

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES
NOTICE OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST
RELEASE DATE: MARCH 11, 2022**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES PROPOSES TO SUBMIT
A STATE PLAN AMENDMENT TO ADD COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER
SERVICES AS A COVERED BENEFIT**

This notice provides information of public interest that the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) proposes to submit State Plan Amendment (SPA) 22-0001 to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to seek federal approval to add community health worker (CHW) services as a Medi-Cal covered benefit. The proposed effective date for SPA 22-0001 is July 1, 2022.

CHWs are skilled and trained health educators who work directly with individuals who may have difficulty understanding and/or interacting with providers due to cultural and/or language barriers. CHWs can assist those individuals by helping them to navigate the relationship with their health care providers, assist them in accessing health care services, and provide key linkages with other similar and related community-based resources. As a result, CHWs help to extend the reach of providers into underserved communities, reduce health disparities, enhance provider communication, and improve health outcomes and overall quality measures.

DHCS proposes to add CHWs as another class of skilled and trained individuals who are able to provide clinically appropriate Medi-Cal covered benefits and services. CHWs would render Medi-Cal covered benefits and services. These services will be available in both the fee-for-service (FFS) and managed care delivery systems.

As defined in Title 42, Section 440.130(c), of the Code of Federal Regulations and Section 4385 of the State Medicaid Manual, DHCS is seeking to add CHWs to the State Plan as a preventive service that are recommended by physician or licensed provider.

DHCS is proposing to establish the Medi-Cal FFS reimbursement rates for CHW services at no more than 80 percent of the corresponding Medicare rate for the same or similar service, effective July 1, 2022. Proposed SPA 22-0001 is subject to approval by CMS.

DHCS estimates that SPA 22-0001 will result in an increase in annual aggregate expenditures of approximately \$16.32 million in total funds (\$6.15 million state general funds and \$10.17 million federal funds).

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENTS

Upon submission to CMS, a copy of the proposed SPA 22-0001 will be published at the following internet address:

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/laws/Pages/Pending-2022.aspx>

If you would like a physical copy of the SPA once it becomes available, please visit your local county welfare department. You may also request a copy of proposed SPA 22-0001 by requesting it in writing to the mailing or email addresses listed below. Please indicate SPA 22-0001 in the subject line or message.

Written comments may be sent to the following address:

Department of Health Care Services
Benefits Division
Attn: Jim Elliott
P.O. Box 997413, MS 4601
Sacramento, California 95899-7417

Comments may also be emailed to PublicInput@dhcs.ca.gov . Please indicate SPA 22-0001 in the subject line or message.

A copy of submitted public comments to SPA 22-0001 may be requested in writing to the mailing or email addresses identified above.