



2020 West El Camino Avenue, Suite 800
Sacramento, CA 95833
hcai.ca.gov



November 6, 2025

PIL 25-01

To: Acute Psychiatric Hospitals
General Acute Care Hospitals
Special Hospitals

Subject: 2026 Biennial Reporting Period and New Legislation

This Program Information Letter (PIL) notifies hospitals about the 2026 biennial reporting period for policy submissions and the chaptering of [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 1312 \(Chapter 450, Statutes of 2025\)](#) adding presumptive eligibility requirements to the Hospital Fair Pricing Act, and the chaptering of [Senate Bill \(SB\) 862 \(Chapter 243, Statutes of 2025\)](#) amending the hardcopy notice requirement.

2026 Biennial Reporting Period

[Health and Safety Code section 127435\(a\)](#) and [Title 22, California Code of Regulations section 96051.6\(b\)\(1\)](#) requires hospitals to submit policies or report no significant change since the last submission, through the policy submission portal during the reporting period. The 2026 biennial reporting period began September 1, 2025, and ends January 1, 2026.

The Department is still reviewing policies submitted for the 2024 biennial reporting period. For hospitals that have not received a Final Compliance Determination for the 2024 reporting period, no action is required to meet the reporting requirements for 2026 since the 2024 policy review is still in progress.

Hospitals that have received a Final Compliance Determination for the 2024 reporting period are required to report no significant change or submit new policies by January 1, 2026.

AB 1312

Beginning July 1, 2027, AB 1312 requires hospitals to screen patients and presume financial assistance eligibility for patients who:

- Are enrolled in CalFresh; CalWORKs; Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF); Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); California Alternate

Rates for Energy (CARE); the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program; and any other programs that would reasonably reflect the approximate patient household income;

- Were determined eligible for financial assistance in the previous six months; or
- Are experiencing homelessness.

Beginning July 1, 2027, AB 1312 also requires hospitals to screen patients for financial assistance eligibility if the patient is:

- Uninsured;
- Enrolled in Medi-Cal with cost sharing or eligible for Medi-Cal under the Hospital Presumptive Eligibility (HPE) program; or
- Enrolled in a Covered California health plan.

If the screening concludes that a patient is financially qualified, the hospital must determine financial assistance eligibility without requiring the patient to complete a separate application.

Effective July 1, 2027, AB 1312 requires hospitals to establish a written process for screening patients that is to be included within the hospital's financial assistance policies. The names of any software products and any other third-party services used to presumptively determine, or determine, financial assistance eligibility must be disclosed with the written process.

SB 862

Effective January 1, 2026, SB 862 amends the notice requirements of [Health and Safety Code section 127410](#). Except for emergency room visits, SB 862 permits hospitals to provide written notice containing information about the availability of its financial assistance policies by electronic means, if the patient has previously consented to receive electronic communications about their health care services. The notice must still be provided to the patient in hardcopy for emergency room visits.

If the notice is provided electronically, SB 862 requires that the subject line prominently indicates that the notice is related to the hospital's discount payment and charity care policies, and the notice must be sent separately from any other electronic communications sent to the patient.

The information in this PIL is a brief summary of the provisions of AB 1312 and SB 862. Hospitals are responsible for following all applicable laws. The Department's failure to expressly notify facilities of statutory or regulatory requirements does not relieve facilities of their responsibility for following all laws and regulations. Hospitals should refer to the full text of all applicable sections of the Health and Safety Code and the California Code of Regulations to ensure compliance.

For questions concerning this PIL, please contact the Hospital Fair Billing Program at HFBP@hcai.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Hospital Fair Billing Program



Department of Health Care Access and Information

hcai.ca.gov

hfbp@hcai.ca.gov