

DATE: April 17, 2023

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS Letter No.:23-09
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

SUBJECT: DISCONTINUATION OF THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UNINSURED GROUP PROGRAM

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to inform counties that the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) will discontinue the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Uninsured Group (UIG) program on May 31, 2023. The federal government has notified the department that the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) will end on **May 11, 2023**. Therefore, COVID-19 UIG eligibility under the V2 aid code will end on **May 31, 2023**.

This ACWDL supersedes or updates guidance provided in [MEDIL I 20-37](#) and [MEDIL I 22-19](#) and reestablishes the relevant UIG program information conveyed in [ACWDL 22-18](#), page 15.

Background

On March 18, 2020, Public Law 116-127 (the Families First Coronavirus Response Act) authorized state Medicaid programs to provide access to coverage for medically necessary COVID-19 diagnostic testing, testing-related services, and treatment services, including vaccination, hospitalization, and all medically necessary care, at no cost to the individual.

The COVID-19 Uninsured Group (UIG) Program Unwinding Plan

In preparation for unwinding the COVID-19 UIG Program, DHCS will take the following steps:

- **On March 20, 2023**, DHCS began mailing a COVID-19 Uninsured Group (UIG) Sunset Notice (Attachment 1) with a copy of the “Application for Health Insurance” and a “Notice of Language Services (GEN 1365)” to individuals enrolled in the COVID-19 UIG program (aid code V2). This notice will advise UIG beneficiaries of the date their coverage will end, how to apply for no-cost or low-cost health coverage through Medi-Cal or Covered California, and their hearing rights in the preferred written language on file. Counties may also find this notice

on the DHCS website once it is posted. This first mailing is scheduled to be completed the week of April 17, 2023.

- **After the first mailing phase**, DHCS will mail the COVID-19 UIG Sunset Notice to individuals that are newly enrolled in the COVID-19 UIG program in their written language on file with a copy of the “Application for Health Insurance” and a “Notice of Language Services” (GEN 1365). The subsequent mailings will occur on, or near the following schedule:
 - Phase 2 Sunset Notice Mailing Date: **April, 2023**
 - Phase 3 Sunset Notice Mailing Date: **May, 2023**
 - Final Phase Sunset Notice Mailing Date: **June, 2023**
- Individuals enrolled in the COVID-19 UIG program may contact counties to apply for Medi-Cal and/or Covered California. They may also apply by mail, on-line, or by phone.
- *The federal COVID-19 PHE is considered a qualifying life event, which provides individuals a special enrollment period with Covered California.* This Special Enrollment Period will also apply to individuals discontinued from the COVID-19 Uninsured Group at the end of the federal COVID-19 PHE. It will provide individuals who qualify with 60 days from May 31, 2023, to apply for Covered California coverage.
- Individuals who apply for ongoing coverage through Medi-Cal or Covered California and have medical expenses, including for COVID-19 related services provided before or after the COVID-19 UIG program ends, counties should remind those (and all) applicants of the following:
 - They may request up to three-month of retroactive Medi-Cal eligibility as part of their application for comprehensive coverage.
 - Or if they enroll in Covered California, they can ask the biller to submit the claim to their health insurance company. The Covered California coverage may cover the bill for their COVID-19-related services provided in months their Covered California plan is effective.

Billing for COVID-19 Uninsured Group Program Services

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When the COVID-19 Uninsured Group Program ends, Medi-Cal providers can still bill for services provided to eligible beneficiaries while the program was in effect.

- Normal [Medi-Cal billing timelines](#) and requirements will apply for services provided during the COVID-19 Uninsured Group Program but claimed after the program ends.
- The Letter of Authorization (LOA) may be used if the COVID-19 UIG beneficiary is approved for Medi-Cal for a month more than one year before the current month's eligibility (up to 48 prior months) through either a State Hearing decision or discovery of an administrative error. To learn more about the LOA process, visit [MEDIL I 21-29](#) or [MEDIL I 21-29E](#) .
- COVID-19 UIG beneficiaries who paid a bill for covered COVID-19 services while on Medi-Cal (including but not limited to eligibility in aid code V2) may use the [Conlan process](#) to obtain reimbursement.

