

Essential Elements of Medi-Cal Palliative Care Services: Requirements for Credentialing and Training for Palliative Care Providers

This resource is part of “Section A: Define (or refine) the health care program” and “Section B: Ensure readiness (and ongoing development) of the PC provider organization” of the California Health Care Foundation publication *Essential Elements of Medi-Cal Palliative Care Services: Tips and Tools for Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans and Palliative Care Providers*.

Medi-Cal managed care plans and their palliative care provider partners shared information from their programs for this guide, including internal policies and procedures. CHCF is grateful for this leadership and willingness to contribute for the benefit of more people whose health and lives can be improved with high-quality palliative care.

Several managed care plans (MCPs) initiate the contracting process with potential PC provider partners through a questionnaire. The questionnaire asks about a range of topics:

- Geographic regions served
- Number of patients served
- The distinction between hospice and palliative care in the provider’s services
- The staff team’s composition and professional roles
- Educational background and experience of the program physician(s)
- Credentials and certifications at the organization level and the clinician level
- Experience serving patients in the Medi-Cal program

Here are some of the requirements for palliative care provider organizations, from a Medi-Cal MCP that goes beyond the state’s requirements:

- Organization or all its providers are contracted Medi-Cal providers, with the capacity to bill the MCP for services provided.
- Clinical staff are trained in palliative care. Minimum training is from the California State University Shiley Haynes Institute for Palliative Care or equivalent coursework.
- Medical director may be board-certified, board-eligible, or have one year (at least 200 hours) of hospice or palliative care experience.
- Ability to collect and submit data using the Palliative Care Quality Network system (PCQN). *(Note: PCQN is merging with the Palliative Care Quality Collaborative at the end of 2021.)*
- Core staffing identified (hired or contracted to be hired by contract start date):
 - Medical director
 - Registered nurse
 - Social worker
 - Administrator
- Organization or medical director already providing services in the region for at least six months before contracting.
- Organization provides letters of support from its referral sources.