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“Deemed Eligibility” for Infants to Age One Year

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- When a mother has Medi-Cal for the delivery (income at or below 213% of poverty), her newborn is automatically “deemed eligible” (DE) for Medi-Cal from the date of birth continuously to the first birthday, without needing to submit a Medi-Cal application.
- Infants whose mothers had coverage under the Medi-Cal Access Program (MCAP, income over 213% up to and including 322% of poverty) will also qualify for Medi-Cal or the Medi-Cal Access Infants Program (MCAIP)¹ until age one without an application.²
- **The issue is how to get the newborn enrolled into Medi-Cal or MCAIP with their own number as of the date of birth without a Medi-Cal application.**
 - Early enrollment maximizes the chances that infants will receive developmental screens, immunizations, and other preventive services on time as well as have steady access to all other care they may need, including specialty care, that is covered by Medi-Cal.

Existing Ways to Enroll DE Infants into Medi-Cal, without an application

- **Fax** the one-page [Newborn Referral Form](#) (NRF) to the county, using the fax number provided at page 2 of the NRF for each county. Also available in [Spanish](#).
 - Check whether the listed fax number has been updated.
- **Call** the county to refer the birth.
 - The phone number for each county is also provided at page 2 of the NRF.
- Use the **Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) Gateway** at a hospital-affiliated clinic or other pediatric clinic. See, [MEDIL 18-11 \(July 5, 2018\)](#).
 - Need the mother’s Medi-Cal number or Social Security Number (SSN optional) so that the system can match her active Medi-Cal to the infant’s date of birth.
 - When a match is found, a number will be issued in **real time** for the newborn. **The provider gives a print out of the eligibility confirmation page with the newborn’s number to the family, so they can show other providers that the baby has immediate, full coverage.**
 - For DE infants 0-12 months, Medi-Cal through the CHDP Gateway lasts continuously until age one. No follow up Medi-Cal application is required during the first year for DE infants.
 - **Note:** For other children, CHDP Gateway coverage is only temporary and does require a follow up application to continue.

And for MCAP-linked Infants

- Fax the [MCAP Infant Registration Form](#) in English or [Spanish](#) to the MCAP program in Sacramento.
- Call the MCAP program in Sacramento to report the birth: 1-800-880-5305.

New, starting July 1: Newborn Gateway

- Starting July 1, 2024, a [new state law](#) (see, Sec. 151 at PDF p. 236) requires hospitals, birth centers, and all other birth settings where babies are delivered to mothers covered by Medi-Cal or MCAIP and that participate in any of Medi-Cal's Presumptive Eligibility (PE) programs to **refer the birth within 72 hours, or one day after discharge, whichever is sooner**, through a new on-line portal.
 - PE providers must attend a training on this **before July 1**.
 - The next [provider trainings](#) are on **May 29 and June 6**.
- When the mother's Medi-Cal or MCAIP number is matched as active on the newborn's date of birth, the newborn will be automatically **enrolled in Medi-Cal or MCAIP continuously for the first year**.
 - A regular Medi-Cal application is not required for these DE or MCAIP infants.
- The newborn's unique Medi-Cal/MCAIP **number will be issued in real time**.
 - The hospital or other provider must print and give the confirmation page with the newborn's unique number to the family for immediate use for developmental screens and immunizations, specialty services, and all other pediatric care covered by Medi-Cal.
 - If the enrollment takes place after the mother and baby have left, the hospital or other birth setting must **mail a copy of the eligibility confirmation print out to the family**.
 - The state only recently agreed to add the mailing instructions.
 - Providers should also call, text, and/or email the confirmation number to the family.
- **This Newborn Gateway will also be embedded into a new Children's PE (CPE) program.**
 - The state's provider trainings for the Newborn Gateway also cover the CPE.
 - CPE replaces the CHDP Gateway (described above) and is open to all Medi-Cal providers who see children in any setting, not just CHDP providers.
 - Like the CHDP Gateway, the CPE will also look to match the DE Medi-Cal or MCAIP infant's date of birth to the mother's coverage for the delivery and confirm in real time the infant's eligibility for Medi-Cal or MCAIP for the year.

Plan and Primary Care Provider (PCP) Selection

- Like all other persons enrolling in Medi-Cal, these infants have the right to select a plan (in counties where more than one plan is offered) and a PCP before plan enrollment takes effect.
- In some cases where more than one plan is available, however, we understand that newborns are being automatically enrolled into the mother's health plan, without prior notice to the family, and without a PCP being assigned for the newborn. Here's what to know if this happens:

- Families have the right to move the newborn to another Medi-Cal plan.
 - But it may take a month or more for the plan change to take effect.
- Families can choose a PCP for the newborn at any time. Do this soon to:
 - Avoid delays in accessing specialty care needed by the newborn now or later, because only a PCP can refer the infant to a specialist; and
 - Promote continuity of care throughout the first year, which is very important for identifying and treating issues early, especially for infants.
- **Note:** If you know of families whose newborns were automatically put into the mother's plan in a county with more than one plan to choose from, please let MCHA know by contacting lynnk@mchaccess.org or lucyqmas@gmail.com.

¹MCAIP is for infants whose mothers were in MCAP with income over 266% up to and including 322% of poverty. Infants in the MCAIP go into Medi-Cal health plans, just like other children who are eligible for Medi-Cal with household income at or below 266% of poverty.

² State policy for DE Medi-Cal infants is summarized in these All County Letters: [ACL 03-49](#) and [ACL 09-17](#). For MCAP, see: [Registering Your Baby for MCAP](#).
