MONTEREY COUNTY OFFICE of EDUCATION

Dr. Deneen Guss
County Superintendent of Schools

DHCS/Medi-Cal Programs

Alternative Format Plan

Purpose

This Alternative Format Plan was developed, in accordance with federal and state law, to provide opportunities for effective communication with all qualified members of the public participating in public programs, including persons with disabilities. A person is a qualified member of the public if they are an appropriate person with whom the LEA should or would communicate. This includes, but is not limited to, Medi-Cal beneficiaries and/or their authorized representative (family member, friend, or associate).

The LEA is required to provide auxiliary aids and services to qualified members of the public with disabilities. Aids and services will be free of charge to ensure all qualified persons with speech, hearing, and/or vision disabilities can effectively communicate and participate in public programs, services, and/or activities. This includes making program documents and information available in alternative formats.

Background

In accordance with federal and state law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, discrimination against qualified members of the public participating in public programs based on disability is prohibited. The right to equal access to public services, including, but not limited to, Medi-Cal and other Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) programs, must be extended to all persons with disabilities. Accordingly, all public agencies are required to provide auxiliary aids and services to ensure that all qualified members of the public with disabilities, including Medi-Cal beneficiaries, can effectively communicate and participate in public programs, services and/or activities.

Alternative Formats Available

Alternative format requests can include, but are not limited to:

- Large print (20-point Arial Font)
- Audio format (CD)
- Accessible electronic format (such as a data CD)
- Braille
- Closed Captioning
- Text-to-Speech
- Voice-to-Text

Medi-Cal beneficiaries and their representatives may only request one alternative format each.

Document Conversion and Resources

The LEA is responsible for converting or translating documents created and owned by the LEA for DHCS/Medi-Cal program related purposes. The DHCS program or division is responsible for converting or translating documents created and owned by the DHCS. For Medi-Cal applications in an alternative format, the LEA can contact the applicable county's Health and Human Services Agency.

The LEA may contact the applicable county's Health and Human Services Agency for translation assistance with the following formats:

- Braille
- Large print (20-point Arial Font)
- Audio CD

This Alternative Format Plan shall be stored and maintained in the LEA's audit file and readily available upon request by DHCS.

- Accessible electronic format (data CD)

Alternative Format Selection Application (AFSA) System and Request Recording

In an effort to comply with all federal and state laws, all alternative format requests for Medi-Cal and other DHCS program information shall be forwarded to the following designated individual.

Title: Assistant Superintendent or designee
Phone: 831-755-0300

The DHCS' online Alternative Format Selection Application (AFSA) system will be utilized to search for and/or record a Medi-Cal beneficiary's alternative format selection, using one of the following methods:

1. Medi-Cal beneficiaries can input their request directly into the online system. https://afs.dhcs.ca.gov/
2. Medi-Cal beneficiaries can report their request to **Assistant Superintendent or designee**, who may enter the request into the online system. https://afs.dhcs.ca.gov/
3. The Assistant Superintendent or designee or the Medi-Cal beneficiary may call 1-833-284-0040 and go through the prompts to input the format request.

The following Medi-Cal beneficiary information will be required to record or to search for a previously reported alternative format selection. This information can be obtained directly from the beneficiary, parent/authorized representative, or the data match process:

- Name (First and Last)
- ID Number (BIC)
- Date of Birth (MMDDYYYY)

For Audio or Data CD selections, beneficiaries will receive their Medi-Cal notices and information in an electronic format that is not encrypted (password protected). If Medi-Cal notices and information are requested in an encrypted electronic format, call 1-833-284-0040.

Primary consideration will be given to the requester's choice, unless the requested alternative format material cannot be provided by the LEA due to fundamental alteration of the information or an undue hardship to the LEA. In such instances and upon beneficiary or authorized representative approval, the requested document can be provided in another equally effective means of communication (i.e. read out loud). The applicable document(s) must be delivered in a timely manner, but no later than two months after the request was made.

Alternative Format Communication Process

A report containing a list of Medi-Cal beneficiaries who require an alternative format will be provided by the LEAs billing vendor and/or LEC on a quarterly basis.

- The beneficiary's alternative format selection will be found in the data match output file in spaces 263-303 (LEA BOP) and the final column labeled "Alternative Format" (SMAA).

The (Assistant Superintendent or designee will track and store (Electronic File with limited access) all alternative format selection lists and documents in order to ensure requirements are met with every communication with the beneficiary or for use in other similar alternative format requests in the future. The **[**Assistant Superintendent or designee will share this Alternative Format Plan, alternative format documents, and a list of newly identified Medi-Cal beneficiaries with applicable staff, as needed.

Please refer to PPL 21-017R, PPL 23-004 for additional Alternative Format requirements and information.

This Alternative Format Plan and PPLs shall be stored and maintained in the LEA's audit file and readily available upon request by DHCS.