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*Director*

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



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
*Governor*

October 5, 2017

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS Letter No.: 17-35  
ALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS  
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS  
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES  
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Implementation of the Soft Pause Removal through the Statewide Automated Welfare System  
(Reference: All County Welfare Director's Letters: 14-18 and 16-18, CalHEERS Information Transmittals: Updated and Second Updated CalHEERS Information Transmittal # 0127-15).

## Introduction

The purpose of this All County Welfare Director's Letter (ACWDL) is to establish the policies and procedures for the removal of Soft Pause through the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS).

Change Request (CR) 3043, implemented on May 16, 2016, added a Soft Pause indicator to the California Healthcare Eligibility, Enrollment, and Retention System (CalHEERS) Budget Worksheet page, and introduced new functionality that allows county staff to remove Soft Pause protection directly in SAWS and then redetermine eligibility.

## Background

When consumers' personal circumstances change, the Soft Pause functionality protects consumers from losing their Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) Medi-Cal eligibility while the county evaluates eligibility for other Medi-Cal programs not subject to MAGI, such as Non-MAGI Medi-Cal or Consumer Protection Programs (CPPs). Adverse actions that will trigger Soft Pause functionality include:

- Moving from MAGI Medi-Cal to Advanced Premium Tax Credits/Cost Sharing Reductions (APTC/CSR)
- Moving from non-premium MAGI Medi-Cal to premium MAGI Medi-Cal

- Moving from full scope MAGI Medi-Cal to limited or restricted scope MAGI Medi-Cal
- Moving from full-scope MAGI Medi-Cal to Pregnancy Related Medi-Cal
- Losing eligibility for MAGI Medi-Cal, including, but not limited to, turning 65 years old, becoming eligible for Medicare before age 65, or experiencing an increase in income that renders the beneficiary ineligible due to being over program income limits.

The Soft Pause Groups are comprised of beneficiaries who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- aged 65 or older
- attesting to blindness
- attesting to being disabled
- becoming eligible for Medicare
- a parent of a child under age 21
- a caretaker relative of a child under age 21
- a child under age 21
- a pregnant woman with income over 138 percent Federal Poverty Level up to the end of the 60-day post-partum period

### **Non-MAGI Screening**

The County Eligibility Worker (CEW) must evaluate the individual for CPPs or Non-MAGI Medi-Cal before executing a Soft Pause removal or before transferring the beneficiary for APTC/CSR evaluation. The CEW may also execute a Soft Pause removal if the beneficiary has clearly indicated in writing or verbally (with documentation in the case file) that they do not want a Non-MAGI Medi-Cal evaluation. [ACWDL 14-18](#) outlines the policies and procedures for evaluating beneficiaries for Non-MAGI Medi-Cal.

Similarly, the county must complete a non-MAGI evaluation for persons who soft paused during the renewal process before advancing the annual renewal date. The county shall not advance the annual renewal date for persons in soft pause until the Non-MAGI screening process outlined in ACWDL 14-18 has been completed and soft pause removed. SAWS shall program in the next available release functionality which prevents the system from advancing the annual renewal date for household members in Soft Pause during the automated renewal process and sending renewal Notices of Action. Additionally, SAWS shall add functionality to prevent a CEW from finalizing eligibility based on a renewal reason for beneficiaries in Soft Pause.

If the individual is determined eligible for Non-MAGI Medi-Cal, the county shall remove Soft Pause via SAWS to place the beneficiary in the appropriate aid code and provide notice to the beneficiary.

It is important to note that a beneficiary whose eligibility is discontinued for Failure to Respond to the Non-MAGI evaluation is not protected by Soft Pause. The CEW shall remove Soft Pause after processing the discontinuance. When a discontinued beneficiary provides the missing information during the 90-day cure period, the county must treat the information as submitted timely and evaluate Medi-Cal eligibility dating back to the date of discontinuance. In this instance, if the discontinued beneficiary is found eligible to Non-MAGI Medi-Cal without a share of cost (SOC), the beneficiary should be granted eligibility on the Non-MAGI basis dated back to the date of discontinuance. If the beneficiary has already transitioned to APTC/CSR, and is found eligible only for Medically Needy with a SOC, the county may follow-up to inquire whether the individual would like to have concurrent eligibility for Medically Needy SOC and APTC/CSR.

### **Soft Pause Removal**

With the implementation of CR 3043, CEWs have the ability to execute a Soft Pause removal directly from SAWS. Once the CEW has completed the Non-MAGI or CPP eligibility review, the CEW may remove the Soft Pause in SAWS and choose the appropriate triggering event (i.e. lost coverage in the past 60 days).

