



## **Important Announcement: The Alliance will launch a new Medicare Advantage Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan (D-SNP) on Thursday, January 1, 2026**

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Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance) values our dedicated provider partner community. We have an important announcement to share with you.

**We are excited to let you know the Alliance will launch a new Medicare Advantage Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan (D-SNP) on Thursday, January 1, 2026.**

The Alliance D-SNP will serve Alameda County residents eligible for Medicare and Medi-Cal (Dual Eligibles) and opt to enroll in this plan. Our Alliance provider network is a vital component to the success of the new Alliance D-SNP. We will continue to share details, updates, and information about the Alliance D-SNP as we prepare to contract with the providers we identify for this important new plan for our community.

The Alliance D-SNP will allow the seamless integration delivery of Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits and streamline the services to our providers and members. This further allows the Alliance to advance our mission of improving the health and well-being of our members by collaborating with our provider and community partners to deliver high-quality and accessible services.

We value your contributions as a health care provider and encourage you to participate in the new Alliance D-SNP. We are sharing the additional information below to give more insight into what is to come for the new Alliance D-SNP.

### **How are dual eligible members identified?**

Alameda County residents eligible for both Medicare and Medi-Cal will qualify to enroll in the new Alliance D-SNP when the enrollment period is available. Members may also already be eligible with the Alliance for the Medi-Cal line of business.

### **What can providers who currently serve dual-eligible members expect in the near future?**

- Starting in July 2024, the Alliance will begin reaching out to network providers contracted for Medi-Cal and Group Care to discuss contracting for D-SNP.
- Alliance conducted webinars and town halls on D-SNP.
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and other provider communications with more D-SNP information as it becomes available.

**What does this mean for the existing contracted Alliance providers?**

- Alliance contracted providers may receive a contract amendment and cover letter about contracting for D-SNP.
- Contracting for D-SNP does not affect your current contract with the Alliance for the Medi-Cal and Group Care line of business.

**What are the benefits of a D-SNP?**

- A higher level and more improved coordination of health care delivery services of both Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits for the enrolled Alliance D-SNP members.
- A more integrated claim and reimbursement process for Alliance contracted D-SNP providers.
- Improved operational procedures to help simplify the administrative processes for providers and members.

**What does this mean for non-contracted providers?**

Non-contracted Providers interested in contracting with the Alliance for D-SNP can inquire with the Alliance contracting team at [DeptContractsInquiry@alamedaalliance.org](mailto:DeptContractsInquiry@alamedaalliance.org).

**Who can providers call if they have questions regarding this expansion?**

Provider Services Department  
 Phone Number: **1.510.747.4510**  
 Email: [providerservices@alamedaalliance.org](mailto:providerservices@alamedaalliance.org)

**Who can members call if they have questions regarding this expansion?**

We are sharing this information with Alliance providers first. We will share more information and updates with Alliance providers and our members as it becomes available.

We appreciate and thank you for the high quality care you give to your patients and your partnership in making a difference in our community.



**Questions?** Please call the Alliance Provider Services Department  
 Monday – Friday, 7:30 am – 5 pm  
 Phone Number: **1.510.747.4510**  
[www.alamedaalliance.org](http://www.alamedaalliance.org)

# ALAMEDA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH

## MEDICARE ADVANTAGE (MA) DUAL ELIGIBLE SPECIAL NEEDS PLAN (D-SNP) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

### **Q: What is a Medicare Advantage (MA) Plan?**

**A:** A Medicare Advantage (MA) Plan provides Medicare Part A and Part B coverage, supplemental benefits, and usually a Part D drug benefit. Part A and Part B are also called Original Medicare or Traditional Medicare. MA Plans, sometimes called “Part C,” are offered by Medicare-approved private companies that follow the rules set by Medicare. An individual still has the same rights and protections under all Medicare plans. To learn more about MA Plans, please visit [www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/12026-Understanding-Medicare-Advantage-Plans.pdf](http://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/12026-Understanding-Medicare-Advantage-Plans.pdf).

### **Q: What are Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans (D-SNPs)?**

**A:** Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans (D-SNPs) enroll individuals who qualify for both Medicare (title XVIII) and medical assistance from a state plan under Medicaid (title XIX). In California, Medicaid is called Medi-Cal. States cover some Medicare costs, depending on the state and the individual’s eligibility. States and health plans may vary in determining their eligibility categories. D-SNPs are a federal product, not a state product. To learn more about D-SNPs, please visit [www.cms.gov/medicare/enrollment-renewal/special-needs-plans/dual-eligible](http://www.cms.gov/medicare/enrollment-renewal/special-needs-plans/dual-eligible).

