

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Week of March 13, 2023

State Issues

<p>Telehealth Policy Update</p>	<p>This week, the Department of Health Care Services published a memo outlining the state’s telehealth policies for Medi-Cal services. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) had adopted very narrow telehealth policies that hindered the use of telehealth for this population.</p> <p>However, during COVID, additional telehealth flexibilities allowed Medi-Cal’s health care delivery systems to meet the health care needs of enrollees in an environment where in-person encounters were not recommended or not available.</p> <p>After a lengthy push from advocates, legislation was adopted last year (Section 380 of Assembly Bill (AB) 133 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 143, Statutes of 2021), that required DHCS to convene a Telehealth Advisory Workgroup for the purposes of informing the 2022 – 2023 Governor’s Budget and the development of post-public health emergency (PHE) telehealth policies.</p> <p>As a result of those stakeholder meetings and ongoing pressure from advocates and the Legislature, the Department has since updated its Medi-Cal telehealth policies, which are reflected through the Department’s Telehealth Policy Paper, Senate Bill No. 184, Assembly Bill No. 32, and in the DHCS Telehealth Provider Manual.</p> <p>You can access the highlights of the revised Medi-Cal telehealth policies here. You can access the full policy paper here.</p>
<p>California Women’s Caucus and CA Future of Abortion Council Announces Priority Legislation</p>	<p>This week, the California Future of Abortion Council announced its support for a 17-bill legislative package introduced this session by the California Legislative Women’s Caucus, which builds upon the recommendations put forth by the Council over the last few years.</p> <p>In a press conference earlier this week, they introduced and supported a package of bills that seeks to expand the state’s abortion provider network, reduces barriers to care, and protects abortion patients and providers.</p> <p>See the attached legislative package bill list.</p>

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California Women's Caucus and CA Future of Abortion Council Announces Priority Legislation

- SB 36 (Skinner) Strengthens safe haven protections for abortion and gender-affirming care by prohibiting bail agents or bounty hunters from apprehending people in California and protecting access to public benefits.
- SB 345 (Skinner) Improves protections for providers who provide abortion and gender-affirming care and services.
- SB 385 (Atkins) Extends many of the updated training rules for nurse practitioners and certified nurse-midwives to provide first trimester abortion care (from SB 1375 last year) to physician assistants.
- SB 487 (Atkins) Provides additional safeguards for California abortion providers and other entities and individuals that serve and support abortion patients that reside in states with restrictive abortion laws.
- AB 90 (Petrie-Norris) Improves access to long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) for those seeking abortion services.
- AB 254 (Bauer-Kahan) Provides privacy protections for digital data related to patients accessing abortion services in California.
- AB 352 (Bauer-Kahan) Enhances privacy protections for medical records related to abortion, pregnancy loss, and other sensitive services through electronic health record sharing and health information exchanges.
- AB 571 (Petrie-Norris) Ensures that licensed medical providers have access to professional liability insurance coverage without discrimination for providing abortion care, contraception, and gender affirming care.
- AB 576 (Weber) Aligns Medi-Cal coverage of medication abortion with evidence-based clinical guidelines.
- AB 598 (Wicks) Requires school districts to participate in the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) and include a module on sexual and reproductive health care as one of the core survey modules.
- AB 710 (Schiavo) will launch a public information campaign to provide women with accurate information regarding access to abortion care at crisis pregnancy centers.
- AB 793 (Bonta) Supports safe access to reproductive and gender-affirming care in the digital age by protecting people from unconstitutional searches of their data.
- AB 1194 (Carrillo) Ensures that businesses can't use exemptions under the Consumer Privacy Rights Act (CPRA) to share information about "a consumer accessing, procuring, or searching for services regarding contraception, pregnancy care, and perinatal care, including, but not limited to, abortion services."

- AB 1432 (Carrillo)- Requires every health insurance policy or certificate that is issued, or delivered to a resident of California, regardless of the situs of the contract, to comply with California laws that require coverage of abortion services and gender affirming Care.
- AB 1481 (Boerner-Horvath) Clarifies Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnant Individuals (currently called PE4PW) coverage policies and ensures PE4PW patients can access abortion services regardless of other health coverage.
- AB 1646 (Nguyen) Facilitates guest rotations in medical residency programs in California.
- AB 1707 (Pacheco) Builds on existing law to protect reproductive health care providers from adverse actions based on another state's law.