

Asthma Remediation/Community Supports

Fact Sheet



Recognizing that asthma home visiting is an evidence-based intervention proven in study after study to improve asthma outcomes, lower health care utilization costs, and reduce disparities, RAMP has been working with a broad network of asthma and health equity partners to increase access to these services for low-income Californians. Asthma Remediation/Community Supports is one successful outcome of this work.

What is Asthma Remediation/Community Supports?

California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) is a multi-year initiative by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to improve the quality of life and health outcomes of our California's Medi-Cal recipients by implementing broad delivery system, program, and payment reform across the Medi-Cal program.

One major component of CalAIM is Community Supports, which launched in January, 2022. Community Supports are a substitute for traditional medical services to avoid utilization of other, costlier services such as emergency department use. Formerly called "In Lieu of Services," Community Supports provides a menu of 14 services that Medi-Cal managed care plans (MCPs) can integrate into their programs.

As a result of our advocacy, DHCS included Asthma Remediation as one of the 14 services that MCPs can opt to provide to qualifying beneficiaries.

What does Asthma Remediation cover?

Asthma Remediation covers minor to moderate environmental asthma trigger remediation, with a lifetime cap of \$7500 per beneficiary. Along with education about how to reduce or eliminate environmental asthma triggers, many supplies and services are also covered.

Examples of supplies include: mattress and pillow dust covers, HEPA filtered vacuums, dehumidifiers, or air purifiers, also known as air cleaners.

Examples of services include: minor mold removal and remediation services, ventilation improvements, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Other supplies and services may be covered if identified to be medically appropriate and cost effective.

The Centers for Disease Control, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Housing and Urban Development collaborated to produce an [asthma trigger checklist](#), which may be useful in determining which interventions are necessary.

Do you have questions about Asthma Remediation?
RAMP can provide no-cost technical assistance and support.

TA@rampasthma.org

Who is eligible to receive Asthma Remediation services?

Eligibility is limited to individuals with poorly controlled asthma for whom a licensed health care provider has documented that the service will likely avoid asthma-related hospitalizations, emergency department visits, or other high-cost services.

Poorly controlled asthma is determined by an emergency department visit or hospitalization or two sick or urgent care visits in the past 12 months or a score of 19 or lower on the Asthma Control Test.

Given that MCPs have to select Asthma Remediation as part of Community Supports, the services are only available to individuals who meet the above criteria and are covered by a participating MCP.

Who can provide Asthma Remediation services?

Any MCP that has selected Asthma Remediation may: manage these services directly; coordinate with an existing Medi-Cal provider to manage the services; and/or contract with a county agency, community-based organization, or other organization, as needed.

Asthma Remediation providers must have experience and expertise with providing these unique services. Examples of the types of providers MCPs may choose to contract with include but are not limited to: lung health organizations; healthy housing organizations; local health departments; and community-based providers and organizations.

MCPs must develop their own process for vetting Asthma Remediation providers and any organization contracted to provide Asthma Remediation services must obtain a National Provider Identifier (NPI). For organizations that do not already have a NPI, DHCS provides a [step-by-step guide](#).



What about services that include physical adaptations to the residence?

Asthma Remediation that is a physical adaptation to a residence must be performed by an individual holding a California Contractor's License. The Department of Consumer Affairs, Contractors State License Board licenses contractors in 43 classifications, ranging from General Building Contractors to more specialized designations such as Flooring Contractors. Please see the [CSLB License Check website](#) for more information. Before commencement of a permanent physical adaptation to the home or installation of equipment in the home, such as installation of an exhaust fan or replacement of moldy drywall, the MCP must provide the owner and member with written documentation that the modifications are permanent, and that the State is not responsible for maintenance or repair of any modification nor for removal of any modification if the member ceases to reside at the residence. This requirement does not apply to the provision of supplies that are not permanent adaptations or installations, including but not limited to: allergen-impermeable mattress and pillow dust covers; high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtered vacuums; de-humidifiers; portable air filters; and asthma-friendly cleaning products and supplies.

What are the billing codes and rates?

Per DHCS's Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports Coding Options, MCPs must use HCPCS code S5165 with Modifier U5 for reporting to DHCS. There are no mandatory billing rates for Asthma Remediation services. The MCP and contracted organization will agree upon a payment amount as part of the contracting process. Funding is intended to cover the supplies and services, along with the staff time required to provide services and education. DHCS's pricing guidance suggests a service rate of \$7500 per beneficiary, but it is non-binding. Additional expenditures may be authorized if the client's condition has changed substantially and/or additional modifications are necessary to avoid higher levels of care such as hospitalizations.

How does Asthma Remediation relate to the new Asthma Preventive Services benefit?

As a result of our advocacy, as of July 1, 2022, Asthma Preventive Services (APS) is a covered benefit for eligible Medi-Cal beneficiaries. APS includes:

- Asthma self-management education including: the basic facts of asthma, proper use of long-term controllers and quick relief medications, evidence-based self-management techniques and self-monitoring skills, and actions to mitigate or control environmental exposures that exacerbate asthma symptoms.
- In-home environmental trigger assessments, meaning the identification of environmental asthma triggers commonly found in and around the home, including allergens and irritants. This assessment guides the self-management education about actions to mitigate or control environmental exposures.

Ideally, Asthma Preventive Services (self-management asthma education and environmental asthma trigger assessment) and Asthma Remediation services (environmental asthma trigger remediation supplies and services) will be provided by the same entity to ensure efficient and coordinated delivery of care. Combined, these two sources of Medi-Cal funding can support comprehensive asthma home visiting services. Where combining the delivery of the services under the two policies is not possible, effective coordination between Asthma Remediation and Asthma Preventive Service providers is needed. See [this factsheet](#) for more information about the Asthma Preventive Services benefit.

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Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans have already selected Asthma Remediation

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Counties in California now have access to Asthma Remediation as of August 2023

Is Technical Assistance available for organizations interested in Asthma Remediation?



Yes. Combining over two decades of experience, strong relationships with diverse stakeholders, and deep knowledge of asthma best practices and the Medi-Cal landscape, RAMP is the leading asthma technical assistance provider in California. RAMP provides TA on program design, data collection, workforce development, cultural humility, partnership development, and best practices for environmental asthma trigger remediation. We provide direct, flexible, responsive TA to existing asthma home visiting programs as well as organizations just beginning work on Asthma Remediation. TA is available directly from RAMP; additionally, DHCS has created a TA Marketplace to provide free TA to organizations across California, and RAMP is a TA provider as part of this Marketplace. We can also support MCPs with their efforts to implement Asthma Remediation. You can learn more about our TA [here](#).

We encourage you to reach out to us directly with questions or to learn more about TA at TA@rampasthma.org.

References

The DHCS Medi-Cal Community Supports, or In Lieu of Services (ILOS), Policy Guide, January 2023.
<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Documents/MCQMD/DHCS-Community-Supports-Policy-Guide.pdf>

The DHCS Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports Coding Options, Updated March 2022.
<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Documents/MCQMD/Coding-Options-for-ECM-and-Community-Supports.pdf>

DHCS's Non-Binding ILOS Pricing Guidance.
<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Documents/MCQMD/ILOS-Pricing-Guidance-Updated-8-5-2021.pdf>

RAMP's Asthma Preventive Services Fact Sheet
<https://rampasthma.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/APS-Fact-Sheet-Final.pdf>

Updated October 2023

