



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



DATE: June 24, 2021

Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter No.: 21-09

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: CONTINUING TELEPHONIC FLEXIBILITIES FOR THE MINOR CONSENT PROGRAM BEYOND THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

The purpose of this Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter (MEDIL) is to provide information to counties on ongoing changes being made to the Minor Consent program to allow for telephonic interviews and appointments beyond the flexibilities resulting from the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE).

BACKGROUND

California Family Code provides that a minor may, without parental consent, receive services related to sexual assault, pregnancy and pregnancy-related services, family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, drug and alcohol abuse, and outpatient mental health treatment and counseling.

Minor consent services are categorized by age as follows:

UNDER AGE 12:

- pregnancy and pregnancy-related care
- family planning services
- sexual assault services

AGE 12 YEARS AND OLDER:

- sexually transmitted diseases treatment
- drug and alcohol abuse treatment/counseling
- mental health outpatient care
- pregnancy and pregnancy-related care
- family planning services
- sexual assault services

The above-named services which a minor may receive on his/her own are referred to as "minor consent services."

Prior to the PHE, counties were instructed to only accept Minor Consent applications or renewals from minors in person. However, at the onset of the PHE, DHCS modified this policy and instruction to counties. To prevent and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, counties were instructed to follow guidance provided in [ACWDL 19-17](#) to conduct telephonic interviews/appointments in situations that usually require an applicant or beneficiary to visit the county office for services, including the Minor Consent program. Forms that would usually require a wet signature to be valid, could be completed and signed via telephonic signature for the duration of the PHE.

Given the effectiveness of this change in policy throughout the PHE, DHCS has adopted this change ongoing to allow minors to apply and/or renew eligibility for the Minor Consent program either in-person or by telephone. Counties shall continue to accept applications, renewals, and reported changes in information over the telephone for the Minor Consent program beyond the PHE.

IMPORTANT REMINDER REGARDING CONFIDENTIALITY OF MINOR CONSENT

All minor consent cases are confidential and parents are not to be contacted regarding their child's receipt of the requested services. A minor must apply for minor consent services. Parent(s) may not apply on behalf of their minor child. Whether applying or renewing eligibility for the Minor Consent program in person or over the phone, contact shall **ONLY** be directed to the minor applying for or renewing services, and the confidentiality requirement shall not be waived under any circumstance. Notices of Action (NOAs) or paper BIC cards shall not be sent to the home address, to preserve the confidentiality of the minor's case.

POLICY NEXT STEPS

DHCS will be updating Medi-Cal Eligibility Procedures Manual, Article 4V, to reflect this modification to the Minor Consent program policy. DHCS will also provide further guidance to counties as needed in a subsequent policy letter.

For additional information on the Minor Consent program, please contact Lucy Hall, by phone at (916) 345-8088 or by email at Lucy.Hall@dhcs.ca.gov.

Original Signed By
Sandra Williams, Chief Medi-Cal Eligibility Division