



Medi-Cal Rx

90-Day Countdown: Upcoming Changes to Medi-Cal Rx

October 1, 2025

Background

As previously announced in the alert titled [Upcoming Changes to Medi-Cal Rx](#) and pursuant to the enacted [2025-26 State Budget](#), the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is implementing a series of Medi-Cal Rx policy updates over the coming months to reduce pharmacy spending, improve program integrity, and ensure continued, equitable access to quality pharmacy benefits and services.

What Pharmacy Providers and Prescribers Need to Know

Effective January 1, 2026, Medi-Cal Rx will implement the following policy updates:

Over-the-Counter (OTC) COVID-19 Antigen Tests

- OTC COVID-19 antigen tests will require a prior authorization (PA) request for all Medi-Cal members unless written by a California Children's Services (CCS) Panelled Provider for a pediatric member younger than 21 years of age (refer to the [Now Available: CCS Panel Authority Policy Exclusions on the Medi-Cal Rx Approved NDC List](#) alert for more information). Pharmacy claims for these tests may be approved on a case-by-case basis with medical justification demonstrating the need for suspected COVID-19 exposure or infection. Providers must include the following information with the PA request:
 - *International Classification of Diseases – 10th Revision* (ICD-10) diagnosis code
 - Signs and symptoms exhibited
 - Date of most recent COVID-19 test taken
 - Documentation of medical necessity, such as recent exposure, active signs and symptoms, previous diagnosis, or suspected ongoing infection
- **Note:** PAs are only approved for a one-time override and cannot be renewed. A new PA request will be required for each pharmacy claim for an OTC COVID-19 antigen test. Additionally, approvals are limited to up to four tests per month, per Medi-Cal member. It is important to remind Medi-Cal members that there may be additional alternative COVID-19 testing coverage options available through their pharmacy provider, prescriber or Medi-Cal managed care plan (MCP).

GLP-1 Drugs

- GLP-1 drugs used for weight loss and weight loss-related indications will be excluded from Medi-Cal Rx coverage for all Medi-Cal members. DHCS will issue letters directly to Medi-Cal members to inform them of the change in coverage.
- **Note:** Medi-Cal Rx will continue to cover GLP-1 drugs that are indicated for type 2 diabetes or other non-weight loss-related indications using a clinically appropriate ICD-10 code diagnosis.

Continuing Care

- Continuing care for certain drugs and products that are currently paying as continuation of care exceptions will no longer be covered without an approved PA demonstrating medical necessity. This policy will apply to all Medi-Cal members. The following drugs and products are impacted:
 - Chlorpromazine 25 mg/ml and 50 mg/2 ml ampules and vials
 - Fluphenazine 2.5 mg/ml vial
 - Haloperidol deconate 50 mg/ml and 100 mg/ml ampules
 - Haloperidol lactate 5 mg/ml ampules, vials, and syringes
 - Timolol 0.25% and 0.5% gel-solution
 - Timolol maleate 0.25% and 0.5% eye solution
 - Bimatoprost 0.03% eye drops
 - Adhansia XR (methylphenidate) 25 mg, 35 mg, 45 mg, 55 mg, 70 mg, and 85 mg capsules
- **Note:** Approval of select noncovered drugs as a paid benefit will first require use of a therapeutic alternative drug listed on the [Medi-Cal Rx Covered Drugs List](#) (CDL).

Coverage Policies for Select OTC Products

Note: The following OTC coverage policy updates will not impact members when the prescription is written by a CCS Paneled Provider under the CCS Panel Authority policy.

- **Select OTC Products**
 - Coverage policies for select OTC products for Medi-Cal members 21 years of age and older under Medi-Cal Rx will be updated as follows:
 - Multivitamin combination products will no longer be covered.
 - Certain single-ingredient vitamins and dry eye products will require a PA demonstrating medical necessity.
 - First- and second-generation antihistamines coverage are restricted to generic formulations.
- **OTC Prenatal Vitamins**
 - OTC prenatal vitamins will be limited to use during pregnancy or lactation conditions for Medi-Cal members between 10 and 60 years of age.

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.