

Date of Hearing: May 10, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Chris Holden, Chair

AB 1481 (Boerner) – As Amended April 20, 2023

Policy Committee: Health

Vote: 13 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill expands the Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnant Women program to include pregnant people and renames the program “Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnant People” (PE4PP). This bill also requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), for a pregnant person who is covered under the PE4PP program and who applies for full-scope Medi-Cal benefits within 60 days of receiving the presumptive eligibility determination, to continue to provide PE4PP coverage until their full-scope Medi-Cal application is approved or denied.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Costs of an unknown amount to DHCS, likely in the hundreds of thousands to low millions of dollars, to make systems and policy changes, create and disseminate guidance to providers, and extend coverage until an applicant receives a full-scope Medi-Cal eligibility determination (General Fund, federal funds).

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Pregnant women with incomes above 138 percent up to 213 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) are eligible for pregnancy-related Medi-Cal coverage. Under the presumptive eligibility program, low-income pregnant women have access to temporary coverage for prenatal care while their MediCal application is being processed. However, many applicants are mistakenly dropped during this period due to MediCal eligibility income verification data bases, which are often out of date for as much as a year showing their incomes falling above the 213 percent cap. AB 1481 seeks to create a “bridge” so that presumptive eligibility can continue until the correct income information for the applicant is verified.

2) **PE4PW.** DHCS administers the PE4PW program, which provides immediate, temporary ambulatory prenatal health care, including abortion and miscarriage, related to pregnancy for low-income pregnant people. PE4PW is designed for California residents who believe they are pregnant and who appear eligible for and do not have Medi-Cal coverage for prenatal care. The program is designed to ensure immediate access to a limited range of services

important for pregnant people. The program allows qualified providers to grant immediate, temporary Medi-Cal coverage for ambulatory prenatal care and prescription drugs for conditions related to pregnancy to low-income pregnant applicants at or below 213% of the federal poverty level, based on self-attested information collected by the provider from the applicant, pending their formal Medi-Cal application.

To qualify for the PE4PW Program, the applicant must be a California resident, not currently enrolled in Medi-Cal, meet the income and household composition requirements, and not have had a PE4PW enrollment for the current pregnancy. Providers are required to provide beneficiaries of the PE4PW Program with an insurance affordability program application, which allows the beneficiary to apply for Medi-Cal or subsidized coverage through Covered California. PE4PW beneficiaries must submit a completed application no later than the last day of the month following the month in which presumptive eligibility was granted.

According to information on the Medi-Cal website, as of July 18, 2016, all persons, regardless of gender identity, may request eligibility for pregnancy services when applying for Medi-Cal or other health insurance affordability programs. A doctor must submit a Treatment Authorization Request explaining that the services requested are medically necessary.

- 3) **Previous Legislation.** AB 2729 (Bauer-Kahan), of the 2019-20 Legislative Session, had provisions similar to this bill, but also would have made a presumptively eligible pregnant person eligible for more services under the Medi-Cal program, and allowed a pregnant individual under 26 years of age who can consent to services without parental approval to receive presumptive eligibility by a qualified hospital. Due to the shortened Legislative calendar brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, AB 2729 was not set for a hearing.

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