

**County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)  
Special Notice**

**January 2022 Social Security Administration (SSA) Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and Related Changes**

**Number**

**21-05**

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**Effective Date:**

January 1, 2022

**Background:**

The annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) update for Social Security Administration (SSA) Title II benefits is 5.9 percent and is effective 1/1/2022. There are also annual updates to the Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/State Supplementary Payment (SSP) payment rate, the In-Kind Support and Maintenance levels (ISM) for computing Pickle eligibility, the 2022 Pickle disregard computation chart, the Federal Benefit Rate, Medicare Premiums, and the SSI standard and parental allocation amounts.

**Purpose:**

To provide guidance for processing the 2022 SSA COLA and update the Medi-Cal Assistance Standards chart with 2022 values.

**Policy:**

There will be a 5.9 percent COLA increase to SSA Title II Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance payments effective 1/1/2022. This increase will not apply to Federal Poverty Level (FPL) programs (Aged and Disabled FPL, Blind FPL, and Medicare Savings Programs) until April 2022. The California Healthcare Eligibility, Enrollment, and Retention System (CalHEERS) is not running a COLA update until later in 2022, so Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) cases will not be affected at this time. The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) will notify affected MAGI beneficiaries when CalHEERS runs its COLA update next year. Beneficiaries may contact the county for a re-evaluation back to January 1, 2022, if they were impacted.

The suspension of negative actions due to the public health emergency applies to processing the COLA change. Do not apply negative actions including increases in share of cost until the end of the public health emergency.

Use the updated 2022 Maintenance Need Assistance Standards chart values for the following:

- SSI/SSP Payment cash grant levels for determining Pickle eligibility
- ISM for determining Pickle eligibility
- Pickle disregard computation chart
- Federal Benefit Rate
- SSI standard and parental allocation amounts
- Medicare Premiums

**Procedure:**

Use the updated Maintenance Need Assistance Standards chart when evaluating the appropriate programs. Do not apply the COLA prematurely to FPL and MAGI based programs.

**Program Impacts:**

**Automation**

CalWIN will apply the COLA and complete a mass update of Medi-Cal cases over the weekend of 12/4/2021. Some cases will exception out of the authorization must be reviewed and authorized. The exception list will be available on Sharepoint.

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Some client Correspondence will be held online for worker review and must be reviewed for appropriateness prior to mailing. Automation will send the list to Family Resource Centers via email.

**References:**

ACWDLs 21-21, 21-29, and 21-30

**Sunset Date:**

This policy will be reviewed for continuance on or by 12/31/2022.

**Approval for Release:**



for:

Rick Wanne, Director  
Self-Sufficiency Services