

Medi-Cal Enhanced Care Management for Children and Youth

A new Medi-Cal managed care benefit called **Enhanced Care Management** can help children and youth with complex needs access the full scope of health care and social services that they need.

What is Enhanced Care Management?

Enhanced Care Management (ECM) is a Medi-Cal benefit that provides comprehensive care planning and management across health care and social service delivery systems. A person who qualifies for ECM will be assigned a lead care manager. The lead care manager will work closely with the enrollee to assess their health and social needs. The lead care manager will coordinate with the enrollee's doctors, mental health providers, pharmacists, social workers, and other providers (including other care managers), to make sure the enrollee is receiving all of the services they need. The ECM provider serves as the "air traffic controller" across multiple programs and systems, and they provide services above and beyond the care coordination available in many preexisting programs.

Among other services, the ECM provider can help the enrollee:

- Find doctors and other health care providers
- Schedule health care appointments
- Manage medications
- Arrange free transportation to and from health care appointments or the pharmacy
- Assist with care needed to transition from a facility or hospital to the community
- Find and apply for community support services, such as help finding and maintaining housing, personal care assistance, meal support, and sobering centers

Who Qualifies for ECM?

Children and youth qualify for ECM if they are enrolled in a Medi-Cal managed care plan AND fall within one of the following categories (called "Populations of Focus"):

- Children and youth involved in child welfare, including current and former foster youth up to age 26
- Children and youth with significant mental health and/or substance use disorder needs
- Children and youth experiencing housing instability, including youth who are living in someone else's home due to economic hardship or who are living in hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds, or emergency or transitional shelters

- Children and youth who have visited the hospital or emergency room repeatedly, when it could have been avoided with appropriate outpatient care
- Children and youth who are enrolled in California Children’s Services (CCS) or CCS Whole Child Model (WCM) AND have at least one complex social factor impacting their health (e.g., housing or food instability; difficulty accessing transportation; use of crisis services; recent law enforcement contact; or scoring high on an ACEs screening)
- Children and youth who are transitioning from a youth correctional facility or who have transitioned from a youth correctional facility within the past 12 months
- Youth who are pregnant or up to 12 months postpartum AND who have a higher risk of maternal morbidity or mortality due to racial or ethnic health inequities (as defined by CA public health data)

* For purposes of ECM, “children and youth” are individuals under age 21. The one exception is the Child Welfare Population of Focus, which includes former foster youth up to age 26. Note that adults may also qualify for ECM, but there is different criteria.

How Do Children and Youth Access ECM?

The managed care plan must proactively identify and reach out to enrollees who may qualify for ECM. If a child or youth is not already receiving ECM:

- A youth may contact their managed care plan and ask for ECM;
- An authorized family member, caregiver, or legal guardian may contact the managed care plan and request ECM on behalf of the child or youth; or
- A health care provider, case manager, social worker, or other professional already serving the child or youth can refer them to ECM.

To request or learn more about ECM, contact the child or youth’s [Medi-Cal managed care plan](#).



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