If you have any questions, or if we can provide further information, please contact Kavita Gaunder, by phone at (916) 345-7107 or by email at Kavita.Gaunder@dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Yingjia Huang
Assistant Deputy Director
Health Care and Benefits
Department of Health Care Services

Enclosure

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Attachment 1: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Uninsured Group Program Sunset Notice



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



**Important news about your health coverage
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Uninsured Group Program**

Dear Beneficiary,

You are enrolled in the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Uninsured Group Program. It only covers medically necessary COVID-19 testing, testing-related services, and treatments.

The COVID-19 Uninsured Group Program ends May 31, 2023.

The program is ending because the law changed.

Find out if you qualify for Medi-Cal or Covered California

You can apply for no-cost or low-cost health coverage through Medi-Cal or Covered California. There is one application for both programs.

APPLY TODAY in one of these ways:

- **Online** at CoveredCA.com, MyBenefitsCALWIN.org or BenefitsCal.com
- **By mail**
Fill out the Application for Health Insurance that came with this letter and mail to:
Covered California
P.O. Box 989725
West Sacramento, CA, 95798-9725

Or mail it to your local county office. Find your local county office information at <http://dhcs.ca.gov/COL>. Or call the Medi-Cal Helpline at 800-541-5555.

You can also download a paper application in many languages at <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/applyformedi-cal>.
- **By phone**
Call Covered California at 800-300-1506. Or call your local county office.
Find your local county office at <http://dhcs.ca.gov/COL>. Or call the Medi-Cal Helpline at 800-541-5555.
- **In person**

Apply for Medi-Cal or Covered California coverage in person at your local county office. Find your local county office information at <http://dhcs.ca.gov/COL>. Or call 800-541-5555.

Apply for Covered California before your COVID-19 Uninsured Group Program coverage ends!

Due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, Covered California has a special enrollment period. It will end **60 days** after the last day of the month when the Public Health Emergency ends. You may also enroll if you have another qualifying life event. Or enroll during Covered California's open enrollment period.

To apply for Covered California online, go to CoveredCA.com/apply.

- In the "Special Enrollment" dropdown-menu, choose "Pandemic (COVID-19)/ Public Health Emergency" as your qualifying life event.
- For the date of your qualifying life event, enter the current date.

What if I got a bill for COVID-19 testing or treatment?

- If you got a bill for COVID-19 testing or treatment **before** the program ends, tell the billing Medi-Cal provider to submit the claim to Medi-Cal instead of billing you.
- If you got COVID-19 testing or treatment **after** the program ends, you can apply for Medi-Cal and get the services covered if you qualify for coverage. This includes up to three months of retroactive (back) Medi-Cal coverage. If you enroll in Covered California, tell the biller to submit the claim to your health insurance company.
- If you paid for COVID-19 testing or treatment while you were in the COVID-19 Uninsured Group Program, you can ask for a refund. Call the Medi-Cal Beneficiary Service Center at 916-403-2007. To learn more about refunds, go to the Medi-Cal Out-of-Pocket Expense Reimbursement (Conlan) webpage at <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/conlan>.

Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine, testing or treatment when this program ends?

After this program ends, you can still get vaccinated for free. To learn more, go to www.myturn.ca.gov.

If you need COVID-19 testing or treatment after this program ends, you can apply for Medi-Cal or Covered California. If you qualify, you can get covered for COVID-19 services and more.

Questions?

- Email us at COVID19Apps@dhcs.ca.gov.
- Or call 916-552-9200.
- Or mail your questions to:

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Department of Health Care Services
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division, MS 4607
P.O. Box 997417
Sacramento, CA 95899-7417

To get free help in other languages, use the phone numbers listed on the Notice of Language Services that came with this letter.

Thank you,

Department of Health Care Services
State of California

Important Information About Your Fair Hearing Rights

The COVID-19 Uninsured Group Program is ending on May 31, 2023, because the law changed. You cannot appeal the termination of the program due to a change in the law. (An appeal is a process where you dispute a decision and ask for a fair hearing to review the decision.) You can request a fair hearing if you disagree with a decision related to your Medi-Cal application, benefits or services. You can learn more about how to request a hearing at:

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/fair-hearing>.

Or you can call 1-800-743-8525 (TTY: 1-800-952-8349).