designee) shall assist county incarcerated inmates and youths by submitting an application for, or otherwise assisting in, their enrollment in Medi-Cal regardless of their length of incarceration.

Below are key elements of an effective pre-release application process for **CCFs**:

- Establish Point(s) of Contact (POC) to be responsible for CalAIM Mandatory Pre-Release Application Processes.
 - Maintain and make available a county-specific CCF Pre-Release POC list for their local CWD.
- Collaborate with the local CWD Pre-Release POC to establish streamlined communication and processes between organizations.
- Establish a secure form of communication to transmit and receive information between both organizations. This can be via encrypted email or other forms of secure communication to ensure that information is exchanged effectively and expeditiously.

DHCS recommends that the entity designated to assist individuals with submitting pre-release Medi-Cal applications (CWD, CCF, contracted entity or other designee) shall complete the steps outlined below during or near the intake process for all county inmate and youths, whenever possible, to identify individuals without Medi-Cal coverage and assist them with completing and submitting a Medi-Cal application. However, at a minimum, the application should be submitted at least 135 days before release, if the release date is known, to provide CWDs with sufficient time to complete their eligibility determination.

1. Upon an individual's incarceration, as part of the intake process or shortly thereafter, the **CCF** (or designated entity) shall ask all inmates and youths if they have health insurance and collect responses to health-related questions in order to screen for any individuals who may need Medi-Cal.

Note: *An inmate's participation in the pre-release Medi-Cal application process is voluntary. The inmate (or for an incarcerated youth, the youth's parent or legal guardian) must be willing to participate in the pre-release process in order to apply for Medi-Cal.*

2. The **CCF** (or designated entity) shall verify the current Medi-Cal benefit enrollment status of the inmate or youth, either through a DHCS eligibility verification system or in collaboration with the CWD, and identify individuals who are not currently active and in need of a Medi-Cal Pre-Release Application.
 - a) If the inmate or youth is enrolled in Medi-Cal and there is not an incarceration currently reported as part of the Medi-Cal case, the **CCF** shall communicate the incarceration details to the CWD where benefits are active, including the incarceration date and expected release date if known.
 - b) If the inmate or youth is enrolled in Medi-Cal and there is an incarceration and/or suspension displayed on the case, the **CCF** shall communicate an expected release date to the CWD, if known.
 - c) If the inmate or youth is not enrolled in Medi-Cal, the **CCF** (or designated entity) shall meet with the inmate or youth, answer any questions, and assist the inmate or youth in completing and submitting the pre-release application, along with any other required documentation, as needed, to the CWD in the county where they expect to reside upon release.
 - If the inmate or youth is 18 years of age or older, the inmate or youth can apply on their own case.
 - If the inmate or youth is under 18 years of age and considered part of their parents' household, the parent or legal guardian is required to sign the Pre-Release Medi-Cal Application as detailed in WIC 14029.5.
 - The **County Youth Correctional Facility** shall notify the parent or legal guardian, in writing, of its intention to obtain Medi-Cal benefits for the youth and request a signature on the pre-release application to provide consent for applying for Medi-Cal. The **County Youth Correctional Facility** will give the parent or legal guardian reasonable time to respond to the request (30 days).

- If the parent or legal guardian informs the facility that they do not want an application to be submitted on behalf of their child, no application will be submitted.
 - If the parent or legal guardian does not respond, the **County Youth Correctional Facility** shall submit the application without a signature and the CWD will process the application. CWDs are required to make two attempts to contact the applicant for the purposes of gathering all information necessary to determine eligibility. In the case of an incarcerated youth, these attempts will be made to contact the parent or legal guardian. ([ACWDL 22-12](#)) **County Youth Correctional Facilities** should be aware that the application will be denied if the parent or legal guardian fails to cooperate or does not respond to the request for information needed for the CWD to determine eligibility.
- If the inmate or youth is under 18 and a ward of the court, the **CWD** shall collaborate with the **County Youth Correctional Facility** as needed to determine if an application will be submitted on behalf of the minor based upon the applicable existing court order. When a minor becomes a ward of the court, it means that the court takes the control and responsibility away from the parents/guardian to oversee the care of the minor. California Rules of Court provision 5.790(h) addresses wardship orders and states that a court may make a reasonable order for the medical treatment of a child adjudged a ward of the court. Depending on the circumstances of the court's order in declaring the juvenile a ward, a judge is able to overrule a parent's decision to opt-out of Medi-Cal if it is in the best interest of the child under Rule of Court 5.790(h). The **CWD** and **County Youth Correctional Facility** should review the court's order and handle each situation on a case-by-case basis.
 - Example: The court declares the juvenile a ward of the court and sentences the juvenile to 60 days confinement in the juvenile detention center. Per Welf. & Inst. Code § 14029.5, the county juvenile facility attempts to obtain consent to apply for Medi-Cal benefits prior to the juvenile's release, but the parents refuse to cooperate and opt-out of coverage. Since the juvenile is now a ward of the court, the parents are

