

CALIFORNIA RECEIVES FIRST-IN-THE-NATION APPROVAL FOR NEW COMMUNITY-BASED CARE OPTION FOR AT-RISK SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

State to Receive Estimated \$573 Million in Additional Medicaid Funds

Sacramento – The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced its approval today of California's State Plan Amendment (SPA) to enact the Community First Choice Option. The SPA approval will provide the state with an estimated \$573 million in additional federal funds during the first two years of implementation in its effort to continue to prioritize an individual's ability to reside in one's community rather than in institutional care.

"California continues to lead the nation in health care reform and today's approval reinforces the support and confidence the federal government has in the Golden State," said California Health and Human Services Secretary Diana S. Dooley. "We look forward to working with our state and federal partners as we move to provide seniors and people with disabilities with better options for self-directed care."

Community First Choice will enhance Medi-Cal's ability to provide community-based personal attendant services and supports to seniors and persons with disabilities to certain enrollees who otherwise would need institutional care.

By participating, California will receive a six percent increase in its federal medical assistance percentage for funds spent on these important services. This increased rate applies as long as Community First Choice is included as a Medi-Cal benefit and will help California maintain these important services for a vulnerable population during challenging budget times.

"This is another vital step forward for California toward better care in the community rather than institutional settings, and also helps preserve these programs during difficult fiscal times," said California Department of Social Services Director Will Lightbourne.

California immediately will begin claiming the Community First Choice federal funding, which is retroactive for most In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program services provided since December 1, 2011.

For more information about Community First Choice, please visit:

<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2012pres/04/20120426a.html>. (DSS links here)