

## DHCS All Plan Letter Summary

To: Medi-Cal network participants

January 2026

Subject: All Plan Letter 25-016: Alternative Format Selection for Members with Visual Impairments

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The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) recently issued [All Plan Letter \(APL\) 25-016](#), "Alternative Format Selection for Members with Visual Impairments." We are sharing a summary of this APL with you to ensure you are aware of the information, and you can apply the information to your practice or facility operations, where appropriate.

APL 25-016 updates the process whereby managed care plans (MCPs) such as Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan document members' alternative format selections (AFS) to support effective communication with members with visual impairments or other disabilities requiring the provision of written materials in alternative formats.

### Key information

APL 25-016 requirements for AFS differ from APL 22-002 in the following ways:

- The APL advises MCPs to discontinue use of the AFS Screens web-based system to track members' AFS preferences for receiving information.
- Counties will use the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) AFS process.
- MCPs should direct members to indicate their AFS on the [BenefitsCal](#) or [CoveredCA](#) websites, or at their local county office.
  - Blue Shield Promise recommends providers advise members in the same fashion. Also, please ask members to share their AFS preferences with Blue Shield Promise.
- Effective September 24, 2025, the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS) database will become the system of record for AFS.
- MCPs will no longer receive a weekly AFS extract from DHCS; instead, they will solely rely on the 834 enrollment data file.
  - Providers, IPAs, and MSOs who receive Outbound 834 files from Blue Shield Promise will continue to receive members' AFS preferences through these files.

This summary is only meant as a brief description of the APL. Please see the APL itself for additional background and the complete requirements. The full text of APL 25-016 may be found at this URL:

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/Documents/MMCDAPLsandPolicyLetters/APL%202025/APL25-016.pdf>

(Links to the websites above will take you off the Blue Shield Promise website.)

If you have questions about the topics covered in this APL, please contact our Provider Customer Service team via Live Chat after logging in at [blueshieldca.com/provider](https://blueshieldca.com/provider) or call **(800) 468-9935** from 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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