no longer considered the legal guardian. The parents are deemed by the court to be unable to look after the juvenile's affairs. Either the court or a third party appointed by them will be responsible for making decisions that serve the best interests of the child. Since health coverage is in the best interest of the juvenile, the County Youth Correctional Facility or the CWD can reasonably move forward with submitting and/or the processing of the pre-release Medi-Cal application without parental consent.

3. The **CCF** (or designated entity) may vary in their approach for filling out and submitting the Medi-Cal application on behalf of the individual during the pre-release period. As described in Section 435.907, Title 42 CFR, Medi-Cal applications must be accepted via multiple modalities including by mail, online, by telephone, fax, or in-person.
 - a) The **CCF** (or designated entity) shall ask the inmate or youth where they wish to receive their mail (correctional facility or address they intend to reside upon release) and use that as the mailing address on the application.
 - b) If the **CCF** (or designated entity) is utilizing a paper application, the application and any additional supporting documentation should be submitted to the CWD of the county where the individual intends to reside upon release.
 - c) In addition to the application, DHCS recommends including a cover sheet or transmittal form to identify the Medi-Cal application as a pre-release application and to ensure the CWD is aware of the individual's incarceration status.

*Note: Any subsequent changes to information that was included on the pre-release application should be reported to the CWD as soon as the **CCF** becomes aware of the change.*

The **CCF** (or designated entity) shall include the following minimum information on the cover sheet, transmittal, or other means of communication with the CWD when submitting a new pre-release application:

- The name and address of the CCF, along with the contact information for the CCF POC.
- The inmate or youth's full name (including any known aliases), date of birth, social security number, county and address where the

individual intends to reside, the mailing address, and contact information of any Authorized Representative or parent or legal guardian (if applicable). The **CCF** will keep the CWD informed of any changes to this information.

- The date of incarceration and expected or actual release date (if known or applicable). The **CCF** will keep the CWD informed of any changes in the release date.
- Any other documentation or information (such as jail or prison identification) that may be beneficial to the CWD to process the pre-release application.

Note: The CCF may also utilize a cover sheet or transmittal form when reporting incarcerations to CWDs for inmate or youths who are already enrolled in Medi-Cal but need to have benefits suspended until their release from incarceration. For ease of identification, CCFs should include all of the information above as well as the CIN/SSN for the inmate or youth.

4. The CCF (or designated entity) shall communicate with CWDs in order to assist with trouble-shooting application questions, requests for follow-up information, and any other items necessary for the CWD to process the pre-release application.
5. The **CCF** shall ensure that inmates or youths have their CWD's contact information upon release.

For inmates or youths being released from incarceration, the **CCF** shall submit information to the CWD within a week of the expected release, and no later than one (1) business day, except in the case of unplanned releases in which the **CCF** shall provide as much notice as possible, so that the CWD can activate (unsuspend) their benefits, if applicable. At a minimum, the **CCF** shall provide the following to the CWD:

- a. Full name (and any known aliases);
- b. Date of birth;
- c. CIN/SSN; and
- d. Known or estimated release date.

County Welfare Department Responsibilities

CWDs shall process pre-release applications from CCFs for all incarcerated inmates or youths who submit a Medi-Cal application. Below are the key elements of an effective Pre-Release Medi-Cal Application Process for CWDs:

- Establish Point(s) of Contact (POC) to be responsible for CalAIM Mandatory Pre-Release Medi-Cal Application Processes.
 - Maintain and make available a CWD Pre-Release POC list for their local CCFs.
- Collaborate with the local CCFs to establish streamlined communication and processes between organizations.
- Establish a secure form of communication to transmit and receive information

CWDs shall follow standard Medi-Cal application processes for the evaluation and the determination of Medi-Cal eligibility.

