



# Medi-Cal Coverage for Former Foster Youth

Webinar | February 27, 2014

**CHILDREN NOW**



# Agenda

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## Welcome & Introductions

Ted Lempert, CN, President

Kelly Hardy, CN, Sr. Director, Health Policy

Alice Bussiere, YLC, Staff Attorney

Jessica Haspel, CN, Associate, Child Welfare Policy

Todd Johnson, DHCS, Associate Governmental Program Analyst

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# What we will cover



Overview of the law



Department of Health Care Services policy



How to enroll and overcoming barriers



Examples of best practices



Outreach and Resources



# Poll

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**How familiar are you with coverage  
for former foster youth under the  
Affordable Care Act?**

I don't know much about it.

I have some information

I know a lot about it

# Overview of the law

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# The Affordable Care Act



Increases access to health care coverage



Allows young adults to remain on their parent's insurance up to age 26



Provides equity for former foster youth through Medicaid up to age 26

# California Law



Enrollment upon emancipation

- No interruption in coverage
- No application

Procedures to identify and enroll eligible youth

Identify and conduct outreach to former foster care adolescents who lost Medi-Cal coverage due to turning 21

Simplified redetermination

# California Law



Before coverage can be terminated:

- Identify whether individual is eligible for another reason (such as income)
- Provide advance notice
- Provide an opportunity to appeal

Not discontinued due to a loss of contact



# Eligibility

- In foster care at age 18 or older
  - In California, OR
  - In another state
- Living in California now
- Under the age of 26

No income or assets test. Former foster youth qualify **regardless of income.**

Former foster youth qualify **regardless of placement type.** Includes youth placed with relatives and youth in probation-supervised placements.



# Quiz

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**Hector was in foster care in Utah from age 12 – 18. Now he is 24 and lives in California. Is he eligible for Medi-Cal?**

Yes. California provides Medi-Cal coverage for young adults who were in foster care in another state at age 18 or older.

# Quiz

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**Michael has been in foster care since he was 14. He is now 19 and receiving extended foster care benefits through AB 12. Is Michael eligible for Medi-Cal?**

Michael is eligible for Medi-Cal as a current foster youth. When he leaves foster care, he will be eligible for Medi-Cal as a former foster youth. Although his aid code will change, he should not have any break in coverage.

# Quiz

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Karen is 22. She was placed in foster care in California when she was 15. At age 17 she was arrested, adjudicated a delinquent, and placed in a group home. The placement was supervised by probation. Karen remained in the group home until the juvenile court terminated jurisdiction when she turned 18.

Is Karen eligible for Medi-Cal?

Yes. A group home is a foster care placement. She is eligible as a former foster youth.

# Former Foster Care Children's (FFCC) Program in CA: Then and Now

Former foster youth are enrolled in the Medi-Cal coverage group for Former Foster Care Children

## Pre-ACA

FFY 18-21  
eligible for  
Medi-Cal FFCC  
coverage

## CA Bridge Funding

FFY turning 21  
between  
7/1/13 - 12/31/13  
maintain FFCC  
eligibility until 26

## ACA- 1/1/2014

*Extension takes  
full effect!*  
FFY 18-26 are  
eligible for  
Medi-Cal FFCC

# What coverage is available?

No cost, full scope Medi-Cal

EPSDT up to age 21

- Comprehensive screening, diagnosis and treatment
- Including vision, hearing, and dental

Adult Medi-Cal 21 and after

Includes medical care, vision exams, substance abuse treatment, dental (starting May 2014), and mental health services.



# Why enroll as a former foster youth?

26



**Continuous coverage until age 26**  
(simplified redetermination process)



**No income requirements** = FFY qualify regardless of income & stay covered even if their income changes.



FFY can choose **fee-for-service Medi-Cal**.



**No cost.** Allows FFY to save money for school, rent, and other necessities.

# Department of Health Care Services Policy

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# How does it work?