### **Q: Is a D-SNP considered an MA Plan or a Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MAPD) Plan?**

**A:** Both. D-SNP is a type of MA plan. D-SNP is also a MAPD plan because D-SNPs are required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to offer a prescription drug plan. Therefore, a D-SNP will always have a prescription drug benefit.

### **Q: Why should a dual eligible beneficiary join a D-SNP?**

**A:** A dual eligible beneficiary should join a D-SNP because the plan provides a more integrated and coordinated delivery of health care services. Services such as care coordination, information sharing, integrated materials, supplemental benefits, quality & data reporting, consumer participation in governance boards, continuity of care, encounter data reporting, and integrated appeals & grievances working together to offer a higher quality of medical services.

### **Q: What is the Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance) MA D-SNP?**

**A:** The new Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance) MA D-SNP plan serves Alameda County residents who are eligible for both Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits. These individuals are also referred to as dual eligible. This plan is designed to better coordinate services by providing a single point of contact for both programs and simplifying administrative processes for providers and members. The D-SNP will be offered as a complement to other Alliance programs and help us in our mission to improve the health and well-being of our members by collaborating with our provider and community partners to deliver high quality and accessible services. To learn more about integrated care for dual-eligible individuals, please visit [www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/Pages/Integrated-Care-for-Dual-Eligible-Beneficiaries.aspx](http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/Pages/Integrated-Care-for-Dual-Eligible-Beneficiaries.aspx).

**Q: Why are you adding a D-SNP?**

**A:** Beginning in 2023, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) implemented policies to promote integrated care for individuals who are eligible for both Medicare and Medi-Cal. As part of the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) effort, DHCS limited new MA D-SNPs and expanded county service areas to only allow D-SNPs with an ongoing affiliation with a Medi-Cal managed care plan, such as the Alliance. DHCS transitioned the Cal MediConnect (CMC) program to an integrated Exclusively Aligned Enrollment (EAE) D-SNP program. This means enrollees in an EAE D-SNP will have the same managed care plan for Medi-Cal and Medicare coverage. DHCS aims to implement EAE D-SNPs statewide by Thursday, January 1, 2026.

**Q: What does Exclusively Aligned Enrollment (EAE) mean?**

**A:** Exclusively Aligned Enrollment (EAE) means that members enroll in a D-SNP for Medicare benefits and a Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan for Medi-Cal benefits. The benefits are operated by the same parent organization, such as the Alliance. By matching Medicare D-SNP and the Medi-Cal plan through one parent organization, covered benefits work together to deliver coordinated and integrated services for a better approach to care. Benefits include members receiving integrated member materials, such as an integrated member ID card. Enrollment into the EAE D-SNP will result in the member's Medi-Cal plan changing to the same parent organization's Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan.

**Q: Why does the Alliance want to offer this new plan?**

**A:** The Alliance currently serves more than 41,000 dual eligible members enrolled in its Medi-Cal program.

The addition of the MA D-SNP will allow the Alliance to:

1. Seamlessly integrate the delivery of both Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits, which will better serve members and providers
2. Advance the Alliance mission by expanding high quality care and services for Alameda County residents with limited resources

**Q: How will providers benefit from joining the Alliance network for this new plan?**

**A:** Advantages to providers may include, but are not limited to:

1. A single contact point for two (2) coverage programs to reduce administrative burden for providers and members
2. A simplified billing – no need to bill Medicare and Medi-Cal separately
3. A faster turnaround time on provider reimbursements
4. Assistance with member care coordination to eliminate barriers to care (e.g., transportation to appointments, interpreter services at no cost, health education classes, and information available in several languages)
5. High-risk care management in partnership with providers to help with highly complex patients
6. A specialized Member Services unit specifically created to support dual eligible members

7. A local pharmacy network providing on-site medication therapy management for members with complicated medication regimens
8. A local presence and the ability to speak with a live person to resolve issues
9. A dedicated Provider Services Representative assigned to your practice
10. An online Provider Portal to verify member eligibility and check the status of claims

**Q: Will you be offering Value-Based Payment Models?**

**A:** Yes. The Alliance is exploring to operationalize “Pay for Reporting” and “Shared Savings/Shared Risk” models. Please contact your Contracting Specialist for more information.

**Q: What is the 2024 deadline to return the Medical Services Agreement to join the Alliance MA D-SNP provider network?**

**A:** For timely submission of the CMS application, the Alliance is working to have contracts executed by Sunday, December 15, 2024.

**Q: When will D-SNP launch?**

**A:** Pending approval of our application next year, the Alliance anticipates launching D-SNP on Thursday, January 1, 2026. Members can start enrolling on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, during the annual enrollment period (AEP).

**Q: Why is the Alliance pursuing provider contracts now, for a plan that will start in January 2026?**

**A:** The Alliance provider network is a key element of this new plan. The network must be finalized to file our application with CMS by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of February 2025.