



News Release

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MEDI-CAL RX LENGTHENS TRANSITION TIME TO FULL IMPLEMENTATION

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) today announced it will lengthen the transition time to full implementation of Medi-Cal Rx by three months, until April 1, 2021. The modification allows additional time to develop safeguards to ensure a complete transition of prescription drug services for Medi-Cal’s nearly 13 million beneficiaries during the ongoing uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE).

Development of Medi-Cal Rx is being led by DHCS in collaboration with its vendor, Magellan Medicaid Administration, Inc. During this additional transition period, prescription drugs services will continue to be delivered under the current system for both fee-for-service beneficiaries and those served by Medi-Cal managed care plans (MCP).

Medi-Cal Rx is designed to standardize the Medi-Cal pharmacy benefit statewide, while improving access to pharmacy services for beneficiaries. It will deliver cost savings by shifting to the state the responsibility for providing prescription drug services to all beneficiaries.

The additional transition time also allows more time for state-contracted pharmacies and other providers to take additional trainings and to become more familiar with the Medi-Cal Rx processes for submitting claims and prior authorizations, as well as other functionalities within the Medi-Cal Rx provider portal.

“Considering the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential that this transition be as seamless as possible to avoid interruptions in health care services for the most vulnerable among us,” said DHCS Director Will Lightbourne. “This additional time allows an extra level of preparation to ensure that prescribers, pharmacists, and beneficiaries have the best possible experience.”

DHCS and Magellan will use the extra time to communicate with and provide additional information to MCPs and other interested stakeholders, including:

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- Allowing Medi-Cal providers, MCPs, and other interested parties to register for the Medi-Cal Rx secure portals and participate in comprehensive trainings that ensure greater overall understanding of the project and support operational readiness for providers and MCPs.
- Standing up and fully mobilizing the Medi-Cal Rx Customer Service Center (CSC) well in advance of the full implementation date. Experts at the CSC will be able to field and answer questions from customers and providers, potentially preempting confusion and other potential problems once the transition occurs. The CSC provides guidance on claims processing, prior authorization of drugs, prescription request adjudication, and more through the 24/7 support service for Medi-Cal providers, beneficiaries, MCPs, and other interested parties.
- Providing additional time for MCPs to interact with and build rapport with dedicated Medi-Cal Rx clinical liaisons, who will help Magellan build accurate and comprehensive MCP profiles to ensure that the individualized needs of the populations served by each MCP are met.
- Allowing DHCS and Magellan to roll out additional Medi-Cal Rx website and secure portal functionalities and tools in advance of the project launch, including, but not limited to, the new Medi-Cal Rx Pharmacy Locator, Medi-Cal Rx Provider Manual, and Contract Drug List.

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