

April 20, 2026

Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information

Letter No.: I 26-12

TO: 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 WELFARE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Incarcerated Members.  
(REFERENCE: All County Welfare Directors Letters [24-04](#) Consolidated  
Policy for the Medi-Cal Inmate Eligibility Program, Medi-Cal Benefit  
Suspension Processes, and Pre-Release Medi-Cal Application Processes for  
Incarcerated Individuals).

The purpose of this Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter is to communicate to counties on the handling of the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) members when the counties receive incarceration information from a State or County Correctional Facility.

## Background

The **Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023** (Public Law 117328, enacted December 29, 2022) amends Medicaid requirements for justice involved in juveniles and aligns CHIP requirements, as noted in your document. It establishes statutory requirements to protect CHIP eligibility for individuals who become incarcerated. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued State Health Official (SHO) letters to provide guidance that reflects and implements these provisions.

Effective January 1, 2025, the CAA 2023 amended Section 2102(d)(1)(A) of the Social Security Act to prohibit termination of CHIP eligibility for targeted low-income children and pregnant individuals during incarceration. SHO 23004, published September 29, 2023, operationalizes this requirement by directing states not to discontinue CHIP coverage for members who become incarcerated during their 12-month continuous



eligibility period, including during pregnancy and postpartum. Coverage continues until renewal or the end of postpartum eligibility.

The **Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024** (Public Law 11842, enacted March 9, 2024) strengthens these protections by requiring states to suspend, rather than terminate, eligibility for all incarcerated members, effective January 1, 2026. SHO 24004, published July 23, 2024, reflects this mandate by requiring states to suspend CHIP eligibility for incarcerated individuals, ensuring coverage resumes upon release or when eligibility ends.

### **Overview of CHIP Programs**

CHIP provides health coverage to children in families who earn too much to qualify for Medi-Cal but cannot afford private health insurance. DHCS administers CHIP through a combination of both Medi-Cal expansion and separate CHIP programs.

- Medi-Cal expansion Programs:
  - Optional Targeted Low Income Children's Program (OTLICP)
- Separate CHIP programs:
  - County Children's Health Initiative Program (CCHIP),
  - Medi-Cal Access Program (MCAP) and
  - Medi-Cal Access Infant Program (MCAIP)

### **MCAP Eligibility**

MCAP provides full scope services for pregnant individuals at no cost who are ineligible for Medi-Cal. Covered services include prenatal care, hospital stays, dental, mental health, vision, and postpartum care for up to 365 days. MCAP is for middle-income families who do not have health insurance and whose income is too high for no-cost Medi-Cal. MCAIP provides infants born to MCAP members up to two years eligibility, unless infant is enrolled in employer sponsored insurance or no-cost Medi-Cal or income no longer qualifies on infant's first birthday.

Eligibility requirements include:

- Being a California resident
- Being pregnant
- Income above 213% and below 322% of the Federal Poverty Level

### **CCHIP Eligibility**

CCHIP is only available in Santa Clara, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties. It provides full scope coverage to children ages 0–19 whose families have incomes between 266% and 322% of the FPL.

To qualify for CCHIP, an individual must:

- Be between the ages of 0–19
- Be uninsured and ineligible for Medi-Cal
- Be a U.S. Citizen, National, or Lawfully Present Immigrant
- Not have employer sponsored coverage

### **Incarceration Procedures for MCAP and CCHIP Members**

When the County receives notification from a state or county correctional facility that a member enrolled in CCHIP (aid code 2C) or MCAP (aid code 0E) has been incarcerated or released, the County must submit the required information to the Maximus County Liaison via email within 24 hours for processing. This information must include the correctional facility detail, the member's name and date of birth, and any applicable custody details as outlined below.

#### **Correctional Facility Details**

- Name and address of the County Correctional Facility (CCF)
- Contact information for the CCF worker or designated point of contact

#### **Member Information Full name (include any known aliases)**

- Inmate number
- Date of birth

April 20, 2026

- Social Security number
- County and address where the individual intends to reside after release
- Mailing address
- Contact information for any Authorized Representative, parent, or legal guardian (if applicable)

### **Custody Details**

- Date of incarceration
- Expected or actual release date (if known)

### **Maximus County Liaison Contact Information**

Counties must submit the above information to Maximus using the following email address:

Email: [SPELiaisons@maximus.com](mailto:SPELiaisons@maximus.com)

If you have any questions, or if we can provide further information, please contact the Medi-Cal Eligibility Division (MCED) Policy inbox at [MCED-Policy@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:MCED-Policy@dhcs.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Sarah Crow, Chief  
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division