Medi-Cal Rx

Medi-Cal Coverage of Vaccines

September 22, 2025; Last Updated October 7, 2025

Background

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Medical Director mailed a letter to Medi-Cal stakeholders on September 17, 2025, regarding the recent enactment of Assembly Bill 144 (Budget Act of 2025). AB 144 requires Medi-Cal to cover vaccines and immunizations in accordance with a recommendation from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Family Physicians, or any modification or supplement to ACIP recommendations adopted by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

What Pharmacy Providers and Prescribers Need to Know

Pursuant to AB 144, Medi-Cal will continue to cover COVID-19 vaccinations for all persons 6 months of age and older, consistent with current CDPH recommendations and regardless of federal ACIP recommendation.

DHCS notes that the Vaccines For Children (VFC) program only covers vaccines that are ACIP-recommended. However, pursuant to AB 144, Medi-Cal will cover childhood vaccines outside of VFC if recommended by any of the previously listed organizations, even if ACIP does not recommend them. DHCS also notes that AB 144 authorizes pharmacists to administer specified vaccines in a manner consistent with CDPH recommendations. A California pharmacist may independently initiate and administer an immunization that was ACIP-recommended on January 1, 2025, or is currently recommended by CDPH, to persons 3 years of age and older. In addition, pharmacists may immunize individuals of any age when administering vaccines pursuant to a protocol with a prescriber, under *Business and Professions Code* (Bus & Prof Code), Section 4052(a)(11).

Vaccines may be billed as a pharmacy benefit to Medi-Cal Rx and DHCS will reimburse pharmacy providers for vaccine pharmacy claims billed at point of sale (POS). This reimbursement for pharmacy administration of VFC-funded vaccines for Medi-Cal managed care members will be paid for by Medi-Cal managed care plans (MCPs) under Medi-Cal Rx if the pharmacy identifies that they administered the vaccine by entering the applicable values using NCPDP standards. Pharmacy providers also have the option of submitting a medical claim to the member's Medi-Cal MCP to be reimbursed for the administration fee in lieu of submitting a pharmacy claim to Medi-Cal Rx. However, the initiation fee (consultation and assessment of need for vaccination) billed under pharmacist services as a medical benefit will be billed to Medi-Cal MCPs, not Medi-Cal Rx, for Medi-Cal managed care members.

DHCS will be issuing an update to All Plan Letter (APL 24-008) regarding immunization requirements as soon as possible to clarify Medi-Cal MCP requirements. DHCS is sharing this update now to provide clarity and guidance on the policy direction going forward.

Contact Information

You can call the Medi-Cal Rx Customer Service Center (CSC) at 1-800-977-2273, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year.

For other questions, email Medi-Cal Rx Education & Outreach at MediCalRxEducationOutreach@primetherapeutics.com.