PRESS RELEASE

California Launches Vital Health Care Services Ahead of Schedule

CDCR, CCHCS, and DHCS CalAIM Justice-Involved Reentry Initiative Bring Critical Care to Individuals Transitioning to Community Life

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS), and the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) are proud to announce the early launch of the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) Justice-Involved Reentry Initiative within the state's prison system. Originally set to launch in March 2026, the initiative rolled out on February 3, providing linkages to timely and vital Medi-Cal-covered health care services as well as provider reimbursement payments for covered expenses.

California is the first state in the nation to enable its prison system to provide Medi-Cal-funded pre-release services. This groundbreaking effort ensures that incarcerated individuals with chronic health conditions, mental health needs, or substance use disorders receive linkages to the critical care and support they need as they transition back to their communities.

"This is a transformative initiative that will strengthen care coordination, improve health outcomes, and reduce recidivism," said CDCR Secretary Jeff Macomber. "Launching this program ahead of schedule is a testament to our commitment to ensuring individuals transitioning back into our communities have the tools and support they need to succeed."

Building on Early Success

The early launch follows the completion of a small preliminary cohort spread across three institutions – California Health Care Facility (CHCF), California Medical Facility (CMF), and Central California Women's Facility (CCWF), which demonstrated the efficacy of enhanced care coordination and pre-release planning. Best practices were also developed through collaboration with various stakeholders, refining the approach for broader application to all 31 prisons statewide.

"Working with a small cohort of individuals prior to launch showed us the real potential of this initiative to bridge gaps in care for those reentering society," said CCHCS Receiver J. Clark Kelso. "By ensuring a seamless transition from incarceration to

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community-based care, we are addressing critical gaps that have historically left many without the resources they need to survive and succeed."

A Collaborative Vision

With approximately 85 percent of CDCR's population eligible for Medi-Cal, CalAIM provides a crucial safety net, focusing on individuals with mental health, medical, or substance use disorder treatment needs.

"The Justice-Involved Reentry Initiative is about ensuring no one is left without the care they need at a critical time in their lives," said DHCS Director Michelle Baass. "By working together with CDCR and CCHCS, we're delivering comprehensive case management and vital medical and behavioral health services to ensure continuity of care during this reentry period."

The State Prison Phased Rollout

As the CalAIM Justice-Involved Reentry Initiative continues to rollout in three phases through July 2025, a comprehensive integrated claims management system will allow for Medi-Cal reimbursement. Phase one, which began February 3, permits pharmacy medication claims for reimbursement, provides information to the population, initiates the identification and evaluation of CDCR's incarcerated population for eligibility, and the automation of stakeholder notifications. On the first week of launch, the state received 450 reimbursement payments. Phase two covers Care Management billing and phase three covers Clinical Services Billing.

The early launch underscores California's leadership in health care innovation and its dedication to supporting justice-involved individuals as they reintegrate into society.

For more information, visit the CCHCS website and DHCS website.

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