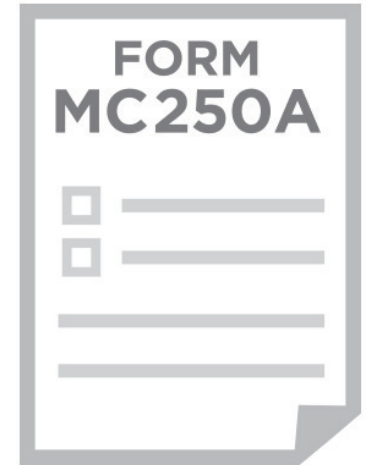
**Self-attestation = immediate enrollment**  
Medi-Cal Form MC250A (Rev 01/14)

## **DHCS Guidance:**

- Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter (MEDIL) No. I 14-05
- MEDIL No. 14-11 (workarounds & system overrides)
- More guidance and/or FAQs expected!

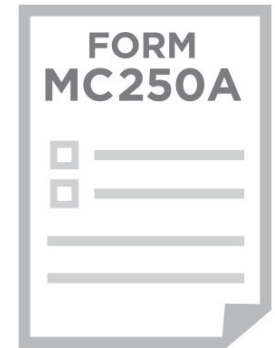
## **County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) Guidance:**

- CWDA desk aid for county workers

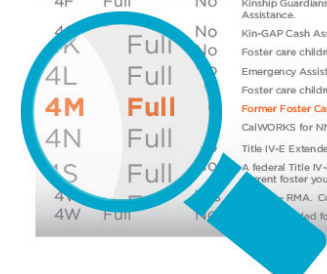


# DHCS Guidance

- Identify former foster youth early in the application process to prevent the collection of unnecessary information (e.g. income) & streamline enrollment
- MC 250A form (a simple, one-page form) used for former foster youth
  - Single, streamlined application or full Medi-Cal application NOT required
- 4M aid code assigned for former foster youth up to age 26
- Enroll youth who were in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday regardless of aid code



Code	Benefits	SOC	Program/Description
4A	Full	No	Out-of-State Adoption Assistance Program (AASAP)
4E	Full	No	Hospital PE. Covers former foster care children 26 years of age with no income screening.
4F	Full	No	Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP)
4K	Full	No	Kin-GAP Cash Assistance. Foster care children in CaWORKS.
4L	Full	No	Emergency Assistance Foster Care. Foster care children in 1931(b).
<b>4M</b>	<b>Full</b>	<b>Full</b>	<b>Former Foster Care Children (FFCC).</b> CaWORKS for NMD/FFP Medi-Cal
4N	Full	No	Title IV-E Extended for NMD Kin-GAP/FFP Medi-Cal
4S	Full	No	A federal Title IV-E KinGAP that serves former foster youth.
4V	Full	No	VRMA. Covers non-citizen victims of violence.
4W	Full	No	VRMA. Covers non-citizen victims of violence. CaWORKS for NMC Kin-GAP/FFP Medi-Cal



# DHCS Guidance: Immediate enrollment & Verification


Attest to having been in foster care at 18 or older = immediate enrollment

- Enrolled while county verifies former foster care status


## **Verification:**

- Youth NOT required to bring foster care documentation
- Counties encouraged to verify status in CA by looking in the Child Welfare System/Case Management System (CWS/CMS)
- If applicant was in foster care in another state, county must contact other state to verify

# Instructions to counties - Processing applications from Former Foster Youth



FFCC cases should be processed in SAWS (not CalHEERS)




County workers should manually override the system to assign the appropriate 4M aid code to FFY until all the automated systems (SAWS) are reprogrammed



Counties should check MEDS system to make sure '4M' aid code has posted.

- If not posted, county should manually assign '4M' aid code in MEDS

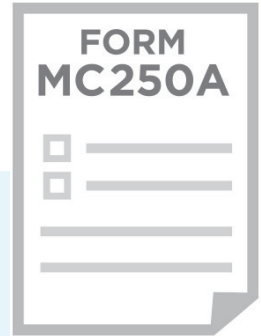


In immediate need situations, counties shall complete an online MEDS transaction to activate aid code 4M (same day FFY applies)