1. **CWDs** shall collaborate with CCFs to verify the current Medi-Cal enrollment status of inmate or youths, when necessary, to assist the CCF with identifying individuals who will require a pre-release application.
 - a) If the inmate or youth is enrolled in Medi-Cal and there is not an incarceration reported, the CWD can obtain the incarceration details from the CCF, including the incarceration date and expected release date, if known. If applicable, the CWD shall suspend benefits in accordance with the guidance provided in the Medi-Cal Benefit Suspension Policy for Inmates section above.
 - b) If the CWD determines that the inmate or youth is not enrolled in Medi-Cal, the CWD shall notify the CCF of the current enrollment status so that the CCF can assist the inmate or youth in completing and submitting a pre-release application.
2. **CWDs** shall receive and process pre-release applications from CCFs.
 - a) In circumstances where the CWD receives a paper pre-release application for an inmate applicant who is incarcerated in the local CCF but indicates they'll be released to another county, the **CWD** shall accept the paper application and coordinate with the correct county of responsibility to transition the application to such county.
 - b) Per, [ACWDL 21-22 and MEDIL 22-40](#), **CWDs** must work with County Youth Correctional Facilities to ensure an application for an incarcerated youth is processed appropriately.
 - If the inmate or youth is under 18 years of age and considered part of their parent's household, the parent or legal guardian is required to sign the Pre-Release application for the minor.
 - The **County Youth Correctional Facility** will notify the youth's parent or guardian that they intend to obtain Medi-Cal benefits for the minor.

- If the parent or guardian does not respond to this notification, the **County Youth Correctional Facility** will complete the application and send it without a signature to the CWD.
 - The **CWD** will work with the juvenile facility, the youth, and/or the youth's parents or guardian to complete the Medi-Cal application process.
 - All Medi-Cal application requirements apply, including the second contact rule (ACWDL 21-12) when requesting additional information. This means that an application can be denied if the responsible individual does not cooperate with the request for additional information. CWDs must only request the minimum information needed to determine or restore eligibility under current Medi-Cal policy.
3. **CWDs** shall communicate with CCFs in order to assist with trouble-shooting application questions, requests for follow-up information, and any other items necessary to process the pre-release application.
- a) If a change in circumstance is reported by the CCF that requires an Intercounty Transfer (ICT), the CWD shall initiate the ICT, as outlined in [ACWDL 18-02](#) and [18-02E](#).
 - i. Example: County A receives information (from the CCF or the beneficiary) of an incarcerated individual's upcoming release from incarceration to County A. After a due diligence search, County A identifies the individual being released is active (or suspended) on Medi-Cal in County B. Either CWD can initiate the ICT.
- Note:** DHCS understands some ICT scenarios related to inmate releases are complex. DHCS will work with the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) and CWDs to explore additional ICT scenarios and issue clarification guidance as needed.*
4. **CWDs** shall notify CCFs if the Medi-Cal determination is not expected to be completed before release, if the release date is known.
5. **CWDs** shall notify inmate applicants of the outcome of their eligibility determination, provide all necessary Medi-Cal informing documentation (i.e. Notices of Action), and issue a plastic Benefits Identification Card (BIC), if applicable.

- a) In cases where there is an immediate need for services, the CWD shall arrange with the CCF to issue a temporary paper BIC to the inmate or youth so they can access Medi-Cal benefits upon release.
6. **CWDs** shall provide contact information for the specific CWD in which the inmate or youth will reside upon release.
7. Once notified that an inmate or youth has been released from incarceration, **CWDs** must activate (unsuspend) Med-Cal benefits on the day of release by reporting the Release Date in the MEDS.

ANTICIPATED ELIGIBILITY SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS

DHCS acknowledges the value of automating some of the processes outlined within this ACWDL. DHCS is collaborating internally and with our Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) partners and CWDs to determine the feasibility and timeline for automating some of these processes within SAWS and/or MEDS.

Given the breadth of the CalAIM Pre-Release Medi-Cal Application mandate, DHCS will continue to work with our CWD and CCF partners to provide technical assistance and issue additional clarification guidance as needed.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, or if we can provide further information please contact Angelo Vitale by email at CalAIMJusticePreReleaseApps@dhcs.ca.gov.

For CalAIM Justice Involved updates and additional information please visit:
<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/CalAIM/Pages/Justice.aspx>.

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:
Sandra Williams, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division