

The following new laws which help health consumers are effective January 1, 2018, unless otherwise noted:

Medi-Cal

- [AB 74 \(Chiu\)](#) requires DHCS to create the Housing for a Healthy California Program by January 2019 to provide rental assistance to individuals who are homeless and receive services from the Whole Person Care pilot program, Health Homes, or another locally controlled funding source.
- [AB 205 \(Wood\)](#) implements the federal Medicaid managed care rule by codifying time and distance standards for Medi-Cal managed care enrollees to obtain primary, specialty, mental health, dental, and pharmacy services; codifies appointment wait time standards; requires DSS to develop regulations related to state fair hearing on grievance and appeal; and establishes reporting requirements. New plan requirements are effective July 1, 2018.
- [SB 171 \(Hernandez\)](#) implements the federal Medicaid managed care rule, including provisions related to public hospital financing, the medical loss ratio effective July 2019, and public reporting related to mental health and substance use disorder parity.
- [SB 218 \(Dodd\)](#) authorizes, to the extent permitted under federal law, the transfer of all amounts in the designated beneficiary's ABLÉ account (tax beneficial savings accounts for people with disabilities) to an ABLÉ account for another individual and prohibit the state from seeking recovery of any amount remaining in the designated beneficiary's ABLÉ account.
- [SB 223 \(Atkins\)](#) codifies into state law the nondiscrimination provisions (section 1557) of the Affordable Care Act; adds notice of the availability of interpreter services in 15 languages spoken by limited-English proficient Californians as identified by the Census Bureau to Medi-Cal, health insurance, and health plan enrollees.
- [SB 743 \(Hernandez\)](#) codifies into state law the provision of federal law that allows Medi-Cal managed care enrollees to see any provider accepting Medicaid for family planning services.

Consumer Rights

- [AB 1021 \(Baker\)](#) requires county human services agencies to accept applications for IHSS benefits by telephone, fax, in person, or, if the county is capable of accepting online applications for benefits, by email or other electronic means.
- [SB 219 \(Wiener\)](#) prohibits long-term care facilities from discriminating on the basis of a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or HIV status, by refusing to use a resident's preferred name or pronoun, denying admission to a long-term care facility, transferring or refusing to transfer a resident within a facility or to another facility, or involuntarily discharging a resident from a facility.
- [SB 239 \(Wiener\)](#) repeals several HIV-specific criminal laws to align them with current laws applicable to other serious communicable diseases.
- [SB 241 \(Monning\)](#) allows patients to receive medical records electronically, if maintained electronically.
- [SB 575 \(Leyva\)](#) provides low-income individuals with free access to their medical records when applying for certain public benefit programs.

Mental Health

- [**AB 340 \(Arambula\)**](#) requires DHCS to convene an advisory working group to update, amend or develop tools and protocols for the screening of children with trauma, and moves the convening date up to May 1, 2018.
- [**AB 470 \(Arambula\)**](#) requires DHCS to build on existing data systems to create performance outcomes reports for mental health services delivered to Medi-Cal enrollees.
- [**AB 727 \(Nazarian\)**](#) clarifies that counties may spend MHSA moneys on housing assistance for persons with severe mental illnesses.
- [**AB 1315 \(Mullin\)**](#) creates the Early Psychosis Intervention Competitive Selection Process Plus Program and an advisory committee to the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission to expand the provision of early psychosis detection and intervention services.

Other

- [**AB 156 \(Wood\)**](#) changes the Covered California and individual market open enrollment period from November 1-January 31 to October 15-January 15 starting in fall of 2018.
- [**AB 651 \(Murasuchi\)**](#) requires the Attorney General to consider the adverse impact on significant cultural interests in the affected community when a non-profit health facility is being sold and to ensure that notices of public meetings prior to the approval of a sale be in all languages widely spoken in the county.
- [**SB 17 \(Hernandez\)**](#) requires drug makers to give notice to specified purchasers before raising prices and requires health plans to report the proportion of the premiums spent on prescription drugs.
- [**SB 54 \(de León\)**](#) makes California a sanctuary state for immigrants to the extent allowed by federal law.
- [**SB 133 \(Hernandez\)**](#) adds continuity of care protections to consumers whose individual plan carrier leaves the market that mirror those protections offered to employees whose employer switches carriers.

Western Center office will be closed from December 18 through January 1, 2018. Happy Holidays and see you next year!