

Medi-Cal Changes for Refugees in California

Executive Summary

Refugees in California continue to qualify for full-scope Medi-Cal benefits because they are considered to have Satisfactory Immigration Status (SIS). However, recent and upcoming state policy changes (2026–2027) affect certain non-citizen groups and may impact enrollment processes, dental benefits, and premiums. This document summarizes those changes and clarifies which immigration statuses qualify as Satisfactory Immigration Status under California Medi-Cal rules.

Key Medi-Cal Policy Changes (2026–2027)

1. Full-Scope Enrollment Freeze (Effective January 1, 2026)

California implemented a freeze on new full-scope Medi-Cal enrollment for adults age 19 and older who do NOT have Satisfactory Immigration Status. Refugees are considered to have Satisfactory Immigration Status and are not subject to this freeze.

2. Dental Benefits Change (Effective July 1, 2026)

Adult Medi-Cal members without Satisfactory Immigration Status will lose non-emergency dental benefits. Refugees with verified status retain full dental coverage.

3. Monthly Premiums (Effective July 1, 2027)

Certain adults without Satisfactory Immigration Status may be required to pay a monthly premium to maintain full-scope Medi-Cal coverage. Refugees are generally exempt from this requirement.

Immigration Statuses Considered Satisfactory (SIS) in California

- U.S. Citizens and U.S. Nationals
- Lawful Permanent Residents (Green Card holders) (subject to federal 5-year rules where applicable)
- Refugees
- Asylees
- Cuban and Haitian Entrants
- Citizens of Compact of Free Association (COFA) nations (Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau)
- Qualified Trafficking Survivors (including certain T-visa holders)
- Qualified Battered Immigrants and certain family members (e.g., VAWA-related statuses)

Important Protections

- Children (0–18) qualify for full-scope Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status.

- Pregnant individuals qualify for full coverage during pregnancy and for 12 months postpartum.
- Current Medi-Cal enrollees who renew on time may retain coverage if eligibility requirements continue to be met.

Overview of MediCal Work Requirements for 2026

Beginning December 31, 2026, many adult Medi-Cal beneficiaries aged 19-64 will be required to verify at least 80 hours per month of work, community service, or job training to maintain coverage. These new work requirements apply to "able-bodied" adults, with exemptions for parents of children 13 or younger and the medically frail.

Key details of the Medi-Cal work requirements for 2026 include:

- **Participation Hours:** Enrollees must document a minimum of 80 hours per month of qualifying activities, which include paid work, volunteering, or approved work programs.
- **Alternative Activities:** Half-time or greater enrollment in school also counts toward the requirements.
- **Target Population:** These rules generally target "able-bodied" adults aged 19–64 who do not meet exemption criteria.
- **Implementation Deadline:** The federal [deadline for implementation is December 31, 2026](#), although states may receive temporary compliance extensions.
- **Additional Changes:** *Starting January 1, 2027, the "New Adult Group" will have to renew their Medi-Cal eligibility every six months rather than annually.*

Exemptions and Verification

- **Exemptions:** Individuals who are medically frail or parents of dependent children aged 13 or younger are generally exempt.
- **Verification:** States are required to use data matching to verify that individuals meet the work requirements.

It is important to note that these changes are part of federal legislation aimed at connecting Medicaid beneficiaries to work and training, and they apply to Medicaid expansion populations.



NEED DENTAL SERVICES?



Starting **July 1, 2026**, Medi-Cal members with unsatisfactory immigration status will only receive emergency dental services.

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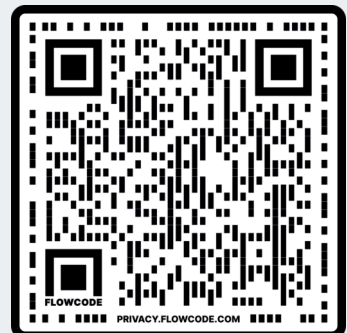
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Kể từ ngày 1 tháng 7 năm 2026, các thành viên Medi-Cal có tình trạng nhập cư không thỏa mãn điều kiện sẽ chỉ được hưởng các dịch vụ nha khoa khẩn cấp.

Hãy hành động ngay và đặt lịch hẹn với chúng tôi ngay hôm nay!

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