

Patient health education: State requirements for providers

Please review the following California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) requirements for patient health education. Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan is committed to supporting you in providing health education to our members. If you need clarification on any of the requirements, please send an email to BlueShieldofCAHealthEducation@blueshieldca.com.

Patient health education must include the following:

- Use of preventive services, education, and counseling
- Appropriate use of Medi-Cal managed care plan services
- Encouragement to take increased responsibility for their personal health
- Availability of local social programs based on patient's needs

Health education services

Health education services include classes, individual counseling, and support groups. Document referrals to health education services in your patient's medical record. To refer your Blue Shield Promise patients to health education services, please complete and fax the Health Education Referral form found at <https://www.blueshieldca.com/en/bsp/providers/policies-guidelines-standards-forms/provider-forms>

Health & Wellness Portal

Please encourage your Blue Shield Promise patients to use our Health & Wellness portal at www.blueshieldca.com/promise/hra. The goal of the portal is to increase patients' ability to manage their health by helping them identify their risks and connecting them to self-management tools and resources that can help mitigate their risks. Patients can also track their health over time on the portal. Some of the tools available on the portal include a health library on various topics, such as physical activity, blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose, and nutrition. A few words from you can increase the likelihood that they will use the site.

Patient education materials

All health education materials you provide to your Medi-Cal patients need to be between the second and sixth grade reading level. Additionally, these materials need to be medically accurate, culturally sensitive, and linguistically appropriate. We provide you with materials that meet these requirements. You may download and print health education materials in English and Spanish at www.blueshieldca.com/healtheducationlibrary.

blueshieldca.com/promise

To request printed copies of materials or materials in other languages or alternative format, please send an email to BlueShieldofCAHealthEducation@blueshieldca.com.

Health topics mandated by California DHCS:

Age-specific anticipatory guidance*	Immunizations
Alcohol and substance abuse	Injury prevention
Asthma	Nutrition
Breastfeeding	Obesity
Complementary and alternative medicine	Parenting
Diabetes	Perinatal
Family planning	Physical activity
HIV/STD prevention	Tobacco prevention and cessation
Hypertension	Unintended pregnancy

* Including information that children can be harmed by exposure to lead

County threshold languages:

	English	Arabic	Armenian	Chinese	Farsi	Khmer	Korean	Russian	Spanish	Tagalog	Vietnamese
LA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
SD	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X

Breastfeeding promotion

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) supports breastfeeding as the optimal form of nutrition for infants. We encourage you to support this position by continuing to promote breastfeeding services to your patients. Also, please continue to refer your Medi-Cal patients to the Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program.

Infant formula logos

Please do not distribute infant formula samples, educational materials, or promotional materials with formula logos to Medi-Cal patients, as per MMCD Policy Letter 98-10.

Breast pumps

Breast pumps are available for breastfeeding patients. We encourage you to promote this benefit to your patients. For more information, please call Blue Shield Promise Provider Services at (800) 468-9935, Monday through Friday, from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Blood lead screening

DHCS All Plan Letter 20-016 states that at each child's periodic health assessment (PHA), from six to 72 months of age, providers must provide oral or written anticipatory guidance to the child's parent or guardian, which "includes information that children can be harmed by exposure to lead, especially deteriorating or disturbed lead-based paint and the dust from it, and are particularly at risk of lead poisoning from the time the child begins to crawl until 72 months of age."

To help you provide this guidance to your patients, we have posted links to patient education brochures on lead poisoning prevention at <http://www.blueshieldca.com/en/bsp/health-and-wellness/health-education-materials>

For more information and/or specifics on All Plan Letter 20-016, please visit the DHCS website:

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/Documents/MMCDAPLsandPolicyLetters/APL2020/APL20-016.pdf>.

Tobacco cessation services

Per DHCS [All Plan Letter 16-014](#), providers are required to implement tobacco cessation interventions and a tobacco user identification system into their practices. Providers must:

- Conduct initial and annual assessments of each patient's tobacco use and note this information in the patient's medical record.
- Offer tobacco cessation medications (for non-pregnant adults) approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Provide counseling using the "5 A's" model or other validated model for treating tobacco use and dependence.
- Refer patients to available individual, group, and telephone counseling services.
- Offer services for pregnant tobacco users.
- Provide interventions to prevent the use of tobacco in children and adolescents.

Some recommendations to identify tobacco users are:

- Add tobacco use as a vital sign in the patient's chart or Electronic Health Records.
- Use International Classification of Diseases (ICD)-10 codes in the medical record to record tobacco use.
- Place a chart stamp or sticker on the chart when beneficiaries indicate they use tobacco.
- Record status on the Child Health and Disability Prevention Program Confidential Screening/Billing Report (PM160).

How to start the conversation about quitting tobacco

You might start by saying, “As your healthcare provider and someone who cares about you and your health, I’d like to help you quit smoking because it’s the best thing you can do for your health and anyone who lives with you.” Then, discuss some of the health problems associated with smoking and other tobacco use.

To view the policy letter, learn more about the required interventions, and find training and patient resources, please visit our Tobacco Cessation website at <https://www.blueshieldca.com/en/bsp/providers/programs/tobacco-cessation-medi-cal>

Smoking cessation agents available to Medi-Cal patients

Smoking cessation agents for adults who use tobacco products are covered by the Medi-Cal Rx program. Some of these medications have quantity limits and are subject to change. Some of the agents (i.e., patches, lozenges, and gum) are found on the over-the-counter list. Please see the <https://medi-calrx.dhcs.ca.gov/home/cdl/> for the drug lists (revised on February 1, 2026).

Medi-Cal will cover these medications for teenagers if a provider determines it is appropriate.

Helpful tips for patients

As a provider, you play a key role in your patient’s journey to quit smoking. Please work with your patients to help them find their best option for quitting smoking, such as referring them to community resources and/or prescribing them tobacco cessation medication. Medications and counseling double the chances of quitting. Kick It California provides FREE tobacco counseling.

Medi-Cal Diabetes Prevention Program

Blue Shield Promise Medi-Cal patients who are at risk for type 2 diabetes have access to the Medi-Cal Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) as a preventive service. This program is offered at no cost to patients. The program is based on a National Institutes of Health randomized controlled trial and has been found to greatly reduce the progression of pre-diabetes to type 2 diabetes.

These services are delivered by trained lifestyle coaches in community settings and via online platforms by organizations recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The focus of the program is making personal changes including improved nutrition and active living.

Eligibility criteria for the program are:

- Blue Shield Promise Medi-Cal member, 18 years and older **and**
- BMI greater or equal to 25, if not self-identified Asian (or if self-identified Asian, 23 or greater) **and**
- Not be pregnant **and**
- No previous diagnosis of type 1 or type 2 diabetes **and**
- Blood test value within the past year:
 - HgbA1c value: 5.7 - 6.4% or
 - Fasting plasma glucose of 100 - 125mg/dL or
 - Oral glucose tolerance test between 140 - 199 mg/dL or
- Have previous clinical diagnosis of gestational diabetes or
- Take a prediabetes risk test and receive a screening result of high risk for type 2 diabetes.

If your Blue Shield Promise patient meets the eligibility criteria for the DPP, please ask your patient to visit www.wellvolution.com/medi-cal or call Solera Health at (866) 671-9644 (TTY:711).

You play an influential role in your patient's overall health. By recommending this program to qualifying patients, you are providing them with a powerful way to change their lifestyle and reduce their chance of progressing to type 2 diabetes. The DPP offers patients an opportunity to take an active role in their health and potentially avoid the need for medication.