

SB-1385

Medi-Cal: Health Workers: Managing Providers



Prepared by the
ELDERLY CARE
EVERYWHERE POLICY
TEAM



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Executive Summary

Introduced by Senator Roth, with coauthors including Senators McGuire, Dodd, Min, and Rubio, Senate Bill No. 1385 (SB 1385) was presented during the 2023-2024 Regular Session of the California Legislature. This bill seeks to amend Section 14132.36 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, specifically addressing the provision of community health worker services within the Medi-Cal program. Medi-Cal, administered by the State Department of Health Care Services, offers health care services to qualified low-income individuals under both federal Medicaid program provisions and state-managed care systems.

SB 1385 introduces significant modifications aimed at formalizing the supervision and billing processes for community health worker services provided during emergency and outpatient follow-up visits. The bill specifies that by July 1, 2025, Medi-Cal managed care plans must establish policies and procedures that create a billing pathway for supervising providers. These providers, including hospitals and community-based organizations, are responsible for submitting claims for services rendered by community health workers, ensuring compliance with federally approved Medicaid state plan amendments. This policy initiative seeks to streamline the integration of community health workers into the healthcare delivery system, recognizing their pivotal role in connecting underserved populations to necessary medical services.

The legislation emphasizes the need for community health workers as a bridge between health services and low-income communities, enhancing access and cultural competence of service delivery. It also mandates Medi-Cal managed care plans to engage in outreach and education to inform enrollees about the benefits available and the processes for accessing community health worker services. The bill defines a "supervising provider" as a licensed entity authorized to oversee community health workers and requires the development of guidance by the Department of Health Care Services to support the billing processes for community health worker services. Additionally, the implementation of these provisions is contingent on the availability of federal financial participation and the acquisition of necessary federal approvals.

In conclusion, SB 1385 is a pivotal legislative measure that not only strengthens the operational framework for community health workers within California's Medi-Cal system but also ensures that low-income and underserved populations receive timely and effective healthcare services. By establishing clear guidelines for the supervision and compensation of community health workers, the bill helps secure the sustainability of this essential workforce, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency of healthcare service delivery. This initiative is poised to significantly impact the delivery of healthcare services, enhancing both the reach and quality of care provided to vulnerable populations across the state, ensuring that all individuals have equitable access to health resources and support.



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Our Position

Senate Bill No. 1385, championed by Senator Roth and coauthors Senators McGuire, Dodd, Min, and Rubio, represents a pivotal advancement for California's Medi-Cal system, focusing on enhancing the management and operational standards for supervising providers. This bill specifically targets the integration of community health workers within the healthcare framework, recognizing their crucial role in connecting underserved communities with essential health services. By establishing clear protocols for billing and supervision, SB 1385 facilitates more effective and timely healthcare interventions during critical service interactions, such as emergency and outpatient follow-up care.

Elderly Care Everywhere endorses SB 1385 enthusiastically, as it aligns with our mission to elevate healthcare access and quality for vulnerable groups, including the elderly. This legislation codifies the functions of supervising providers, ensuring that community health workers are seamlessly incorporated into the healthcare system, thus optimizing service delivery and meeting the intricate needs of seniors who require consistent, accessible, and culturally sensitive medical support.

Moreover, SB 1385 bolsters the reliability and accountability of community health worker services by mandating that Medi-Cal managed care plans implement definitive policies and procedures, thereby standardizing care quality and enhancing transparency statewide. This ensures that supervising providers adhere to rigorous guidelines crucial for protecting the well-being of seniors and other at-risk populations.

The bill also emphasizes proactive outreach and educational initiatives to fully inform Medi-Cal recipients about the community health worker services available to them, empowering patients to actively engage with their healthcare options and fostering improved health outcomes.

A significant feature of SB 1385 is its alignment with federal Medicaid amendments, securing federal financial support and ensuring the sustainability of improvements in the Medi-Cal system, which benefits all Californians, especially the aging population.

Ultimately, SB 1385 serves as a transformative legislative measure that fills existing gaps in the Medi-Cal service framework. Elderly Care Everywhere's support for this bill underscores our commitment to advocate for healthcare systems that not only enhance operational efficacy and service quality but also ensure these services are delivered in a respectful, inclusive, and culturally adept manner. This bill lays the groundwork for a more equitable healthcare system where every Californian, particularly seniors and vulnerable individuals, can access and benefit from necessary health resources, ensuring their dignity and effective care.



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Letter of Support for SB-1385

June 4, 2024

The Honorable Mia Bonta, Chair
Assembly Committee on Health

Re: Support for SB-1385

Dear Assembly Member Bonta and Members of the Health Committee,

On behalf of Elderly Care Everywhere, I strongly support SB 1385, which mandates Medi-Cal managed care plans to establish billing pathways for supervising providers to claim community health worker services during and after emergency department visits. This bill addresses a significant gap in the current healthcare system, ensuring that seniors, among the most vulnerable Medi-Cal beneficiaries, receive essential follow-up care.

SB 1385's emphasis on creating clear policies and procedures for billing community health worker services will streamline the process for supervising providers, including hospitals and clinics, significantly benefiting seniors. This change is crucial for seniors requiring coordinated care following emergency department visits to prevent readmissions and manage chronic conditions effectively.

By including community health workers as a covered Medi-Cal benefit and requiring managed care plans to engage in outreach and education, SB 1385 enhances access to preventive services and ongoing support for seniors. These measures ensure that our diverse senior population receives the necessary information and care, meeting cultural and linguistic appropriateness standards.

The bill's focus on follow-up care is critical to maintaining seniors' health and well-being. By facilitating a billing pathway for these services, SB 1385 ensures that community health workers can provide continuous and comprehensive care, addressing both immediate health issues and longer-term health management for seniors.

Supporting SB 1385 means enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Medi-Cal program, ultimately improving health outcomes for seniors and other vulnerable populations. We urge you to pass this bill to support and care for our aging community.

Sincerely,
Aakrisht Mehra
Founder/CEO
Elderly Care Everywhere



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About Elderly Care Everywhere

Elderly Care Everywhere is a transformative nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of senior citizens. Since its inception, the organization has positively impacted over 40,000 seniors through a variety of programs aimed at enhancing their quality of life.

Elderly Care Everywhere has been instrumental in alleviating hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical debt, ensuring that seniors have access to the healthcare they need without the burden of financial stress. With more than 20 chapters across the United States, the organization extends its reach and resources to numerous communities, providing support and advocacy on a national scale.

Beyond U.S. borders, Elderly Care Everywhere has established flood relief camps in India, showcasing its commitment to global humanitarian efforts. The organization's impactful work has been recognized by the government of New Delhi, further highlighting its significant contributions to senior care and welfare. Through these efforts, Elderly Care Everywhere continues to lead the way in senior advocacy, ensuring that the elderly are treated with dignity and respect worldwide.

Thank you for your support of SB-1385. If you have any questions, feel free to email us at connect@elderlycareeverywhere.org