

# Medi-Cal Program Guide (MPG) Letter #742

January 26, 2012

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**Subject** SUSPENSION OF MEDI-CAL BENEFITS FOR INCARCERATED JUVENILES

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**Effective Date** Upon Receipt

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**Reference** ACWDL 10-06, 10-22

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**Purpose** The purpose of this MPG letter is to inform staff of the process for suspending Medi-Cal coverage for incarcerated individuals under 21 years of age.

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**Background** Incarcerated juveniles are considered inmates of a public institution and are not eligible for Medi-Cal benefits. When a worker receives a report that a juvenile Medi-Cal beneficiary is incarcerated, the juvenile is removed from their Medi-Cal case and their benefits are terminated.

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**Changes** Senate Bill 1147 requires that rather than terminating eligibility, Medi-Cal eligibility is suspended for one year for inmates of public institutions under the age 21 who were Medi-Cal eligible at the time of incarceration. Eligibility must be restored the day an eligible juvenile is no longer an inmate of a public institution without a new application.

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has implemented different suspension methodologies for child-only and family cases. Juveniles in child only cases are to remain active on the county system and are suspended in MEDS by entering other health coverage (OHC) code "I". Suspended juveniles in cases with other family members must be removed from the case in the county system and the family must be re-evaluated for benefits with timely notice.

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**CalWORKs/  
CalFresh  
Impact** On child only Medi-Cal cases where the child has a linked CalFresh or CalWORKs case that includes other family members, current CalWIN functionality will not allow workers to leave the child open in CalWIN as instructed above. In these instances, workers must:

Step	Action
1	Remove the child from the case in CalWIN according to current regulations.
2	Re-evaluate the rest of the case members for CalWORKs and/or CalFresh eligibility.
3	Notify family of eligibility changes with timely NOA
4	Flag the case as suspended using case special indicator 'Juvenile Suspense'
5	Upon eligible release, add child back to CalWORKs or CalFresh as per existing regulations to add a new member to the Assistance Unit and/or Household. The worker must re-open the child-only Medi-Cal case without a new application.

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**Automation Impact** Workers must submit a form 14-28 to their MEDS clerk to request the suspension (by entering "1" in the OHC field) on child only cases.

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**Forms Impact** The following forms related to this change are available in CalWIN:

MC 0377 – Suspension Medi-Cal Benefits for an Incarcerated Minor - This notice must be sent timely when the Medi-Cal eligibility of an incarcerated juvenile is suspended.

MC 0376 – Restore Medi-Cal Benefits upon Release of an Eligible Minor – This notice must be sent when suspended benefits are restored to a juvenile because he or she is no longer considered an inmate.

MC 0375 – Discontinuance of Benefits – This notice must be sent timely when the Medi-Cal eligibility of the incarcerated juvenile is terminated while he or she is under suspension.

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**ACCESS Impact** None.

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**Imaging Impact** None.

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**Quality Assurance Impact** Effective with the March 2012 report month, Quality Assurance will cite with the appropriate error any case that does not meet the

requirements of this letter.

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**Summary of Changes** of The table below shows the changes made to the MPG:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Summary of Change</b>
<u>Article 6, Section 5</u>	Added the suspension of benefits information.

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**Manager Approval**



Sylvia Melena, Assistant Deputy Director  
Self-Sufficiency Programs  
Strategic Planning and Operational Support

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MK

## 06.05.02 Suspension of Benefits for Incarcerated Juveniles

### A. Introduction

Senate Bill 1147 requires that rather than terminating, Medi-Cal eligibility must be suspended for up to one year for inmates of public institutions under the age 21 who were Medi-Cal eligible at the time of incarceration. Eligibility must be restored without a new application the day an eligible juvenile is no longer an inmate of a public institution.

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In order to qualify for suspension, juveniles must:

- Be Medi-Cal Beneficiaries at the time of incarceration.
- Comply with all annual redetermination requirements during incarceration.
- Remain otherwise eligible for Medi-Cal during their incarceration.
- Not be considered an inmate of a public institution within one year of their incarceration date.
- Be eligible on the day they are released.

