



BRADLEY P. GILBERT, MD, MPP
DIRECTOR

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



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

DATE: May 13, 2020

Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter No.: I 20-15

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY WELFARE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS

SUBJECT: PRIORITIZING CASE PROCESSING ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE
DURATION OF THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

The purpose of this Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter (MEDIL) is to provide additional clarification for counties and the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) regarding the instructions found in [MEDIL I 20-07](#) and [MEDIL I 20-08](#).

In an effort to ensure that Californians continue to receive Medi-Cal health coverage during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), and to allow for counties to prioritize processing of access to care issues, and concentrate staffing resources where needed during this public health crisis, per Executive Order (EO) N-29-20, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) issued [MEDIL I 20-07](#) and [MEDIL I 20-08](#) instructing the counties and SAWS to make the following changes:

- Delay processing of annual renewals through the duration of the COVID-19 PHE.
 - In keeping with EO N-29-20, and as instructed in [MEDIL I 20-07](#) and [MEDIL I 20-08](#), counties are to refrain from processing Medi-Cal renewals and associated verifications. This includes not sending manual renewal packets, reminder notices, and requests for verifications. Counties shall identify these cases for future processing once the suspension of renewal processing activities is lifted.
 - As counties have been instructed to refrain from processing renewal packets and associated verifications, to the extent such documents include information on household changes, counties will not act upon such information unless reported separately by the beneficiary.
- Delay discontinuance and negative actions as a result of annual renewals and reported change in circumstances to ensure individuals have access to medical care through the duration of the COVID-19 PHE.
 - Counties shall identify these cases for future processing once the suspension of negative action activities is lifted.

Prioritization of Case Processing Activities

Counties must prioritize processing cases for individuals who would gain access to health care coverage and resolve barriers related to access to health care services. These priorities include:

- Registering all Medi-Cal applications in SAWS including paper applications, applications taken over the phone, and those received online through the California Healthcare Eligibility, Enrollment and Retention System (CalHEERS) or SAWS portals
 - If an individual indicates they are applying for a combination of public assistance programs that includes Medi-Cal, whether in person, over the phone, by mail, or via an electronic application, the county must register the Medi-Cal application in the SAWS and initiate Intake processes timely.
- Determining eligibility for new applications
 - At no time should the processing of a Medi-Cal application be delayed in lieu of processing another public assistance program, as it is equally important to process all applications for public assistance as timely as possible
- 90-day cure period restorations
- Eligibility determinations for transitioning cases in carry forward status
- Processing a reported change in circumstance that would provide access to care
 - This may include:
 - Decrease in income
 - Disability
 - Pregnancy
 - Inter-county transfers
 - Adding new household members to the case

Prioritizing these case processing activities will ensure that Medi-Cal individuals receive access to health care coverage and necessary health care services.

In summary, counties shall delay Medi-Cal annual renewal activities and negative actions for the duration of the COVID-19 PHE and must focus on the priorities listed above. EO N-29-20 ensures that an individual's Medi-Cal benefits will not be negatively impacted for the duration of the COVID-19 PHE and that Medi-Cal beneficiaries will continue to receive services regardless of a reported change in circumstance or annual renewal.

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These instructions shall remain in effect for the duration of the COVID-19 PHE, pending further direction from DHCS. If you have any questions, or if we can provide further information, please contact Bonnie Tran by phone at (916) 345-8063 or by email at Bonnie.Tran@dhcs.ca.gov.

Original Signed by

Sandra Williams, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division