



*This publication is up-to-date as of March 20, 2020. More information on COVID-19 is available here:

<https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/post/announcement-coronavirus-and-how-disability-rights-california-can-help-you> and here <https://www.covid19.ca.gov/healthcare/>

Medi-Cal Applications and Eligibility During the COVID-19 Public Emergency

Because of the COVID-19 emergency, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), which runs California's Medi-Cal program, is putting policies in place to help people apply for Medi-Cal more easily or just keep existing coverage.

How can I get Medi-Cal during the COVID-19 emergency?

Apply for Medi-Cal On-Line or By Phone

Because of COVID-19, you may be able to get Medi-Cal after job loss and/or reduction in earnings. Medi-Cal is free or low-cost health coverage for low-income California residents. Most people with Medi-Cal pay no money for their care. If you are determined to be eligible for Medi-Cal, your coverage begins immediately, and goes back to the first day of the month in which the application was submitted. You can apply for Medi-Cal online at <https://www.coveredca.com/> or call 1-855-295-2023.

Once your Medi-Cal application is submitted, your county's social services office has 45 days from the date of application, or 90 days when the

application is based on disability, to determine if you are eligible for Medi-Cal.ⁱ The county must expedite this Medi-Cal eligibility determination if you have an immediate medical need.ⁱⁱ

Apply for Expedited Medi-Cal in a Hospital

You can also get expedited Medi-Cal through Hospital Presumptive Eligibility (HPE). HPE provides qualified individuals immediate access to temporary, no-cost Medi-Cal for 60 days while applying for permanent Medi-Cal coverage or other health coverage.ⁱⁱⁱ This means, don't be afraid to seek medical care for lack of Medi-cal. To apply for HPE, you must visit a hospital that is a qualified HPE Provider. A list of HPE hospitals is here <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/eligibility/Pages/HospitalPE.aspx>.

What Do I Need to Apply for Medi-Cal during COVID-19?

On March 12, 2020, DHCS issued special rules to the county about how to process Medi-Cal applications during the COVID-19 emergency.^{iv} Because of this, Medi-Cal application requirements are temporarily easier.

Medi-Cal requires documents verifying your: identity, social security card or immigration status, residence, income, and resources.^v During the COVID-19 emergency, if you don't have access to all required documents, a signed and dated written statement, under penalty of perjury, can be used in place of requested verification documents, except for citizenship and immigration status.^{vi}

- For applicants who don't have paper documentation of citizenship or immigration status, your Medi-Cal application should still be processed while you look for this information.^{vii}
- For applicants who lack capacity, county eligibility workers may complete and sign an affidavit on behalf of the applicant.^{viii}
- For applicants who are homeless you just write that on your Medi-Cal application.^{ix}

How can I keep my Medi-Cal during COVID-19?

All Medi-Cal renewals are suspended until June 15, 2020.^x This means that if you have Medi-Cal now, it should continue and the processing of

renewals will be delayed during the suspension. In addition, the county should delay discontinuances and negative actions as a result of renewals and reported changes in circumstances to ensure beneficiaries remain eligible for Medi-Cal during the suspension.^{xi}

During the COVID-19 emergency, you don't need to pay your monthly premium if you are in the Medi-Cal Access Program (MCAP), Medi-Cal Access Infant Program (MCAIP), or Optional Targeted Low-Income Children Program (OTLICP).^{xii} You can't be terminated for not paying these premiums during this emergency.^{xiii}

What if I requested a Medi-Cal State Fair Hearing?

If you have a state Fair Hearing, the state is only holding hearings by phone through April 17, 2020.^{xiv} When the state contacts you, you can request an in-person hearing for the future. If you are receiving aid paid pending, your Medi-Cal benefits should stay the same while you wait for your hearing. Aid paid pending is provided if you requested a hearing before the effective date of the action or if notice of your Medi-Cal benefit change was untimely or inadequate. For information on aid paid pending, you can contact state hearings by calling (800) 743-8525, (800) 952-5253 or TDD (800) 952-8349.

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ⁱ 42 C.F.R. § 435.911; Welf. & Inst. Code § 14154(d)(1); 22 CCR § 50177.

ⁱⁱ ACWDL 19-01 at p. 2.

ⁱⁱⁱ ACWDL 19-01, <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/eligibility/Pages/HospitalPE.aspx>.

iv MEDIL 20-06

v <https://www.benefitsapplication.com/apply/CA/Medi-Cal>

vi ACWDL 15-36; MEDIL 17-16; 22 C.C.R. § 50167(c).

vii ACWDLs 19-01 at p. 2 and 09-27 at p. 3.

viii 22 C.C.R. § 50163(a) (3); ACWDL 19-01 at p. 2.

ix MEDIL 17-16

x Any beneficiaries in areas affected by public health crises or disasters that were discontinued due to not providing required documents may have their benefits reinstated to the previous benefit level and be allowed additional time to provide required documents., <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.17.20-N-29-20-EO.pdf>

xi MEDIL 20-07, ACWDL 19-01 at p. 3

xii MEDIL 20-07, ACWDL 19-01 at p. 4

xiii MEDIL 20-07, ACWDL 19-01 at p. 4

xiv <https://healthconsumer.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CDSS-Advocates-Letter-Covid-19-03.12.20.pdf>