For individuals who have been determined eligible for APTC/CSR, once the CEW removes Soft Pause, the CEW may complete plan enrollment in CalHEERS. If the beneficiary requests help with enrollment and plan selection, the CEW shall help them complete the process, as described in [ACWDL 16-18](#). If the county is unable to complete the plan enrollment process, beneficiaries may also contact the Covered California Service Center at (800) 300-1506 for assistance.

It is important to note that the Soft Pause removal is prospective. Soft Pause is removed only when SAWS sends the future benefit month eligibility determination request to CalHEERS. For information on how the Soft Pause removal functions in CalHEERS, see the enclosed CalHEERS Information Transmittal (Updated CIT #0127-15). For technical assistance in completing these actions in SAWS, please contact your county's SAWS consortia representative.

CEWs should no longer submit CalHEERS Help Desk tickets requesting Soft Pause removal, unless the Soft Pause removal action was unsuccessful or the SAWS case is closed, as described in the Second Updated Soft Pause Removal CalHEERS Information Transmittal (please see enclosure). For existing CalHEERS Help Desk tickets requesting

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Soft Pause removal, CEWs should execute the Soft Pause removal directly from SAWS and then change the status of the Help Desk ticket to “resolved.”

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Brooke Hennessy at (916) 327-0415 or by email at [Brooke.Hennessy@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:Brooke.Hennessy@dhcs.ca.gov).

Original Signed By

Sandra Williams, Chief  
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division

Enclosure

<b>Distribution Date:</b>	May 26, 2016	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Updated CIT # 0127-15</b>																		
<b>Subject:</b>	-																			
<b>From:</b>	CalHEERS Project																			
<b>To:</b>	Covered California, DHCS, Service Centers, Counties, SAWS, CWDA, and OSI SPOCs																			
	<p><b>Please forward to appropriate impacted staff, contacts, or leads in your organization:</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General  <input type="checkbox"/> Contract/MOU/IAA  <input type="checkbox"/> Budget/Fiscal  <input type="checkbox"/> Policy</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Plan Management</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Financial Management</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Assister Management</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Web Portal</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> SHOP</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Navigators/Brokers</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Notices</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Usability/ADA</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Languages/Translation</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Reports (<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal <input type="checkbox"/> Caseload Movement <input type="checkbox"/> Management <input type="checkbox"/> ACA-specific)</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Application Development  <input type="checkbox"/> Technical  <input type="checkbox"/> Conversion  <input type="checkbox"/> Batch and Interfaces  <input type="checkbox"/> Testing  <input type="checkbox"/> Implementation  <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Change Management  <input type="checkbox"/> Training  <input type="checkbox"/> Education and Outreach  <input type="checkbox"/> Service Center  <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/> Assister Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Web Portal	<input type="checkbox"/> SHOP	<input type="checkbox"/> Navigators/Brokers	<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Notices	<input type="checkbox"/> Usability/ADA	<input type="checkbox"/> Languages/Translation	<input type="checkbox"/> Reports ( <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal <input type="checkbox"/> Caseload Movement <input type="checkbox"/> Management <input type="checkbox"/> ACA-specific)			<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
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<b>Description:</b>	<p><b>Purpose</b>          The purpose of this CIT is to <del>remind staff of the interim process for cases that require removal from Soft Pause protection, previously communicated via CIT 0049-15</del> communicate to staff that with the release of 16.4, scheduled for 5/16/2016, there is no longer a need to submit a CalHEERS Help Desk ticket to request a Soft Pause removal, <b>unless the Soft Pause removal action by the County Eligibility Worker was unsuccessful or the SAWS case is closed.</b> County staff will have the ability to complete a Soft Pause removal directly from SAWS. However, there are a couple of points to keep in mind when executing this action.</p> <p><b>History</b>          The CalHEERS Business Rules Engine (BRE) contains Soft Pause functionality designed to protect consumers from losing their existing MAGI Medi-Cal eligibility when their circumstances change and they fit one of the following demographic categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aged</li> <li>• Blind</li> <li>• Disabled</li> <li>• Parent of a child under 21</li> <li>• Caretaker relative of a child under 21</li> <li>• Child under 21 (<i>note they will have age appropriate aid code</i>)</li> <li>• Pregnant woman up to the end of the 60-Day Post-Partum Period</li> </ul>																			

The Soft Pause functionality allows the County Eligibility Worker (CEW) the opportunity to evaluate the case for any consumer protection programs and/or non-MAGI Medi-Cal eligibility.

