

What is CaAIM?

California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CaAIM) is a new Medi-Cal initiative that seeks to improve the health of Californians. It is a multi-year program that is focused particularly on Californians with the most complex needs. The federal government granted a special waiver to the state that allows California to adapt Medi-Cal to make it more “equitable, coordinated, and person-centered.”

The first of CaAIM’s reforms began in January 2022 and additional changes will be added through 2027. For more in depth information about CaAIM, see the California Health Care Foundation’s resource, [CalAIM Explained: A Five-Year Plan to Transform Medi-Cal](#).

The CaAIM Initiative aims to:

-  Offer services that are standard and equitable for all.
-  Address the needs of the whole person, not just their “medical” needs, by integrating Medi-Cal with other social service programs.
-  Streamline and make it easier for members to navigate through the Medi-Cal system.
-  Encourage greater collaboration and coordination with other social services sectors (e.g., criminal legal system, child welfare system, housing and homeless systems.)

CaAIM has many different components that expand health coverage and use innovative strategies to provide better health care to California residents. As part of that goal, the state takes a broad view of the types of services the state will pay for under CaAIM. (For more information about the types of housing-related services covered for people experiencing homelessness, see our companion fact sheet: [CaAIM Housing-Related Services](#).)

Medi-Cal

California’s name for the state Medicaid program

Medicaid

A joint federal/state funded program that provides health coverage to individuals and families with low incomes; children; pregnant people; older adults; and people with disabilities.

Who is CaAIM for?

While CaAIM is intended to help all Medi-Cal members, some new CaAIM programs focus specifically on people with the most complex needs, including:

-  Older adults
-  People with disabilities
-  Children and youth in foster care
-  Children with complicated health conditions (e.g., cancer, epilepsy, or congenital heart disease)
-  People with mental illness and/or substance use disorders
-  People experiencing homelessness who have physical or behavioral health issues
-  People re-entering the community from jail or prison who have physical or behavioral health issues

How is care provided under CaAIM?

Under CaAIM, the State contracts with managed care plans (MCPs) to provide Medi-Cal health coverage for people enrolled in Medi-Cal. The MCPs then contract with networks of health care providers and other qualified service providers to provide delivery of direct services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

Some Medi-Cal MCPs offer health coverage in only one county, others cover members in a few, and still others offer coverage in many counties across the state. Most counties offer Medi-Cal members at least two MCPs to choose from. Some plans are local initiatives or county-organized and as such, only serve a specific county. Other MCPs are commercial plans that may have small Medi-Cal programs that cover people in multiple counties across the state. People who are enrolled in Medi-Cal and have chosen an MCP are referred to as that MCP’s “members.” Each MCP is only directly responsible for providing health coverage to its own members. (You can find a list of the managed care plans for your county here: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/individuals/Pages/MMCDHealthPlanDir.aspx>.)

The MCPs receive payment from the state per member / per month to provide all the Medi-Cal services and benefits that the State offers, including the new services and benefits under CaAIM. (Please see the companion document, [CaAIM Housing-Related Services](#), to learn more about the new programs.)