



CDSS

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

July 22, 2015

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-31-15

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY CALWORKS PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL COUNTY ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISORS
ALL COUNTY CONSORTIUM PROJECT MANAGERS
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL GROUP HOME PROVIDERS
ALL FOSTER FAMILY AGENCIES

SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF MEDI-CAL BENEFITS FOR YOUTH EXITING
FOSTER CARE

REFERENCE: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES (DHCS) ALL COUNTY
WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER (ACWDL) 14-41; CALIFORNIA
WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE (WIC) SECTIONS 391
AND 14005.28

The purpose of this All County Information Notice is to provide county child welfare agency social workers, probation officers, eligibility workers and other county staff with best practices to ensure that youth who are preparing to exit foster care will continue to receive Medi-Cal until age 26.

Background

The federal Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-169) allowed states the flexibility to elect to provide Medicaid (known in California as Medi-Cal) to youth who exit foster care after turning 18. In 2000, Section 391 was added to the WIC and requires, in part, the social worker to assist the exiting foster youth in completing an application for Medi-Cal or in obtaining other health insurance prior to terminating dependency. Similarly, WIC sections 452 and 607.3 require the probation officer to provide such assistance prior to the termination of the court's jurisdiction to a transition dependent under the supervision of the probation department or a ward subject to a foster care placement at age 18.

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

In 2013, Section 14005.28 was added to the WIC. The WIC section 14005.28 states in part, "A foster care adolescent who is in foster care in this state on his or her 18th birthday shall be enrolled to receive benefits under this section without any interruption in coverage and without requiring a new application." Therefore, youth who exit foster care on or after attaining 18 years-of-age, including youth who are missing from placement at the time of foster care exit, are not required to reapply for Medi-Cal and should be automatically transferred into the Medi-Cal Program for former foster youth.

In 2014 pursuant to the Affordable Care Act, California implemented the law for former foster youth and extended Medi-Cal coverage until age 26.

In 2015 DHCS released ACWDL 14-41 which provides instructions to counties for the administration of Medi-Cal benefits to youth who were in foster care at age 18 or older and are between the ages of 18 and 26. A procedure to extend the Medi-Cal benefits for the exiting foster youth was created. The DHCS Medi-Cal aid code, 4M, is used for exiting foster youth in order to continue enrollment. By enrolling exiting foster youth in the 4M aid code, these youth will maintain their benefits up to age 26.

Current Practices

Counties assist exiting foster youth with maintaining Medi-Cal eligibility by connecting or introducing youth to the Medi-Cal eligibility worker and providing contact information in Team Decision Making and Emancipation meetings or by referring the case to a Medi-Cal worker. However, there is not a standard process in place for all counties to follow for transitioning Medi-Cal benefits for exiting foster youth.

Suggested Practices

The following are suggested steps for a social worker or probation officer to take before the foster youth exit care:

- Check with county Medi-Cal eligibility staff before the youth exits foster care to ensure their continued Medi-Cal coverage is active.
- Check with county Medi-Cal eligibility staff before the youth exits foster care to ensure their continued Medi-Cal coverage on aid-code 4M will be active once the youth has exited foster care.
- Provide foster youth with information about ongoing eligibility for Medi-Cal until age 26.

- Refer the foster youth to the county eligibility worker if they have questions on “fee for service” and managed care Medi-Cal options.
- Confirm the foster youth has a Medi-Cal card (also called a Benefits Identification Card or BIC) and contact information for his/her Medi-Cal eligibility worker. If the foster youth does not have a Medi-Cal card, staff should assist the youth with acquiring a replacement card before exiting care.
- Advise foster youth and former foster youth who they can contact if they need further assistance. Potential resources include county Independent Living Coordinators, a county Ombudsman’s Office and the California State Ombudsman’s Office for Foster Care.
- Advise foster youth of the importance of maintaining contact with their Medi-Cal workers if their address or contact information changes.

If you have any questions, please call the Foster Care Support Services Bureau at (916) 651–7465.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

GREGORY E. ROSE
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

c: CWDA