

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES  
NOTICE OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST  
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 18, 2022**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES (DHCS) PROPOSES TO  
SUBMIT A STATE PLAN AMENDMENT (SPA) TO AMEND THE  
ALTERNATIVE BENEFIT PLAN (ABP).**

This notice provides information of public interest that DHCS proposes to submit SPA 22-0051 to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to seek necessary approvals to add associate marriage and family therapists (AMFT) and associate clinical social workers (ACSW) as a billable service under the license of an authorized behavioral health practitioner in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs). SPA 22-0051 will also add doula services as a covered Medi-Cal benefit in the ABP for the new adult group. The effective date for the SPA is January 1, 2023.

This SPA will bring the ABP in line with the changes made by SPA 22-0002, which will add doula services, and SPA 22-0014, which will add AMFT and ACSW to FQHCs and RHCs. DHCS submitted SPA 22-0002 to CMS on November 7, 2022, and will submit SPA 22-0014 to CMS by December 31, 2022.

Additionally, this notice provides information of public interest with respect to Section 440.386 of Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), which requires Medicaid states to publish a public notice to solicit public input regarding the amendment to the Medi-Cal ABP. DHCS provides a comprehensive set of services under the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment benefit for people under 21 years of age, as described by 42 CFR 440.345. DHCS complied with the provisions of Section 5006 (e) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and published a tribal notice November 18, 2022, and will hold a tribal webinar on November 29, 2022.

AMFTs and ACSWs have been providing billable services in FQHCs and RHCs under the supervision of an authorized licensed behavioral health practitioner during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). In submitting SPA 22-0014, DHCS seeks to allow them to continue to deliver services under this arrangement after the COVID PHE ends.

Doula services must be recommended by a physician or other licensed practitioner of the healing arts within their scope of practice under state law. Doula services encompass the health education; advocacy; and physical, emotional, and nonmedical support provided before, during, and after childbirth or end of a pregnancy, including throughout the postpartum period. These services are aimed at preventing perinatal complications and improving health outcomes for birthing parents and infants. Doulas offer various types of support, including perinatal and labor support and guidance; health navigation; evidence-based education, including development of a birth plan; and linkages to community-based resources.

DHCS projects the overall fiscal impact to result in an aggregate expenditure increase of approximately \$43,613 in total funds (\$16,879 state general funds/\$26,735 federal funds) in state fiscal year 2022-23.

SPA 22-0051 is subject to approval by CMS.

### **PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENTS**

Upon submission to CMS, a copy of the proposed SPA 22-0051 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 22-0051 by writing to the mailing or email addresses listed below. Please indicate SPA 22-0051 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](mailto:PublicInput@dhcs.ca.gov) . Please indicate SPA 22-0051 in the subject line or message.

A copy of submitted public comments to SPA 22-0051 may be requested in writing to the mailing or email addresses identified above.