



## **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 Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan (D-SNP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **Q: What is Medicare Advantage?**

**A:** A Medicare Advantage Plan is another way to get your Medicare Part A and Part B coverage (also call Original Medicare or Traditional Medicare). Medicare Advantage Plans, sometimes called “Part C” or “MA” Plans, are offered by Medicare-approved private companies that must follow rules set by Medicare. Each of these Medicare Advantage Plan types have special rules about how you get your Medicare-covered Part A and B services and any supplemental benefits your plan covers. If you join a Medicare Advantage Plan, you’ll still have Medicare, but you’ll get most of your Part A and Part B coverage from your Medicare Advantage Plan, not Original Medicare. You’ll have the same rights and protections you would have under Original Medicare. More information can be found [here](#).

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

**A:** Dual eligible Special Needs Plans (D-SNPs) enroll individuals who are entitled to both Medicare (title XVIII) and medical assistance from a state plan under Medicaid (title XIX), also called Medi-Cal in California. 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. More information can be found [here](#).

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

**A:** Both. D-SNP is a type of Medicare Advantage plan. D-SNP is also a MAPD because D-SNPs are required by CMS to offer a prescription drug plan when filling the bid. 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. Various elements of integration include: 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.

### **Q: What is the Alameda Alliance For Health (AAH) Medicare Advantage (MA) Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan (D-SNP)?**

**A:** The new plan will serve Alameda County residents who are eligible for both Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits (Dual Eligibles). The 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 serving low-income individuals. More information can be found [here](#).

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

**A:** Beginning in 2023, as part of CalAIM effort, DHCS has implemented policies to promote integrated care for beneficiaries dually eligible for Medicare & Medi-Cal. Under this effort, DHCS limited new Medicare Advantage Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans (D-SNPs) and expanded county service areas to only those D-SNPs with an ongoing affiliation with Medi-Cal managed care plans. DHCS transitioned Cal MediConnect (CMC) to an integrated Exclusively Aligned Enrollment (EAE) D-SNP program that means enrollees in EAE D-SNPs will have the same managed care plan for both Medi-Cal and Medicare coverage. DHCS intends that EAE D-SNPs will be implemented statewide by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026.

**Q: What is Exclusively Aligned Enrollment?**

**A:** Under exclusively alignment enrollment, members enroll in a dual eligible special needs plan (D-SNP) for Medicare benefits and in an Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan for Medi-Cal benefits, which are both operated by the same parent organization for better care coordination and integration. Exclusively aligned enrollment D-SNPs offer an integrated approach to care and care coordination. The matching Medicare D-SNP and Medi-Cal plans will work together to deliver all covered benefits to their members. Since all members in the plan are also enrolled in the matching managed care plan, the member can receive integrated member materials, such as one integrated member ID card. Enrollment into the exclusively aligned enrollment 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 approximately 57,000 dual eligible members enrolled in its Medi-Cal program. The addition of the Medicare Advantage Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan will allow the Alliance too: a) seamlessly integrate the delivery of both Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits, which will better serve members and providers, b) diversify and grow its revenue base, and c) advance the Alliance's mission by expanding high quality, cost-effective managed care services for low-income Alameda County residents.

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

**A:** Advantages to providers include:

- Single contact point for two coverage programs to reduce administrative burden for provider and member
- Simplified billing – no need to bill Medicare and Medi-Cal separately
- Faster turnaround time on provider reimbursements
- Assistance with member care coordination to eliminate barriers to care (e.g., transportation to appointments, free interpreter services, health education classes and materials in several languages)
- High risk care management in partnership with providers to help with highly complex patients
- A specialized Member Services unit created specifically to support Dual Eligible members
- Local pharmacy network providing on-site medication therapy management for members with complicated medication regimens
- Local presence and ability to speak with a live person to resolve issues
- A dedicated Provider Services Representative assigned to your practice
- On-line 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 deadline for returning the Medical Services Agreement to join the Alliance's network for the Medicare Advantage Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan?**

**A:** The Medical Services Agreement must be returned to the Alliance no later than Sunday, December 15, 2024.

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

**A:** Pending approval of our application next year, the Alliance anticipates launching this plan January 1, 2026. Members can start to enroll on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

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

**A:** The Alliance's provider network is a key element of this new plan. The network must be finalized in order to file our application with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in February of 2025.