

FAQ: Medi-Cal Managed Care Enrollment for Foster Youth

What is Medi-Cal managed care?

A Medi-Cal managed care plan is a health care company or a health plan that is responsible for providing Medi-Cal benefits through contracts with doctors, clinics, specialists, pharmacies, and hospitals who provide health care for Medi-Cal beneficiaries. Examples of Medi-Cal managed care plans are Kaiser, Anthem Blue Cross, and Partnership Health Plan. When you enroll in a Medi-Cal managed care plan, you will be matched to a Primary Care Provider (PCP) who will help to coordinate your care. You must get your care from the providers who are part of your plan's network, unless your plan gives you permission to see another provider, or if you have an emergency.

Do I have to enroll in a Medi-Cal managed care plan?

You MUST enroll in a plan if you are in a foster care placement in the following counties where there is only one plan choice:

Alameda County
Butte County
Colusa County
Contra Costa County
Del Norte County
Glenn County
Humboldt County
Imperial County
Lake County
Lassen County
Marin County
Mariposa County
Mendocino County
Merced County
Modoc County
Monterey County
Napa County
Nevada County
Orange County

Placer County
Plumas County
San Benito County
San Luis Obispo County
San Mateo County
Santa Barbara County
Santa Cruz County
Shasta County
Sierra County
Siskiyou County
Solano County
Sonoma County
Sutter County
Tehama County
Trinity County
Ventura County
Yolo County
Yuba County

If your foster care placement is in any county not listed above, you may choose to enroll in a Medi-Cal managed care plan, or you can receive your care through fee-for-service Medi-Cal.

What is fee-for-service Medi-Cal?

Under fee-for-service Medi-Cal, you are responsible for finding providers who are willing to accept Medi-Cal; you will not be assigned or matched with a PCP.

What if my foster care placement is in a different county than the county where my foster care case is?

If your foster care placement is in one of the counties listed above, then you must enroll in a managed care plan. It does not matter if your foster care case is in a different county; it is your placement county that determines whether you need to enroll in a managed care plan.

The county responsible for your foster care case will still be responsible for certain specialty services, such as services you receive through the California Children's Services program, [Specialty Mental Health](#) services, or [Drug Medi-Cal](#) services. This is true regardless of whether you enroll in a Medi-Cal managed care plan or get your care through fee-for-service Medi-Cal. The county responsible for your case and the county where you live should work together to coordinate those services.

What were the changes to managed care plans in 2024?

In 2024, the number of managed care plans available changed in some counties. In some counties, the options of plans also changed. [Check to see what plans are available in your county now.](#)

If I have to enroll in a new managed care plan in 2024, can I continue seeing my fee-for-service Medi-Cal providers?

If you were in fee-for-services Medi-Cal in 2023, but are required to enroll in a Medi-Cal managed care plan OR if you were previously enrolled in a Medi-Cal managed care plan but were required to switch to a new plan because of the changes in January 2024, you may be entitled to **continuity of care** to continue seeing your fee-for-service providers, and to keep your existing appointments, if your providers do not accept your new Medi-Cal managed care plan. **Call your current plan to request continuity of care.**

What benefits are only available if I enroll in a Medi-Cal managed care plan?

Enhanced Care Management (ECM): Your managed care plan will provide you with a care manager, who will help you get the health care and social services that you need. They will talk with your doctors, mental health providers, social workers, and other people involved in your care, to make sure they are working together. Your care manager can also help you find providers, schedule and get to appointments, and connect you with community supports (see below). If you are involved in child welfare, you are eligible for ECM.

Community Support Services (CSS): Managed care plans offer services that can help you find and maintain housing, transition from a facility to your home or community, assist with personal care, and/or provide meals if you have complex health needs, among other supports. Each managed care plan offers different CSS. Contact your plan to find out more.

Where can I find out more about mental health services if I need them?

You can get some mental health services, like psychotherapy, from your managed care plan or fee-for-service Medi-Cal. Other mental health services are provided by your County Mental Health Plan, not your managed care plan or fee-for-service Medi-Cal. These services include, among others:

- Intensive Care Coordination (ICC)
- Intensive Home Based Services (IHBS)
- Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC)
- Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS)

To find out more, see our [Guide to Accessing Medi-Cal Mental Health Services for Current and Former Foster Youth](#) or contact your [County Mental Health Plan](#).

Where can I find out more about substance use disorder services if I need them?

You can get some substance use disorder services, like assessments, from your managed care plan or fee-for-service Medi-Cal. Other substance use disorder services are provided by your Drug Medi-Cal program or Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System, not your managed care plan or fee-for-service Medi-Cal. These services include, among others:

- Outpatient drug-free treatment
- Intensive outpatient treatment
- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) including Naltrexone treatment, Buprenorphine treatment, and Methadone treatment

To find out more contact [your county's Substance Use Disorder Access Line](#).

Where can I get help?

- [Medi-Cal website](#): for more information about Medi-Cal and how to get and keep your coverage and access care.
- [Foster Care Ombudsman](#): provides an independent forum for the review and resolution of complaints made by or on behalf of children and youth in foster care regarding their care, placement and services. Call 1-877-846-1602 or email fosteryouthhelp@dss.ca.gov.
- [California Family Urgent Response System \(Cal-FURS\)](#): Offers a free 24/7/365 hotline for current or former foster youth and your caregivers to call and get immediate help for any big or small issues you may be having. Call or text 833-939-3877 or visit the website for chat and email options.
- [Health Consumer Alliance](#): offers free assistance over-the-phone or in-person to get or maintain health coverage and resolve problems with their health plans. Call the hotline at 888-804-3536 for more information.



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