

Network Provider Update

To: Medi-Cal and Cal MediConnect* network participants

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Subject: **All Plan Letter 20-018, Ensuring Access to Transgender Services**

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) issued All Plan Letter (APL) 20-018, "Ensuring Access to Transgender Services" in October of 2020. We are sharing a summary of this APL with you to ensure you are aware of the information, and you can apply the information to your practice or facility operations, where appropriate.

APL 20-018 reminds managed care plans (MCPs) such as Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan of their obligations to provide transgender services to members, including services deemed medically necessary to treat gender dysphoria or which meet the statutory criteria of reconstructive surgery. MCPs are not obligated to provide cosmetic surgery.

Key points:

- MCPs must analyze transgender service requests under both the applicable medical necessity standard for services to treat gender dysphoria and under the statutory criteria for reconstructive surgery. A finding for either will serve as a separate basis for approving the request, taking into consideration the gender with which the member identifies.
- Requests for transgender services must be supported by documentation from qualified providers with experience in transgender care.
- MCPs should follow nationally recognized medical/clinical guidelines for analyzing transgender service requests.
- MCPs may not categorically exclude or limit transgender services, but instead must evaluate each request on a case-by-case basis.
- An MCP's denial of a request for transgender services must include a Notice of Action document and may be subject to review and appeal.

This summary is only meant as a brief description of the APL. Please see the APL itself for additional background and the complete requirements. The full text of APL 20-018 may be found at this URL: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/Documents/MMCDAPLsandPolicyLetters/APL2020/APL20-018.pdf> (Links to the DHCS.ca.gov website will take you off of the Blue Shield Promise website.)

Please direct questions about serving Blue Shield Promise members to our Provider Services Department at **(800) 468-9935** from 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

*Cal MediConnect network participants are responsible for identifying and applying the guidance and requirements that pertain to their patients.