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AB-870 California Children's Services Program: county designation. (2025-2026)

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Assembly Bill No. 870

CHAPTER 167

An act to amend Section 123850 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to children's services.

[Approved by Governor October 01, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State October 01, 2025.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 870, Hadwick. California Children's Services Program: county designation.

Existing law establishes the California Children's Services (CCS) Program, administered by the State Department of Health Care Services and counties, to provide medically necessary services, based on financial eligibility, for persons under 21 years of age who have any of specified medical conditions, including, among others, cystic fibrosis or hemophilia.

Existing law requires the board of supervisors of each county to designate the county department of public health or the county department of social welfare as the designated agency to administer the program. Existing law authorizes counties with a total population under 200,000 persons to administer the county program independently or jointly with the department. Existing law requires counties with a total population in excess of 200,000 persons to administer the county program independently.

This bill would authorize counties with a total population under 2,000 persons to designate another county to administer the program, if the other county agrees to the designation and otherwise meets certain CCS standards established by the Director of Health Care Services and if neither county is a Whole Child Model county under certain provisions of the Medi-Cal program. The bill would require the department to adopt regulations necessary to implement these provisions.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 123850 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

123850. (a) (1) The board of supervisors of each county shall designate the county department of public health or the county department of social welfare as the designated agency to administer the California Children's Services (CCS) program. Counties with a total population under 200,000 persons may administer the county program independently or jointly with the department. Counties with a total population in excess of 200,000 persons shall administer the county program independently. Except as otherwise provided in this article, the director shall establish standards relating to the local administration and minimum services to be offered by counties in the conduct of the CCS program.

(2) Counties with a total population under 2,000 persons may designate another county to administer the program, if all of the following conditions are met:

(A) The other county agrees to the designation.

(B) The other county otherwise meets the standards established by the director pursuant to paragraph (1) and pursuant to any other applicable provisions of this article.

(C) Neither county is a Whole Child Model county under Article 2.985 (commencing with Section 14094.4) of Chapter 7 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(3) (A) The department shall adopt regulations necessary to implement this section, including, but not limited to, requirements applicable to written agreements between the counties.

(B) Notwithstanding the rulemaking provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code), the department may, if it deems appropriate, implement, interpret, or make specific this section by means of provider bulletins, written guidelines, or similar instructions from the department until regulations are adopted.

(b) (1) Upon a determination by the director that a Medi-Cal managed care plan and participating county have met all of the State Department of Health Care Services' readiness requirements, the designated county agency and a Medi-Cal managed care health plan serving the county, as determined by the director, shall provide for the transition of CCS program services, except for services provided pursuant to subdivision (c), into the Medi-Cal managed care health plan contract in Whole Child Model counties pursuant to Article 2.985 (commencing with Section 14094.4) of Chapter 7 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code for children who are enrolled in the Medi-Cal managed care plan and CCS. For children enrolled in a Medi-Cal managed care plan and CCS in Whole Child Model counties pursuant to Article 2.985 (commencing with Section 14094.4) of Chapter 7 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the case management, care coordination, provider referral, and service authorization administrative functions of the CCS program shall then be the responsibility of the Medi-Cal managed care health plan in accordance with Section 14094.13 of the Welfare and Institutions Code and a written transition plan prepared by the designated county agency and the Medi-Cal managed care health plan. The director shall provide an implementation date for the transition and identify how the state shall continue to fulfill the requirements set forth in Sections 123855, 123925, and 123960. CCS program eligibility determination shall remain the responsibility of the designated county agency in accordance with the provisions of this article.

(2) The case management, care coordination, provider referral, and service authorization functions of the CCS program shall remain the responsibility of the county for CCS beneficiaries exempt from mandatory enrollment in the Medi-Cal managed care plan.

(c) The CCS Medical Therapy program shall remain responsible for the provision of medically necessary occupational and physical therapy services prescribed by the CCS Medical Therapy Unit Conference Team Physician or the CCS-paneled physician who is providing the medical direction for occupational and physical therapy services.

(d) Notwithstanding Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, the department may implement, interpret, or make specific this article, Article 2.97 (commencing with Section 14093) and Article 2.985 (commencing with Section 14094.4) of Chapter 7 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, and any applicable federal waivers and state plan amendments by means of all-county letters, plan letters, CCS numbered letters, plan or provider bulletins, or similar instructions, without taking regulatory action in order to implement the Whole Child Model established pursuant to Article 2.985 (commencing with Section 14094.4) of Chapter 7 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. By July 1, 2020, the department shall adopt regulations in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code. Commencing January 1, 2018, the department shall provide a status report to the Legislature on a semiannual basis, in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code, until regulations have been adopted.