



DAVID MAXWELL-JOLLY
Director

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



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

December 10, 2010

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS Letter No.: 10-19
ALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: REMOVAL OF MEDS ACCESS FOR COUNTY CLINIC STAFF

This letter is to inform County Welfare Departments (CWDs) that county clinic staff should not have access to the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS).

As noted in All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) 07-20, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has conducted on-site data privacy and security assessments. The purpose of the assessments is to review CWD procedures in safeguarding Medi-Cal Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

Upon review of CWD assessment findings, DHCS has observed that some CWDs have provided MEDS accounts to county employees that work in medical clinics. The CWDs provided the MEDS accounts to clinic staff for purposes other than administering the Medi-Cal Program. The county clinic staff were using the MEDS system to perform Medi-Cal eligibility verifications for provider billing purposes.

This is not an appropriate use of MEDS as outlined in CWD Medi-Cal Data Privacy and Security Agreements (Agreements). The Agreement Preamble states that the Agreement covers workers that assist in the administration of the Medi-Cal program and access, use, or disclose Medi-Cal PII to perform an administrative function on behalf of Medi-Cal, such as determining eligibility or case managing In-Home Supportive Services' clients.

Further, ACWDL 08-04 requires that CWDs only provide MEDS access to CWD employees for the purpose of administering the Medi-Cal program. The administration of the program encompasses those administrative activities and responsibilities that the DHCS is required to engage in to operate the program, which includes determination of eligibility by DHCS and its agents. Disclosure of information is limited to and solely for Medi-Cal administrative purposes.

This letter instructs CWDs to not provide MEDS accounts to county clinical staff, as their duties do not relate to the administration of Medi-Cal. Clinic staff is defined as those county employees that work in a setting where medical or health-care related services are provided and are not assisting DHCS in administering the Medi-Cal program. If your CWD has provided county clinic workers with access to MEDS, please revoke immediately using the standard MEDS 41 account authorization process. Please inform the county clinic staff to utilize other alternatives to verify Medi-Cal eligibility, such as the Automated Eligibility Verification System, the Medi-Cal Internet website, or the Point of Service device. CWD Medi-Cal eligibility workers that are outstationed in a clinic or other medical setting may continue to have MEDS accounts. Out-stationed Medi-Cal Eligibility workers sometimes use MEDS to verify eligibility when processing new Medi-Cal applications for a clinic patient.

In the event that you need to contact DHCS regarding any of the information in this letter, please contact Ms. Melissa Villarama, Analyst, Policy Operations Branch, Security Unit, at melissa.villarama@dhcs.ca.gov or at (916) 552-9521.

Original signed by:

René Mollow, MSN, RN, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division