

March 18, 2022

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 22-25**

The purpose of this All-County Letter is to provide information to counties regarding the extension of the COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment special transaction and reinstatement of the COVID-19 Emergency Back-Up Provider Pay Rate.



**KIM JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

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**GAVIN NEWSOM**  
GOVERNOR

March 18, 2022

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 22-25

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGERS

SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF IHSS COVID-19 MEDICAL ACCOMPANIMENT  
SPECIAL TRANSACTION AND REINSTATEMENT OF THE  
COVID-19 EMERGENCY BACK-UP PROVIDER PAY RATE

REFERENCE: [ALL-COUNTY LETTER 20-29](#) (March 30, 2020)  
[ALL-COUNTY LETTER 20-139](#) (December 17, 2020)  
[ALL-COUNTY LETTER 21-79](#) (July 19, 2021)  
[ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE \(ACIN\) I-25-21](#) (April 21, 2021)  
[ALL-COUNTY LETTER 21-31](#) (March 15, 2021)

The purpose of this All-County Letter (ACL) is to provide information to counties regarding the extension of the COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment special transaction and the reinstatement of the COVID-19 Emergency Back-Up Provider Pay Rate.

Information contained in this ACL supersedes the information provided in ACL 20-29 (March 30, 2020), ACL 20-139 (December 17, 2020), and ACL 21-79 (July 19, 2021) regarding the COVID-19 Emergency Back-Up Provider Pay Rate and ACL 21-31 (March 15, 2021) regarding the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment Special Transaction.

## **BACKGROUND**

As part of the changes made to California's COVID-19 vaccination plan, additional statewide directed measures are necessary to protect particularly vulnerable populations to ensure that there is a sufficient, consistent supply of workers in high-risk care settings. These measures can improve vaccination rates and ensure that both the individuals being served, as well as the workers providing the services, are protected from COVID-19.

## **COVID-19 MEDICAL ACCOMPANIMENT**

The IHSS recipients who need assistance from their providers to obtain a vaccination, and currently have authorized time for Medical Accompaniment, can use those service hours for this purpose. For recipients who are not authorized time for accompaniment to medical appointments, but require this IHSS service to get their vaccine, or need additional hours for this purpose, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) reinstated the COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment special transaction to allow a one-time payment to the providers, for up to two hours per vaccine appointment, including the first vaccine shot, the second vaccine shot, and the vaccine booster shot, per recipient. The COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment special transaction will be reactivated retroactively to January 1, 2022, and will continue to be available for pay periods through June 30, 2022.

In late February 2022, CDSS sent notices to IHSS recipients informing them about the changes made to California's vaccination plan and the availability of COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment. The IHSS recipients also received a copy of the COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment Claim Form.

To request this payment, providers are to complete the COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment Claim Form and have the recipient sign the Claim Form. The provider submits the Claim Form to the county IHSS office. Note: under this process, the state statutory maximum number of hours of 195 or 283 per month still applies. Any hours claimed through this process that would increase the recipient's hours above the applicable statutory maximum will not be eligible for payment.

## **COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

When the county IHSS office receives the COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment Claim Form, county staff shall determine if a previous claim(s) has been paid, and if there are remaining hours available, as well as, if any of the claimed hours are eligible for payment based on applicable statutory maximum hours. County staff will also need to verify the provider's enrollment status and determine if they are active on the named recipient's case and eligible to receive the payment. No adjustment is needed to the existing service hours before processing the claim, and the hours will not be counted toward the provider's weekly working hours.

If a COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment Claim Form is submitted with a revision date other than February 2022, that does not include the updated information on the appointment dates or vaccine booster information, that form can still be accepted by the county. If such a form is received, the county should accept the form and the IHSS staff may contact the provider to obtain additional information if needed to accurately process the form. It is not necessary for the county to request submission of an updated form.

Any additional information collected by the county to process the claim should be annotated on the form and initialed by the county IHSS staff person.

Claims received requesting payments for the COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment can be paid retroactively back to January 1, 2022. County staff will be able to use the COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment special transaction for pay periods through June 30, 2022. The county must document the claim outcome details in the recipient's Case Note in the Case Management Information and Payrolling System (CMIPS).

To assist counties with the denial process, a letter template is posted on the [CommsHub](#). Counties can customize the template and use it to inform the recipients of the claim denial/partial denial.

### **ISSUE PAYMENT FOR COVID-19 MEDICAL ACCOMPAINMENT**

The following information will be needed to create the COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment special transaction in CMIPS:

- From/To Date: The pay period associated with the vaccination date(s) on the form
- Payee Name: Select the name of the provider claiming the hours
- Program: Select "IHSS"
- Type: Select "COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment"
- Hours: Up to six hours (up to two hours per vaccine appointment)

The "COVID-19 Medical Accompaniment" special transaction, like all special transactions, requires a second level of approval. Once the transaction is saved, it will be routed for approval before issuing a warrant. Upon final approval, the request will be in pending payroll status and payment will be sent to the provider by their preference payroll method as indicated in CMIPS. The information provided above regarding the Medical Accompaniment special transaction is available in the "COVID-19-Related Special Transactions Job Aid" located at the [CommsHub](#).

Please refer to Chapter 8 of the [CMIPS User's Manual](#) for additional information regarding how to create special transactions.

### **COVID-19 EMERGENCY BACK-UP PROVIDER PAY DIFFERENTIAL**

The COVID-19 emergency back-up provider pay differential which expired on December 31, 2021, has been reinstated. On February 14, 2022, the CMIPS functionality was reactivated retroactive to February 1, 2022, and will continue to be available for pay periods through June 30, 2022.

Additionally, on February 14, 2022, the two-dollar differential pay rate for the emergency back-up providers was made available for each county, except Los Angeles County, which already pays a wage differential to back-up providers through their Back-Up Attendant Program. This wage rate is meant to be used only for providers who are providing emergency back-up services for IHSS recipients whose provider cannot work due to COVID-19 impacts.

As a reminder, the emergency back-up provider pay rate is not available in ESP via E-Hire as described in [ACIN I-25-21](#). In order to be paid for the pay differential, the emergency back-up provider must be assigned to the case by the county.

### **CMIPS FUNCTIONALITY**

Counties are to use the normal process in CMIPS to assign the emergency back-up provider to the IHSS recipient case. County staff are to access the Assign Case Provider screen, complete the fields, and choose the new differential wage rate for emergency back-up providers. County staff are to utilize the "Begin Date" and "End Date" on the Assign Case Provider screen to identify the period of time the provider is being assigned to provide emergency back-up services to ensure providers are only eligible for the pay differential during the period of time in which they were approved to provide emergency back-up services due to COVID-19 impacts. County staff must terminate the provider from the recipient's case once the emergency back-up services are completed. If the IHSS recipient decides to hire the emergency back-up provider as a regular ongoing IHSS provider, county staff are to create a new provider segment utilizing the standard county wage rate.

Questions regarding the information transmitted in this ACL may be directed to the Adult Programs Division, CMIPS and Systems Enhancements Branch, at the following email address: [CMIPSI-Requests@dss.ca.gov](mailto:CMIPSI-Requests@dss.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

### ***Original Document Signed By***

LEORA FILOSENA  
Deputy Director  
Adult Programs Division

cc: CWDA