When an individual is placed into Soft Pause, their case must be reviewed by a CEW in order to correctly disposition the case. Current CalHEERS BRE functionality prevents a Soft Pause from being lifted for the current month. Therefore, in order to provide correct eligibility for the future month, staff must request eligibility for the future month.

#### **Steps for Soft Pause Removal**

- ~~1. The CEW will access the CalHEERS case and review the most current budget worksheet to confirm the consumer is in Soft Pause.~~
- ~~2. The CEW will confirm that all of the case details (such as income, tax filing status, etc.) are up to date prior to logging a CalHEERS Help Desk ticket.~~
- ~~3. Follow your county procedure to log a CalHEERS Help Desk ticket, using the Soft Pause template referencing the specific case number, and indicating that the case appears to be "Soft Paused."~~
- ~~4. A Help Desk representative will begin the process to remove the Soft Pause and will notify the CEW via e-mail to confirm which individual(s) require Soft Pause removal.~~
- ~~5. The CalHEERS Help Desk will coordinate a database update to lift the Soft Pause. When completed, the county will be notified via the Help Desk ticket resolution e-mail.~~
- ~~6. Once notified, the CEW will log into CalHEERS and locate the case number in question.~~
- ~~7. Once located, navigate to the *Manual Verifications* page and click the **Redetermine Eligibility** button. The case eligibility will be determined only for the prospective month based on the current case data, and Soft Pause protection will not be reapplied.~~
- ~~8. CalHEERS will return an unsolicited DER to the county with the new eligibility determination for finalization in SAWS.~~
- ~~9. When the CEW verifies the determination is correct, they can discontinue the Medi-Cal eligibility in SAWS.~~

#### **Important Points**

- Soft Pause is removed prospectively (future month).
- When initially removing a Soft Pause and SAWS sends the current and future benefit month Eligibility Determination Request (EDR), or just the future benefit month EDR, CalHEERS will remove the Soft Pause prospectively.
- If the Soft Pause removal is sent with only a current benefit month EDR, the Soft Pause will **NOT** be removed.
- Once Soft Pause is removed, if SAWS runs eligibility for prior months that were in Soft Pause, the Soft Pause is reapplied and county staff will be required to remove Soft Pause again.
- Once Soft Pause is removed, if a consumer submits a Report a Change (RAC) applicable to a current month still in Soft Pause, the Soft Pause is reapplied and county staff will be required to remove Soft Pause again.

**CalHEERS Project**  
**CalHEERS Information Transmittal (CIT)**

	<p>For example, a Soft Pause removal is completed on May 16. On May 17, the consumer completes a RAC. The Soft Pause is reapplied and county staff will be required to remove the Soft Pause again.</p> <p>For existing CalHEERS Help Desk tickets that were submitted for a Soft Pause removal, County staff are to complete a Soft Pause removal directly from SAWS. Once the CEW has removed the Soft Pause in SAWS, set the CalHEERS Help Desk ticket to a “Resolved” status.</p> <p><b>When to submit a CalHEERS Help Desk Ticket for a Soft Pause Removal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a Soft Pause removal via SAWS by the County Eligibility Worker is unsuccessful, submit an <b>Incident</b> to CalHEERS Help Desk with the subject line “Soft Pause Removal unsuccessful.”</li> <li>• When a SAWS case is closed and a Determination of Eligibility Response (DER) is received, submit a <b>Service Request</b> to CalHEERS Help Desk with the subject line “Closed case Soft Pause removal Request.”</li> </ul> <p>If you have any questions regarding this CIT, please contact the primary or backup project contact.</p>
<p><b>Primary Project Contact:</b></p>	<p><i>Contact this person for questions about the contents of this CIT.</i></p> <p>Jane Watson  (916) 999-3755  <a href="mailto:jane.a.watson@calheers.ca.gov">jane.a.watson@calheers.ca.gov</a></p>
<p><b>Backup Project Contact:</b></p>	<p>Lonnie Perez  (916) 999-2396  <a href="mailto:lonnie.perez@calheers.ca.gov">lonnie.perez@calheers.ca.gov</a></p>
<p><b>Attachments:</b></p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><b>SharePoint Link:</b></p> <p><b>NOTE:</b>  <b>SharePoint access is not available to counties</b></p>	<p><a href="#">CIT Folder</a></p> <p>OR</p> <p>You may also retrieve the CIT document and attachments by following these steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In the left menu, click the “Communications” hyperlink</li> <li>2. Click the “CIT” folder icon</li> <li>3. Click the “2015” folder icon</li> <li>4. Click the appropriate CIT # folder icon</li> </ol>