

For immediate release:
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Access to Full Scope Medi-Cal Services Now a Reality for Undocumented Children Age 18 and Under

Oakland, CA -- Under recently passed legislation known as SB-4 and SB-75, undocumented children 18 and under will be eligible for full-scope Medi-Cal benefits as early as May 16, 2016 as long as they meet all other program eligibility requirements. Families with children currently receiving restricted Medi-Cal health coverage will automatically transition to full-scope Medi-Cal services. Under the new legislation, no immigration papers are needed to apply for services and coverage does not affect a person's application for residency.

"No child should be denied full access to the medical services they need to develop into healthy individuals," said Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan, Chair of the Board of Supervisors Health Committee. "State and federal lawmakers now need to act to allow undocumented residents to purchase health plans through Covered California, so more families can benefit from the security provided by having comprehensive health insurance."

Currently, undocumented children 18 years of age and under are only eligible for "restricted" Medi-Cal services. As the term "restricted" implies, medical coverage is limited to certain procedures and services. Effective May 16, 2016, children 18 years and under will be eligible for an array of services including hospitalization, prevention and wellness, chronic disease management, and pediatric care. The Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA) anticipates that there will be over 3,000 children who will transition to full-scope Medi-Cal in Alameda County.

"This is exciting and much anticipated news. The premise that a child should be denied medical services based on their immigration status is counter-intuitive to the mission of the Social Services Agency," commented Lori A. Cox, Agency Director. "Providing medical intervention before a child's needs rise to crisis level is a more thoughtful and cost effective approach to medical coverage."

SSA has begun to identify outreach and public awareness strategies to inform eligible families of program changes whose children are currently receiving restricted medical coverage. Additionally, SSA will partner with community health clinics, school districts throughout the County, faith-based organizations, and non-government organizations to ensure that all eligible children and their families are aware of the expanded coverage and are

enrolled.

"This is the type of information that we want to share far and wide," said Andrea Ford, Assistant Agency Director, Workforce and Benefits Administration. "The more broadly we communicate these changes in eligibility criteria we increase the likelihood that we enroll as many eligible children as possible. The last thing we want is for a child to suffer through a medical complication that could have been avoided had the proper medical services been available to them."

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors Health Committee will take up the issue at its meeting on Monday April 11, 2016 at 9:30 am, 1221 Oak St. 5th floor Board Chambers. Families can apply online through www.coveredca.com or mybenefitscalwin.org or by calling the Alameda County Social Services Agency office at (510) 777-2300.

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