



**Medi-Cal is California's public health insurance program that covers low-income families and individuals, children, parents, pregnant people, seniors, and people with disabilities.**

Medi-Cal is jointly funded by the federal government and the state of California. It is overseen at the federal level by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and at the state level by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

Medi-Cal provides health coverage to approximately 15.7 million people in California. In California, most Medi-Cal members receive care through Managed Care Plans (MCPs), which operate in different counties across the state.



## Medi-Cal is an Important Safety Net for People Experiencing Homelessness

Many people experiencing homelessness are likely eligible for or already enrolled in Medi-Cal.

Research consistently shows that people experiencing homelessness have high rates of chronic, mental, and physical health conditions; co-occurring disorders; and high mortality rates. Living on the streets or other places not meant for human habitation only worsens these health challenges, which makes access to health care vital.

Medi-Cal coverage became even more important in 2022 when California introduced CalAIM, an initiative that aims to provide comprehensive care to low-income Californians with the most complex health needs. CalAIM<sup>1</sup> includes two programs that are particularly important for people experiencing homelessness:

- **Enhanced Care Management (ECM)** provides intensive care coordination and services across multiple systems to address clinical and non-clinical needs. It allows recipients to receive care whenever they need it, including in shelters, on the streets, and more.
- **Community Supports (CS)** are new services that address the social needs of Medi-Cal members. While all 14 of the Community Supports are valuable for individuals with complex health needs, four are explicitly related to housing supports (housing transition navigation services, housing tenancy and sustaining services, housing deposits, and short-term post-hospitalization housing).

People eligible for Medi-Cal must apply to get health coverage. They can apply online, in-person, over the telephone, or through regular mail. Once they are enrolled, they are known as Medi-Cal "members." They can apply online at [BenefitsCal.com](https://www.benefitscal.com) if they are seeking Medi-Cal and other public benefits (like CalFRESH or CalWORKS). If they **only** need health coverage, they can also apply at [BenefitsCal.com](https://www.benefitscal.com) or they can apply through [Covered California's website](https://www.coveredca.com).

Medi-Cal's comprehensive health coverage and housing-related services are incredibly valuable to the health and wellness of people experiencing homelessness.

<sup>1</sup> To learn more about CalAIM, see Homebase's overview materials, [CalAIM's Housing-Related Services](#) and the [HHIP Implementation Toolkit for CoCs](#).