# How to enroll & overcoming barriers

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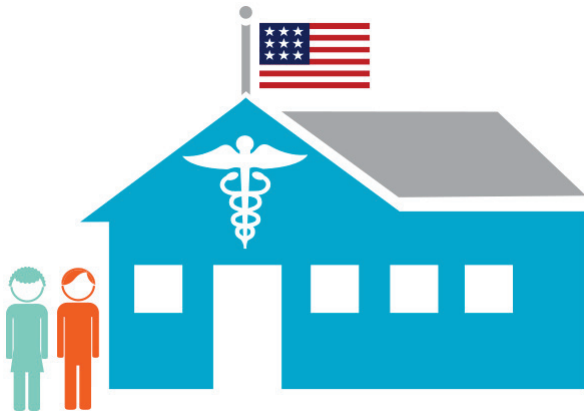
# How to Sign Up



**BEST  
WAY**

Apply directly through the county using one-page **MC 250A form**

Can apply in-person at a county Medi-Cal office



Some counties have assigned special staff to enroll former foster youth and/or identified streamlined ways for youth to apply without going in-person



# Other ways to apply – Not ready yet

→ **Online/Covered CA:** FFY are likely to (1) experience delays and (2) be placed in the incorrect coverage group if they try to apply online or try calling Covered CA right now. Also, some former foster youth who apply through Covered CA may be incorrectly told they are ineligible for Medi-Cal coverage.

## → **Why is this?**

The CalHEERS online system is not yet programmed to assign former foster youth the correct aid code or to recognize that former foster youth qualify for Medi-Cal coverage based on their former foster youth status.

Former foster youth can't currently skip unnecessary questions online.

→ **Covered CA Call Center:** staff currently have no mechanism to identify former foster youth.

## **TIP:**

FFY should NOT apply online right now. They should apply through a county social service agency office.

# What barriers have some former foster youth encountered?



Incorrect  
information



Enrollment  
delays



Incorrect  
eligibility  
determinations



# What is being done to make things better & reduce barriers?

Counties are receiving additional training & guidance.

- CWDA sent county workers a desk aid with instructions on how to process applications from former foster youth.

CWDA is working to identify county liaisons for the FFCC program.

Trouble shooting by DHCS, CWDA, and county agencies as issues identified.

Counties have received direction to manually override county systems to issue correct aid code to former foster youth until permanent programming fixes are made to SAWS.

Covered CA & DHCS are working on programming fixes to CalHEERS.

# Enrollment tips/reminders

## Former foster youth:

- Should be enrolled in the Former Foster Care Child (FFCC) coverage group
- Should be assigned the “**4M**” aid code
- Do **NOT** have to provide income information

# Enrollment tips/reminders

## Former foster youth:

- Do **NOT** have to fill out the full Medi-Cal application (just the MC250A form)
- Do **NOT** have to provide proof that they were in foster care at age 18 or older – the county will verify
- Should be immediately enrolled in coverage. Former foster youth should receive a Medi-Cal benefits number before they leave the county social service agency office.

It may help to bring a copy of the guidance sent to the counties (e.g. MEDIL 14-05 and/or CWDA desk aid) when going to apply at a county office.

These documents and the MC 250A are available at [www.mcffy.org](http://www.mcffy.org) and [www.coveredtil26.org](http://www.coveredtil26.org).

# Best practices

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# Best Practices - Counties



**Designate** a specific point person or phone number for former foster youth to call to enroll

**Examples** Alameda, Butte, Calaveras, Fresno, Los Angeles, Santa Clara, Solano

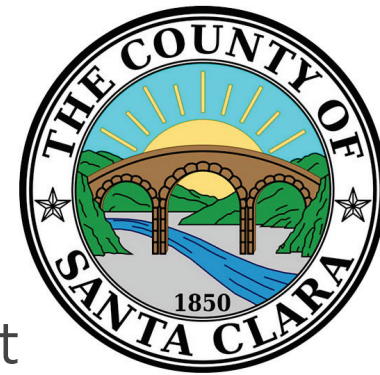


**Identify** specific staff for former foster youth to ask for if they go in person to a county Medi-Cal office.

**Partner** with service providers working with transition-aged youth.



# Spotlight on Santa Clara County



Santa Clara County has developed three easy ways for former foster youth to sign up (without visiting a local county office). Former foster youth can:

1

Meet with a designated county social worker during his drop-in hours at The Hub. The Hub is a youth-led resource center for current & former foster youth.

