



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



DATE: October 25, 2022

Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter No.: I 22-39

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

SUBJECT: CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS IN THE MEDI-CAL ELIGIBILITY DATA SYSTEM (MEDS) (REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER (ACWDL 18-23))

The purpose of this letter is to remind the County Welfare Departments (CWD) of the confidentiality requirements for children in the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS) who are part of the Foster Care (FC), Adoption Assistance (AAP) and Kinship Guardianship Assistance (Kin-GAP) Programs and California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKS).

Federal Law

Federal Medicaid law requires that medical information on applicants and beneficiaries must be kept confidential, and that State Medicaid agencies must provide safeguards that restrict the use or disclosure of information concerning applicants and beneficiaries to purposes directly connected with the administration of the state Medicaid program (Title 42, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 1396a (a)(7)). The regulation implementing this law governs the disclosure of information collected and maintained by state Medicaid agencies and their agents and contractors (Title 42, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Sections 431.300 et seq.).

California State Law

Access and use of the social security number (SSN) within MEDS is subject to strict privacy and confidentiality rules under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). California W&I Code, § 14100.2(a) further requires that beneficiary information “shall be confidential, and shall not be open to examination other than for purposes directly connected with the administration of the Medi-Cal program.”

Medi-Cal Policy

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Counties must use the child's existing SSN (if available) and Client Index Number (CIN) in MEDS throughout the child's history in the child welfare system. Counties shall not enter pseudo-SSNs into California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) or MEDS for children that have an existing SSN, as this creates duplicate records in MEDS. In the event of an adoption, the County Eligibility Worker or Foster Care Eligibility Worker shall work with their respective CalSAWS to utilize security functionality to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for the pre-adoptive child within the FC, AAP, Kin-GAP, CalWORKS, or Medi-Cal case. Again, the child's record within MEDS is to stay consistent using the child's existing SSN and CIN as set out in [ACWDL 18-23](#). As the child's record is maintained in MEDS, the confidentiality of the child's personal information will be protected by HIPAA and Medi-Cal confidentiality rules and standards.

Adhering to these guidelines will prevent adopted/foster care children from being located or identified by unauthorized persons. DHCS appreciates the efforts our county partners have taken to increase access to health care for children exiting foster care into adoptive homes.

If you have any questions regarding confidentiality for FC, AAP, KinGAP, CalWORKS or Medi-Cal children in MEDS or CalSAWS, please submit your questions to DHCSFosterCareProgram@dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by
Sandra Williams, Division Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division