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### B. Suspension Methodology

There are two separate methods for suspending juveniles from Medi-Cal cases, one method for cases that only include the incarcerated juvenile and one for cases that include other family members.

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To suspend the incarcerated juvenile in child only cases, workers must:

Step	Action
1	Leave the juvenile active in the county system.
2	Enter a suspense code (I in the OHC field) via MEDS request form 14-28 to suspend the benefits.
3	Send timely notice of suspension (MC 377) to juvenile's caretaker.
4	Flag the case as suspended using case special indicator 'Juvenile Suspense'.
5	Narrate suspension and release date and tick case for re-review upon the one year anniversary of incarceration or the release date if known.

For cases where there are other family members eligible to Medi-Cal, workers must:

Step	Action
1	Remove the juvenile from the case in the county system.

2	Send timely notice of suspension as soon as the worker is notified that the juvenile is incarcerated.
3	Re-evaluate the rest of the case members' Medi-Cal eligibility.
4	Notify the family of any eligibility changes due to the removal of the child with timely NOA.
5	Flag the case as suspended using special indicator 'Juvenile Suspense'.
6	Narrate suspension and tick case for re-review upon release date if known.

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**C.  
Restoration**

Eligibility must be restored on suspended juveniles without a new application the date the County receives report that the juvenile is released or no longer considered an inmate.

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To restore benefits on...	Workers must ...
child only cases,	transmit the end date of incarceration to MEDS via a 14-28 request. The 'I' in the OHC field will remain until the following month, but the child will be able to use Medi-Cal effective the release date entered in MEDS.
family cases,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>add the child back into the case in the county system without requesting additional forms or verifications.</li> <li>re-evaluate the family's eligibility.</li> </ul>

Workers must send notice MC 376 to notify caretakers of restoration.

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**D.  
Redetermination**

Suspended juveniles must meet redetermination requirements. When the redetermination falls within the first year of the juvenile's incarceration, workers must confirm the juvenile is still an inmate of a public institution and is otherwise eligible to Medi-Cal.

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If redetermination requirements are not met, the suspension and Medi-Cal eligibility must be discontinued with timely notice.

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**E.  
Discontinue  
Suspension**

When a juvenile no longer meets the suspension criteria and is still incarcerated, they become ineligible to Medi-Cal and the worker must end the suspension. The suspension of eligibility must be discontinued if:

- The juvenile has been incarcerated for over one year. The suspension must be discontinued at the end of the month on the one year anniversary of incarceration with timely notice.
- The juvenile turns 21 during suspension.
- The responsible party fails to comply with redetermination requirements within the first year of incarceration.
- The child becomes Medi-Cal ineligible for any reason other than incarceration.

In order to discontinue the suspension of eligibility for...	Workers must...
child only cases,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• submit the end date of suspension to MEDS via 14-28.</li> <li>• close the case in the county system.</li> </ul>
family cases,	narrate the change and keep the child's status as 'out of the home' in the county system.

Child only cases will receive a MEDS alert to terminate eligibility at the end of the last month of the one year suspension mark.

Workers must send timely notice to the juvenile's family or responsible party to discontinue the suspension.

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**F.  
Pre-Release  
Applications**

As part of the pre-release application process (see [MPG 06.05.03](#)) workers may receive referrals for new Medi-Cal applications for juveniles in active Medi-Cal cases.

If the child is...	Then ...
suspended,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do not process the application referral.</li> <li>• send communication form to probation department indicating the child is</li> </ul>

	suspended and will be added back to the case upon release.
not suspended,	suspend the Juvenile if they meet the suspension criteria in MPG 06.05.02.A. and evaluate the case as in MPG 06.05.02.B
not eligible for suspension (for example: they have been incarcerated for over a year),	remove child from the case and process the pre-release application as in MPG 06.05.03.

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