



Date: January 15, 2025

From: CenCal Health
Pharmacy Department

Subject: Medi-Cal Rx Update: 30 Day Countdown: Pediatric Integration of Members 21 Years of Age and Younger

Dear Network Providers,

Effective **January 31, 2025**, Medi-Cal Rx will implement claim UM edits and PA requirements for members **21 years of age and younger** for both new start and continuation of therapy claims.

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) recently made an important policy adjustment relative to Medi-Cal Rx's initiative for reinstatement of prior authorization (PA) requirements and utilization management (UM) claim edits for Medi-Cal members 21 years of age and younger, including members of the California Children's Services (CCS) Program. Prior authorization (PA) requirements will only be reinstated for new start drugs/products for members 21 years of age and younger.

"New starts" are defined as new to therapy or absence of paid claims in the past 15 months prior to the current claim's date of service (DOS). Continuation of therapy claims will still be subject to all other Medi-Cal Rx claim UM edits (such as those related to frequency and quantity limits), which may require a PA to establish medical necessity. DHCS has adjusted its policy approach for the pediatric integration, as follows:

- **For new start therapies/prescriptions:**
 - All UM claim edits, including PAs, will be fully reinstated and in effect for all Medi-Cal Rx covered and contracted drugs and products for Medi-Cal members 21 years of age and younger. This approach remains the same.
 - CCS PPA will be fully functional, and these claims will pay if they satisfy CCS Panel Provider Authority specifications. This approach remains the same.
- **For continuing therapies/prescriptions:**
 - For a period of no less than 60 days, if a claim would otherwise reject with Reject 75 (*PA required*) but the Medi-Cal member has recent claims history, DHCS' transition policy will continue to apply, and the claim will pay without the need for additional PA. This approach has been adjusted and is intended to give providers and prescribers additional time to adjust their internal processes and better plan for PI requirements as well as submit proactive PAs.
 - CCS PPA will be fully functional, and these claims will pay if they satisfy CCS Panel Provider Authority specifications. This approach remains the same.



Providers are encouraged to attend one of the **upcoming weekly webinars hosted by Medi-Cal Rx beginning Friday, January 17, 2025**. When available, the link can be found on the Pediatric Integration tab located on the [Education & Outreach](#) page on the [Medi-Cal Rx Web Portal](#).

Medi-Cal Rx will also implement the California Children's Services (CCS) Panel Authority policy for CCS Paneled Providers who are physicians or certified nurse practitioners and enrolled in Medi-Cal. CCS Panel Authority enables CCS Paneled Providers to prescribe for members 20 years of age and younger without submitting a PA for Medi-Cal Rx covered drugs and products, with some exceptions.

CCS Panel Authority covers the PA requirement when all the following conditions are met:

- The member is younger than 21 years of age.
- The prescription is written by the member's physician or certified nurse practitioner who has CCS Panel Authority.
- The requested medication is not an excluded drug/product
- The claim denies with one of the following reject codes:
 - Reject Code 75 – Prior Authorization Required (some exceptions apply)
 - Reject Code 83 – Duplicate Paid/Captured Claim (when submitted for enteral nutrition products)

Prescriptions written by providers that do not meet the CCS Panel Authority policy requirements or by providers without CCS Panel Authority will be subject to PA requirements.

Some examples of excluded drugs/products that will require additional documentation include, but are not limited to:

- Opioid analgesics, benzodiazepines (except anticonvulsants), and sedative/hypnotics.
- High-risk drugs using criteria such as, but not limited to:
 - not approved for use in the pediatric population and not considered standard of care in the community.
 - or black box U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) safety warning
 - or not considered first-line therapy.
- Noncontracted enteral nutrition products and enteral nutrition products prescribed outside published clinical criteria.

A detailed list of products included or excluded (by NDC) from the CCS Panel Authority policy will be available in the [Medi-Cal Rx Approved NDC List](#) the week of January 27, 2025, and updated monthly thereafter.

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has created a [Pediatric Integration Q&A document](#) based upon stakeholder feedback received during recent meetings and via email. Medi-Cal Rx will also publish an updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) in mid-January to provide additional support.

For any provider inquiries regarding Medi-Cal Rx, please call the CenCal Health Pharmacy Department at 805-562-1080.

In Partnership,

CenCal Health