



An Advocate's Guide to Medi-Cal Services

2025-2026

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Foreword

The National Health Law Program (NHeLP) is pleased to present *An Advocate's Guide to Medi-Cal Services*. This Guide is intended to be a resource for health care and low-income advocates, legal aid attorneys, and other health care stakeholders in California to understand the Medi-Cal program and defend the health rights of low-income individuals in the State. The 2025-2026 update emphasizes policy changes implemented pursuant to the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) initiative, including new chapters on Care Coordination and Community Supports. In addition, some chapters have been updated to reflect the changing landscape of behavioral treatment, by incorporating a description of the Behavioral Health Community-Based Organized Networks of Equitable Care and Treatment (BH-CONNECT) program.

We hope that this publication will serve to improve your understanding of the benefits covered by Medi-Cal and the important role that Medi-Cal plays in improving the health and well-being of low-income individuals and families in California.

About NHeLP

Founded in 1969, NHeLP protects and defends the health rights of low-income and underserved individuals and communities to access high quality health care, particularly in publicly funded health programs. We advocate, educate, and litigate at the federal and state levels to advance health and civil rights in the U.S.

At NHeLP, we believe that health equity is achieved when a person's characteristics and circumstances — including race and ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, income, class, disability, health, immigration status, nationality, religious beliefs, language proficiency, or geographic location — do not predict their health outcomes. We also believe that these characteristics and circumstances should not limit people's experience in the world or in our organization. Our equity vision is one of collective liberation, where individuals of all identities and backgrounds are valued and where we can all achieve our full potential as individuals and as a society, as well as live with dignity. NHeLP works towards a society where everyone can achieve an optimal state of well-being and where everyone has a fundamental right to their highest attainable standard of health. You can read more about NHeLP's Equity Stance at <https://healthlaw.org/equity-stance/>.

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