Immigrant Youth Access to Medi-Cal and Managed Care

Medi-Cal eligibility and managed care is being cut back for some immigrant youth. **Eligibility changes <u>do not apply</u> to youth under age 19, current and former foster youth up to age 26, or immigrants with a "satisfactory immigration status."** However, some of these populations will no longer have access to managed care. This factsheet outlines these changes.

1. Youth with Satisfactory Immigration Status (SIS)

SIS = U.S. citizens, Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs or "green card" holders) who have met or are exempt from the 5-year waiting period, Cuban/Haitian entrants, and COFA nationals.

Additionally, in California, **youth under age 21 and pregnant people have SIS if they are lawfully residing in the U.S.** This includes Special Immigrant Juvenile status applicants and holders, family unit beneficiaries, asylees, refugees, survivors of trafficking, and others *if they are under age 21 or pregnant.*

Youth of all ages with SIS are eligible for **full-scope Medi-Cal**, which includes comprehensive coverage of doctor's visits, hospital services, medications, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, vision, dental, and more.

These same youth also have access to **Medi-Cal managed care**, which means they can enroll in a health plan and access benefits like Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports.

2. Youth with Unsatisfactory Immigration Status (UIS) Who Qualify for an <u>Exemption</u> from Medi-Cal Cuts

UIS = All immigration statuses not listed as SIS, including undocumented status.

Exempt from Medi-Cal cuts = All youth under age 19, foster youth, nonminor dependents, and former foster youth up to age 26.

Youth with UIS who qualify for an exemption are eligible for **full-scope Medi-Cal**, which includes the same comprehensive coverage provided to youth with SIS.

Starting January 1, 2027, these youth will only have access to **Medi-Cal fee for service** (also called "regular" or "straight" Medi-Cal). This means they cannot enroll in a health plan. Youth currently in a plan will be transitioned out of it, with continuity of care protections. "Fee for service" does <u>not</u> mean the enrollee pays for their care.

3. Youth Age 19+ with UIS Who Are Not Exempt

Youth age 19 and older who have an immigration status that is considered UIS and who are not exempt are eligible for **full-scope Medi-Cal with no dental**, which covers all Medi-Cal benefits except routine dental services. These youth will also be subject to new premium payment and verification requirements starting July 1, 2027.

Youth age 19 and older who are **undocumented** and who are not exempt are only eligible for this coverage if they applied or were enrolled in full-scope Medi-Cal before January 1, 2026. These youth must remain continuously enrolled in Medi-Cal to retain this comprehensive coverage. If they lose coverage, then they would only be eligible for emergency scope Medi-Cal upon reapplication (see #4 below).

Starting January 1, 2027, youth in this category will only have access to **Medi-Cal fee for service**. Youth currently in a health plan will be transitioned out of it, with continuity of care protections.

4. Undocumented Youth Age 19+ Who Are Not Exempt AND Who Were Not Enrolled in Full-Scope Medi-Cal on January 1, 2026 or Who Lost Medi-Cal Coverage After That Date

These youth are eligible for **emergency scope Medi-Cal** (also called "restricted scope" Medi-Cal), which only covers emergency medical services, dialysis, pregnancy-related care, emergency dental, and long-term care.

These youth can only access **Medi-Cal fee for service**. They cannot enroll in a health plan.

Additional Resources

- Defining SIS and UIS
- Immigrant Medi-Cal Eligibility Chart
- DHCS Guidance on Immigrant Eligibility
- Medi-Cal Benefits
- Medi-Cal Managed Care
- ECM and Community Supports

Questions?

If a youth is unsure about how changes to Medi-Cal affect them, they can contact their local Medi-Cal office or call 800-541-5555. If they encounter issues accessing Medi-Cal coverage or services, they can call the Health Consumer Alliance at 888-804-3536 for free legal help.

* This factsheet reflects information current as of September 2026. However, these policies may change based on future federal or state actions.