



April 21, 2021

To: The Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman  
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

Honorable Members  
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

Honorable Members  
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

From: Cathy Senderling-McDonald, Executive Director

**RE: CWDA COMMENTS ON AUTOMATION RELATED  
BUDGET PROPOSALS**

As part of the annual budget process, the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) typically comments or takes positions on budget proposals from the Administration or advocates that are of policy interest to our members or that have an effect on county operations. Because of the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the annual state budget hearing process, we have been unable to provide our feedback through public testimony as we usually would. Therefore, we are providing this feedback on several automation related budget proposals that we have not already commented upon, in writing here.

**Center for Data Insights and Innovation**

CWDA shares the Assembly Subcommittee Number 1 on Health and Human Services' interest in understanding how the administration's Center for Data Insights and Innovation might impact human services programs. To the extent human services program data will be included, CWDA asks that we be consulted and included in any meetings that take place about how this effort will interact with existing processes and coordination efforts with CDSS and DHCS.

**Medi-Cal Enterprise System (MES) Modernization**

CWDA is supportive of the administration's MES Modernization efforts moving forward, including the modernization of the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS). The need to improve and update MEDS has significant impacts for counties and SAWS, and we look forward to resuming our engagement in the modernization effort. We also ask that CWDA representatives be expressly included among the attendees should the Legislature adopt the LAO's recommendation on establishing quarterly updates regarding this project.

### **Field Testing of Translations**

The California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN) and Western Center on Law and Poverty (WCLP) have proposed adding a process to field-test translated materials. CWDA is very supportive of establishing a robust system that can provide accurate and timely translations in all threshold languages. Any new process must be designed in a way that will not add delays in the state providing translations to SAWS or create manual work for counties due to automation delays. We also caution that establishing a cycle of continuous updates to materials, as proposed, creates the risk of reducing SAWS capacity for other policy changes. We think it is important to create a process that will get translations right from the start.

### **Telephonic Attestation for Medi-Cal**

CWDA is supportive of the WCLP proposal to allow ongoing telephonic attestation for Medi-Cal. We recommend this attestation process be consistent with the pandemic guidance counties are currently operating under, and not require that the attestations be recorded if the county does not have the necessary technology in place. CWDA anticipates that all counties will have the technology to record telephonic signatures by the completion of the CalSAWS migration. In the interim, recording costs are prohibitive for many counties, and would impede their ability to provide this valuable support for Medi-Cal consumers.

### **Client Notification of Benefit Eligibility**

CWDA is supportive of the Administration's proposal to allow outreach to recipients of human services programs about other benefits that may be available to them. It is essential that the administration coordinate the messaging and timing of such outreach with CWDA and counties. As counties administer these programs, they are frequently contacted by recipients when they have questions about other programs. Without advance coordination, counties may be unable to assist with these questions, or to reassure their customers of the legitimacy of such messages.

Thank you for your consideration of our feedback. We are happy to provide more information about our comments on any of these issues at your request.

cc: Chris Woods, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore  
Mareva Brown, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore  
Marjorie Swartz, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore  
Jason Sisney, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly  
Gail Gronert, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly  
Agnes Lee, Office of the Speaker of the Assembly  
Renita Polk, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3  
Scott Ogus, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3  
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