



PROVIDER Bulletin



October 7, 2026

This Provider Bulletin applies to the lines of business and provider types checked below:

☐ PHC (Medicare) ☒ Primary Care Physicians ☐ Specialists
☒ PHC (Medicaid) ☐ Hospitals ☐ Ancillary ☐ AHF Grants

Purpose

The purpose of this bulletin is to advise PHC California network providers about the provision of the annual Medi-Cal cognitive health assessment to eligible Members who are 65 years of age or older and who do not have Medicare coverage. As described in Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) All Plan Letter 26-014, effective June 30, 2025, **Providers are no longer required to complete cognitive health assessment training in order to receive payment for conducting a cognitive health assessment.** For cognitive health assessments completed prior to June 30, 2025, Providers must have completed the required DHCS Dementia Care Aware cognitive health assessment training in order to bill and receive reimbursement. Enrollees with Medicare are excluded, since cognitive assessments are already covered as part of the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit.

BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 48 (Chapter 484, Statutes of 2021) created W&I section 14132.171, which expanded the Medi-Cal schedule of benefits to include an annual cognitive assessment for Medi-Cal members who are 65 years of age and older if they are otherwise ineligible for a similar assessment as part of an annual wellness visit through the Medicare Program. The annual cognitive health assessment is intended to identify whether the patient has signs of Alzheimer's disease or related dementias, consistent with the standards for detecting cognitive impairment under the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit and the recommendations by the American Academy of Neurology (AAN).

Provider Billing Requirements

In order to appropriately bill and receive reimbursement for conducting an annual cognitive health assessment, Providers must do all the following:

- Administer the annual cognitive health assessment as a component of an Evaluation and Management (E&M) visit including, but not limited to an office visit, consultation, or preventive medicine service (elements of the cognitive health assessment can be conducted by



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non-billing team members acting within their scope of practice and under the supervision of the billing Provider);

- Document all the following in the Member's medical records and have such records available upon request:
- - o The screening tool or tools that were used (at least one cognitive assessment tool listed below is required);
 - o Verification that screening results were reviewed by the Provider;
 - o The results of the screening.
 - o The interpretation of the results; and
 - o Details discussed with the Member and/or Authorized Representative and any appropriate actions taken in regards to screening results.
- Use allowable CPT codes as outlined in the Medi-Cal Provider Manual.

Cognitive Assessment Tools

At least one cognitive assessment tool listed below is required. Cognitive assessment tools used to determine if a full dementia evaluation is needed include, but are not limited to:

- Patient assessment tools
 - o General Practitioner assessment of Cognition (GPCOG)
 - o Mini-Cog
- Informant tools (family members and close friends)
 - o Eight-Item Informant Interview to Differentiate Aging and Dementia
 - o GPCOG
 - o Short Informant Questionnaire on Cognitive Decline in the Elderly

See the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Medicare Wellness Visits webpage at:

<https://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/preventive-services/medicare-wellness-visits.html>

3AAN Guidelines on dementia and mild cognitive impairment are available at:

<https://www.aan.com/PressRoom/Home/PressRelease/4908>

<https://www.neurology.org/doi/10.1212/wnl.0000000000004826>

The Medi-Cal Provider Manual, E&M, Cognitive Health Assessment, is available at:

<https://mcweb.apps.prd.cammis.medi-cal.ca.gov/file/manual?fn=eval.pdf>

For more information about the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit, see:

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/coverage/preventive-services/medicare-wellness-visits/annual-wellness-visit>