



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

November 1, 2012

Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter No.: I 12-07

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAMS SPECIALIST/LIAISONS
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: MEDI-CAL INCENTIVES TO QUIT SMOKING (MIQS) PROJECT
EFFECTIVE THROUGH DECEMBER 2015.

Background

The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) was awarded a \$10 million / 5-year grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as part of the Medicaid Incentives for the Prevention of Chronic Disease (MIPCD) Program. In California, this project is known as the **Medi-Cal Incentives to Quit Smoking (MIQS) Project**.

The MIQS Project will provide incentives for tobacco use treatment to 25,000 adult Medi-Cal beneficiaries during the 5-year project period. The project goals are to manage or prevent chronic disease by means of smoking cessation, lower the adult Medi-Cal smoking prevalence rate, and reduce health care costs by reducing treatment for tobacco-caused illnesses.

Incentives Program

The MIQS Project is testing the use of small incentives to encourage Medi-Cal beneficiaries who smoke and want to quit to call the California Smokers' Helpline (Helpline) and utilize the free telephone-based counseling services to attempt to quit smoking. Health care providers and social service organizations are encouraged to assess each Medi-Cal patient/client for smoking status and refer interested smokers to the Helpline for tobacco use treatment counseling.

The incentive is in the form of a \$20 gift card to a major retailer in California, including Wal-Mart, Target, Safeway/Vons and Ralphs/Kroger. Other incentives may be offered as part of two randomized controlled trials being conducted by the Helpline.

Eligibility Criteria

- **Adult Medi-Cal beneficiaries who are current smokers:**
- **Must ask for the \$20 incentive when calling the Helpline;**
- **Must provide a valid Beneficiary Identification Card (BIC) number (verified through the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS));**
- **Must complete the initial 30-40 minute counseling session.**

County Outreach Tools and Resources

The California Diabetes Program is providing technical assistance and training on the MIQS Project and the integration of Helpline referrals into social service and health care delivery systems. The www.caldiabetes.org website contains 1) informational MIQS flyers tailored to beneficiaries, providers, and coalitions; 2) local data information on Medi-Cal smoking prevalence; and, 3) information on technical assistance and training opportunities.

Project Partners

California Department of Health Care Services, Office of the Medical Director is partnering with the California Diabetes Program, a project of the University of California San Francisco and the California Department of Public Health to promote the incentive project statewide through public health and health care settings.

The University of California San Diego's California Smokers' Helpline is providing the counseling services, distributing the incentives, and conducting two randomized controlled trials to test the effectiveness of various retention and re-engagement incentives. Since its debut in August 1992, the California Smokers' Helpline has provided free, personalized and confidential services to more than 600,000 Californians from diverse communities throughout the state. Quitting assistance is provided in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Korean.

The California Department of Public Health's California Tobacco Control Program is an unfunded partner providing expertise in social norm change strategies and assistance with outreach through its network of county and community tobacco control projects. The California Tobacco Control Program is a major funder of the California Smokers' Helpline.

A team of health economists at the University of California San Francisco's Institute for Health and Aging will conduct formal economic analyses to compare the cost-effectiveness of financial incentives to motivate Medi-Cal beneficiaries who smoke to call the Helpline and compare the cost-effectiveness of different incentives levels for smoking cessation.

For More Information

- Project Manager: Gordon Sloss, DHCS Office of the Medical Director, (916) 440-7625
- Outreach Coordinator: Deana Lidgett, California Diabetes Program, (916) 552-9956
- Media Contact: Norman Williams, Deputy Director, Office of Public Affairs, Department of Health Care Services, (916) 440-7657
- MIQS Project Website: <http://www.caldiabetes.org>
- California Smokers' Helpline: <http://www.californiasmokershelpline.org/>
- California Department of Health Care Services: www.dhcs.ca.gov
- California Tobacco Control Program:
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/tobacco/pages/default.aspx>;
<http://www.tobaccofreeca.org/>
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Innovation Center, Medicaid Incentives for Prevention of Chronic Diseases:
<http://www.innovations.cms.gov/initiatives/MIPCD/index.html>

Original signed by Azadeh Fares

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