



*California's Protection & Advocacy System  
Toll-Free (800) 776-5746*

# Rural Medi-Cal Managed Care in Far Northern Counties

---

*September 2014, Pub #5557.01*

## **WHO IS AFFECTED BY THE CHANGES?**

People who live in Del Norte, Lake, Lassen, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, or Trinity County transitioned to Medi-Cal managed care on September 1, 2013.

## **WHAT CHANGES HAPPENED?**

The seven counties transitioned from “regular” Medi-Cal to Medi-Cal managed care. They now have a County Organized Health System, or COHS, health plan for managed care.

## **WHAT IS MEDI-CAL MANAGED CARE?**

Medi-Cal managed care is a relatively new way to get Medi-Cal in many rural counties. Managed care is a system for providing and paying for health care services. Managed care means that you receive your health care from a managed care plan. A managed care plan is an organized network of health care providers that emphasizes primary and preventive care. Some, but not all, hospitals, physicians and other health care providers are members of the network. Managed care plans must cover everything that “regular” Medi-Cal used to cover. They can also cover more services.

## **WHAT DOES COUNTY ORGANIZED HEALTH SYSTEM (COHS) MEAN?**

A County Organized Health System (COHS) is a local agency created by a county to contract with Medi-Cal.

## **CAN I CHOOSE MY HEALTH PLAN IN A COHS COUNTY?**

No. Everyone who gets Medi-Cal in a COHS county must enroll in the same COHS managed care plan for Medi-Cal. In the counties listed above, the only Medi-Cal managed care plan is Partnership HealthPlan.

## **WHY DID THE CHANGES HAPPEN?**

California started to require most Medi-Cal recipients to get managed care many years ago. The transition to Medi-Cal managed care happened over several years. Far Northern counties are some of the last ones to make this transition.

## **I LIVE IN A COHS COUNTY. CAN I STAY OUT OF MEDI-CAL MANAGED CARE?**

Mostly no. In COHS counties, if you want Medi-Cal, you have to get it from COHS managed care. Call Disability Rights California for more information. By contrast, in counties that do not have COHS Medi-Cal managed care, some people can stay out of Medi-Cal managed care and continue to get regular Medi-Cal.

## **WHAT IF I DO NOT WANT TO SWITCH PROVIDERS?**

Ordinarily, you have to see a provider that is part of your managed care network. However, if you want to keep seeing a provider that doesn't accept managed care, you have an alternative. You can ask to keep seeing your current providers for "continuity of care." This is true even in COHS counties. See Disability Rights California's publication called, Medi-Cal Managed Care: Continuity of Care, available at

<http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/PublicationsHealthBenefits.htm> . If

you do not have access to the Internet, please call Disability Rights California to ask for a copy.

## **HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?**

- Call the local county Medi-Cal office or Health Care Options at 1-800-430-4263. Visit [www.healthcareoptions.org](http://www.healthcareoptions.org).
- Also, Disability Rights California has helpful publications posted on our Health website, <http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/PublicationsHealthBenefits.htm>. If you do not have access to the internet, please call us to ask for publications. You might find the following publications helpful:
- An Independent Medical Review (IMR) is One Way to Change a Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan's No to Yes
- Medi-Cal Managed Care: "Continuity of Care"
- Medi-Cal Managed Care Health Plans: What are they? What do I need to know about them?

## **HOW CAN I GET HELP FROM DISABILITY RIGHTS CALIFORNIA IF I HAVE A PROBLEM?**

Disability Rights California provides advice and does advocacy for people with disabilities. Call 1-800-776-5746 or 800-719-5798 (TTY). Visit our website at [www.disabilityrightsca.org](http://www.disabilityrightsca.org).

*Disability Rights California is funded by a variety of sources, for a complete list of funders, go to <http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/Documents/ListofGrantsAndContracts.html>.*