



NOTICE OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 30, 2024

PROPOSED STATE PLAN AMENDMENT (SPA) TO MAKE CLARIFYING AND TECHNICAL EDITS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT (BHT) SERVICES

This notice provides information of public interest that DHCS has submitted SPA 24-0031 to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to seek necessary approvals to make clarifying technical edits that BHT services are provided when recommended by a physician or psychologist, even if the child is not diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, in accordance with requirements for Early and Periodic Screening, Treatment, and Diagnostic benefit. SPA 24-0031 also adds qualified autism service (QAS) professionals as providers who may supervise QAS paraprofessionals. SPA 24-0031 also adds associate marriage and family therapists, associate clinical social workers, associate professional clinical counselors, and psychological associates as QAS professionals, and makes other technical edits.

SPA 24-0031 also proposes to eliminate the Median Rate Methodology (MRM), effective January 1, 2025, for BHT services provided by regional centers and, instead, follow the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) fee schedule. The DDS fee schedule rates follow the same Rate Study Methodology that was previously approved for section 1915(i) services through SPA 24-0028 submitted by DDS. As such, DDS did a Regional Center-specific cost-finding study for the services on the DDS fee schedule, and that study recommended a rate. Providers who are below that rate are paid 90 percent of the rate with the opportunity to get 10 percent more for participating in a provider directory (or 7 percent more if they are at 93 percent of the rate, etc.). Behavior analysts, associate behavior analysts, behavior management assistants, behavior management consultants, behavioral technicians, educational psychologists, clinical social workers, and professional clinical counselors, where more than 30 percent of their clients are not regional center consumers, are paid their usual and customary rates. All other providers are paid on the DDS fee schedule.



DHCS estimates the overall fiscal impact of this amendment to be state fiscal year (SFY) 2024-25: \$818,000 federal financial participation (FFP) and for SFY 2025-26: \$1,636,000 FFP.

The effective date of the proposed SPA 24-0031 is January 1, 2025. All proposed SPAs are subject to approval by CMS.

Public Review and Comments

Upon submission to CMS, a copy of the proposed SPA 24-0031 will be published on: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/laws/Pages/Pending-2024.aspx>

If you would like to review the SPA once it becomes available, please visit your local county welfare department. You may also request a copy of proposed SPA 24-0031 by writing to the mailing or email addresses listed below.

Written comments may be sent to the following address:

Department of Health Care Services
Benefits Division
Attn: Jim Elliott
P.O. Box 997413, MS 4601
Sacramento, California 95899-7417

Comments may also be emailed to PublicInput@dhcs.ca.gov. Please indicate SPA 24-0031 in the subject line or message.

A copy of submitted public comments to SPA 24-0031 may be requested in writing to the mailing or email address identified above.