

Need help with your HMO?



The HMO Help Center
1-888-466-2219

*Call toll-free, 7 days a week,
24 hours a day, in hundreds of languages.
www.hmohelp.ca.gov*



What is the HMO Help Center?

The HMO Help Center is part of the California Department of Managed Health Care, a state agency that protects the rights of HMO members. The HMO Help Center helps people resolve problems with their HMOs and makes sure that HMO members get the right care at the right time.

What can the HMO Help Center do for you?

- Help you decide what to do about your problem.
- Help you talk to your health plan or doctor. Sometimes one phone call can solve a problem.
- Help you file a complaint with your health plan or with the State. (A complaint is also called a grievance or appeal.)

Can the HMO Help Center enforce decisions?

Yes. If your complaint is decided in your favor, your health plan must do what you or your doctor asked for.

Do I have to file a complaint with my health plan first?

In most cases, yes. But if your problem is urgent or you are not sure what to do, call the HMO Help Center now.



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Is there a time limit on complaints?

Yes. File your complaint as soon as possible. In general, you should complain within six months after your problem happens.

What kind of problems can you get help with?

- You were denied a service, treatment, or medicine.
- You were told a service or treatment was not medically necessary.
- You cannot get a referral you need.
- Your health plan cancelled your coverage.
- You cannot get reimbursed for a service that you paid for.
- Your health plan will not pay for emergency care you received.
- You cannot get an appointment as soon as you need it.
- You think you received poor care or service.
- You have a problem with COBRA/Cal-COBRA or HIPAA.
- You are being billed for services you think should be paid by your plan.

What is an Independent Medical Review (IMR)?

It is a review of your case by one or more doctors. You may qualify for an IMR if your health plan:

- Will not provide a service or treatment you need, saying that the service or treatment is not medically necessary or is experimental or investigational.
- Will not pay for emergency or urgent care that you already received.

The review doctors are not part of your health plan. You do not pay anything for an IMR. If the IMR is decided in your favor, your plan must give you the service you asked for.

How do I get an IMR?

The HMO Help Center directs the IMR process. You can apply for IMR using the forms on the web at www.hmohelp.ca.gov. or call the HMO Help Center and ask about IMR. In most cases you must file a complaint with your plan first.

Can I find more information on the web?

Yes. Visit www.hmohelp.ca.gov. The website also has complaint and Independent Medical Review forms and instructions.

