

DATE: June 22, 2026

ALW PL: 26 – 001

TO: Assisted Living Waiver (ALW) Care Coordination Agencies, ALW Providers, and Applicants

SUBJECT: Clarification regarding Long-Term Care Ombudsman Referrals for the ALW

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) issues this notice to provide clarification regarding the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) referral process and the criteria required to qualify for a referral.

On February 16, 2024, as part of the 2024-2029 waiver renewal, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approved the DHCS request to add LTCO referrals as a criteria for priority enrollment within the Assisted Living Waiver (ALW). With this approval, the LTCO office was authorized to submit a letter on behalf of a member to their Care Coordination Agency (CCA) requesting expedited release from the ALW Waitlist due to a need for imminent services.

In collaboration with DHCS, the LTCO office established the following eligibility criteria for referrals to the ALW program.

Effectively immediately, individuals must meet all six of the following criteria to be eligible for an LTCO referral:

- Individual is residing in a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF).
- Individual has received a medical assessment and discharge notice that states they are eligible for a lower level of care.
- Individual is low-income.
- Individual is eligible to receive services through the ALW program and is willing to relocate from a SNF to an assisted living facility enrolled as a provider in the ALW program.
- Individual is willing to live in an assisted living setting located in one of the following counties providing ALW services: Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Sonoma counties.
- Individual has provided consent to the LTCO to write a letter on their behalf.

June 22, 2026

If all six of the above criteria are met, the individual and or their authorized representative may contact the LTCO office to request a referral letter for the ALW program.

Please note that the LTCO **will not accept** referrals that come directly from the CCA, assisted living facility providers, nor Managed Care Plan representatives. All referral requests must come directly from the individual and/or their authorized representative.

If an individual does not meet **ALL** the above criteria, they do not qualify for a referral from the LTCO.

If you have any questions about this process, please email ALWP.IR@dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Jake Johnson, Chief
Integrated Systems of Care Division
Department of Health Care Services