



CALIFORNIA CORRECTIONAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES

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California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation eliminates inmate copayments for health care services

ELK GROVE, CA – California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS) will abolish inmate copayment charges for medical and dental services and charges for dental prosthetic appliances effective March 1, 2019. Copayment fees are not charged for mental health services.

After recent internal analysis, it was determined that copayments have minimal fiscal benefit and are not aligned with patient care. Specifically, copayments may hinder patients from seeking care for health issues which, without early detection and intervention, may become exacerbated, resulting in decreased treatment efficacy and/or increased treatment cost. The Department's health care delivery system, known as the Complete Care Model, is based on a preventative and comprehensive approach to patient care. Early detection and preventative health care aligns with most public and private health care organizations and can prove to be fiscally prudent.

This is a large-scale initiative that will include emergency revision and repeal of some CDCR regulations, changes to medical and dental policies, and revisions to other internal documents. CDCR and CCHCS are working to ensure all necessary components are in place and notifications are made prior to this operational change.

Background: In 1994, Section 5007.5(a) was added to the Penal Code (PC) to read: *CDCR is authorized to charge a fee in the amount of five dollars (\$5) for each inmate-initiated medical or dental visit of an inmate confined in the state prison, which will be charged to the prison account of the inmate. If the inmate has no money in his or her personal account, there shall be no charge for the medical or dental visit. An inmate shall not be denied medical care because of a lack of funds in his or her prison account. The medical provider may waive the fee for any inmate-initiated treatment and shall waive the fee in any life-threatening or emergency situation, defined as those health services required for alleviation of severe pain or for immediate diagnosis and treatment of unforeseen medical conditions that if not immediately diagnosed and treated could lead to disability or death. Follow-up medical visits at the direction of the medical staff shall not be charged to the inmate.*

In Fiscal Year 2017/18, a total of 221,788 medical and dental visits occurred. That same year, a total of \$460,177.67 was collected from medical and dental copayments.