2

Call the designated county social worker to make an appointment to meet at another time.

3

Call the County's Foster Care Eligibility unit.

\*Former foster youth can also contact Legal Advocates for Children and Youth ("LACY") if they encounter problems enrolling.

# Outreach & Resources

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# Outreach - Coveredtil26

Children Now is spearheading **Coveredtil26**, a statewide outreach campaign to ensure all former foster youth living in California know they are eligible for Medi-Cal coverage until age 26.

- Targeted to reach many audiences, including former foster youth.
- Partnering with California Youth Connection.

The screenshot displays the Coveredtil26 website. At the top, the logo 'COVEREDtil26' is visible alongside navigation links for 'FAQ', 'How to Sign Up', 'About Us', and 'Spread the Word'. A large banner image shows a group of diverse young people, with text stating: 'The Affordable Care Act Gives Former Foster Youth FREE Health Care until Age 26!'. Below the banner, there are three main sections: 'Do I Qualify for free Medi-Cal coverage?' with a checklist of questions, '4 reasons you should sign up for Medi-Cal coverage for former foster youth:' with numbered points, and 'What's covered?' listing 'Medical care' and 'Vision exams'. A 'MORE INFO' button is located at the bottom of the first section. On the right side, there is a mobile navigation menu for 'CHILDREN NOW' with the 'COVEREDtil26' logo and a hamburger menu icon. Below the menu, there are three buttons: 'DO I QUALIFY?', '4 REASONS TO SIGN UP', and 'WHAT'S COVERED?'. At the very bottom, there are navigation arrows and icons for home, search, and share.

Funded by a grant from The California Wellness Foundation.



# Coveredtil26 Resources

[www.coveredtil26.org](http://www.coveredtil26.org): youth-friendly website with FAQs, resources, and tips on how to sign up.

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**County contact list:** CN continues to gather information on specific county contacts and best practices identified in certain counties. The Coveredtil26 contact list is downloadable from the Coveredtil26 website.

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**Coveredtil26 outreach materials:** Download materials from [www.coveredtil26.org](http://www.coveredtil26.org) and share! Flyers with county-specific sign-up information are available for some counties.

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**Trainings & Presentations:** Contact Fatima Morales at [fmorales@childrennow.org](mailto:fmorales@childrennow.org), or Jessica Haspel at [jhaspel@childrennow.org](mailto:jhaspel@childrennow.org).

# Additional Resources

## Foster Care Ombudsman

Youth who have trouble signing up or who are not sure if they were in foster care at age 18 can contact the Foster Care Ombudsman at **1-877-846-1602** or **fosteryouthhelp@dss.ca.gov**



## Youth Law Center Website

**www.mcffy.org**

A Youth Law Center webpage with information about federal and state law and policies.

Supported by the Walter S. Johnson Foundation and Kaiser Permanente Northern California Community Benefit Programs



# Download Guidance

## MC 250A form

<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/forms/Forms/mc250a2014.pdf>

## County Welfare Director Association (CWDA) desk aid

<http://coveredtil26.childrenow.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/FFCC-Desk-Aid-3.pdf>

## Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter (MEDIL) No. I 14-05

Treatment of Former Foster Care Children's (FFCC) Program

<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/eligibility/Documents/MEDIL2014/MEDIL14-05.pdf>

## Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter (MEDIL) No. I 14-11

System Workarounds and Overrides

<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/eligibility/Documents/MEDIL2014/MEDIL14-11.pdf>

Contact **Todd Johnson, DHCS**, at (916) 319-9356 or

[Todd.Johnson@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:Todd.Johnson@dhcs.ca.gov) if you have questions regarding the guidance above or need further information.

# Contact Information

**CHILDREN NOW**

Children Now:

Jessica Haspel, [jhaspel@childrennow.org](mailto:jhaspel@childrennow.org)



Youth Law Center:

Alice Bussiere, [abussiere@ylc.org](mailto:abussiere@ylc.org)



CA Dept. of Health Care Services:

Todd Johnson, [todd.johnson@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:todd.johnson@dhcs.ca.gov)