

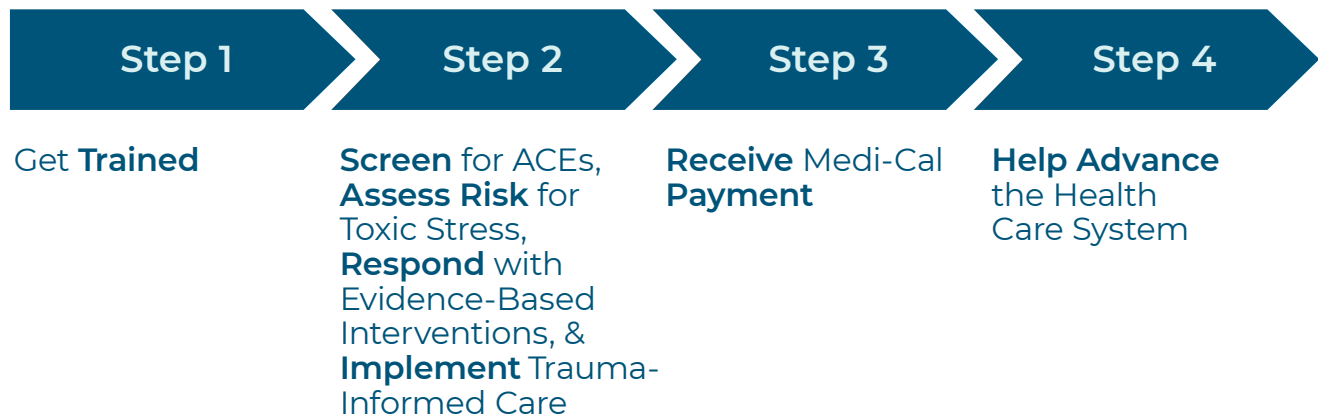


Medi-Cal Certification and Payment

This fact sheet explains how Medi-Cal providers can participate in the ACEs Aware initiative by getting trained, screening patients for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), assessing risk for toxic stress physiology, responding with evidence-based interventions, providing trauma-informed care, and receiving payment.

Steps for Providers

Providers should follow these steps to receive Medi-Cal payment from the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for ACE screenings:



Step 1 Get Trained

Providers can take a free, two-hour [ACEs Aware online training](https://www.acesaware.org/training) at [training.ACEsAware.org](https://www.acesaware.org). Providers will receive 2.0 Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits and 2.0 Maintenance of Certification (MOC) credits upon completion. Additional trainings will be certified in 2020. A [list of certified trainings](#) will be posted at [ACEsAware.org/training](https://www.acesaware.org/training).

Step 2 Screen for ACEs, Assess for Risk of Toxic Stress, Respond to Evidence-Based Interventions, and Implement Trauma-Informed Care

Providers screen patients using a qualified ACE screening tool depending upon the patient's age – find the [ACE screening tools](#) at [ACEsAware.org/screening-tools](https://www.acesaware.org/screening-tools).

Toxic stress risk assessment and management should be pursued according to the ACE Screening Workflows, Risk Assessment and Treatment Algorithms, and ACE-Associated Health Conditions. These clinical resources explain how to apply patient ACE scores and toxic stress risk assessment to target evidence-based interventions to buffer toxic stress, including making appropriate referrals to specialists and community resources. Find [ACE Screening Workflows, Risk Assessment and Treatment Algorithms, ACE-Associated Health Conditions and other clinical resources](#) at [ACEsAware.org/assessment-and-treatment](https://www.acesaware.org/assessment-and-treatment).

a. Screening Tools

An ACE screening evaluates children and adults for ACEs experienced by age 18. The following screening tools qualify providers to receive payment for screenings:

For Children and Adolescents (Ages 0–19)

The Pediatric ACEs and Related Life-Events Screener (PEARLS) was developed by the [Bay Area Research Consortium on Toxic Stress and Health \(BARC\)](#).

Providers receive Medi-Cal payment if the adolescent or their caregiver completes the tool. However, the best practice is for both the adolescent and the caregiver to each complete a tool.

In circumstances when this gives rise to two answers, the higher score should be used for billing and treatment planning.

For Adults (Ages 18 and Older)

The **ACE Questionnaire for Adults** was adapted from the work of Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). If an alternative version of the ACE Questionnaire for Adults is used, it must contain questions on the 10 original categories of ACEs to qualify for Medi-Cal payment. For the [ACE Questionnaire for Adults](#) recommended by the Office of the California Surgeon General and the Department of Health Care Services, visit [ACEsAware.org/screening-tools](https://acesaware.org/screening-tools).

For 18- and 19-year-olds, either the adolescent PEARLS or the ACE Questionnaire for Adults may be used. For patients 20 years and older, the adolescent self-report version of the PEARLS tool is also acceptable.

b. Screening Frequency

Medi-Cal payment is available for ACE screenings based on the following schedule:

Children and Adolescents: Under Age 21

Permitted for periodic ACE rescreening as determined appropriate and medically necessary, not more than once per year, per provider (per managed care plan).

Adults: Age 21 through 64

Permitted once per adult lifetime (through age 64), per provider (per managed care plan). Screenings completed while the person is under age 21 years do not count toward the one screening allowed in their adult lifetime.

For information on assessing for risk of toxic stress physiology and intervening appropriately, visit the "[Clinical Response to Adverse Childhood Experiences and Toxic Stress](#)" fact sheet at [ACEsAware.org/toolkit/clinical-response](https://acesaware.org/toolkit/clinical-response).

Step 3 Receive Medi-Cal Payment

a. Attest to Completing Training

Beginning on July 1, 2020, Medi-Cal providers must self-attest to completing certified ACE training to continue receiving payment for screening. Providers can find and submit an [ACE Training Attestation Form](#) at [ACEsAware.org/certification-payment](https://www.acesaware.org/certification-payment).

b. Receive Medi-Cal Payment

Qualified Medi-Cal providers will receive a \$29 payment for providing qualifying screenings to patients up to age 65 with full-scope Medi-Cal. Payment is not available for patients age 65 and older or for those who are dually eligible for Medi-Cal and Medicare Part B (regardless of enrollment in Medicare Part A or Part D).

Qualifying ACE screenings are eligible for payment in any clinical setting in which billing occurs through Medi-Cal fee-for-service or to a network provider of a Medi-Cal managed care plan.

Medi-Cal Managed Care

Network providers will receive payment from managed care plans in addition to whatever the provider is paid by the managed care plan for the accompanying office visit.

Fee-for-Service

Payments will follow the typical process and will be paid directly to the provider submitting the claim.

Federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), rural health clinics (RHCs), and Indian Health Service (IHS) are also eligible for the \$29 payment.

Find information on the [Medi-Cal provider types that are eligible to receive payment](#) for conducting a qualifying ACE screen at [ACEsAware.org/FAQ](https://www.acesaware.org/FAQ).

Medi-Cal Billing Codes

The following Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) should be used to bill Medi-Cal based on ACE screening results.

HCPCS	Definition	Notes
G9919	Screening performed: Result indicates patient is at high risk for toxic stress; education and evidence-based interventions (as necessary) provided.*	Providers must bill this HCPCS when the patient's ACE score is 4 or greater (high risk) .
G9920	Screening performed: Result indicates patient is at lower risk for toxic stress; education and evidence-based interventions (as necessary) provided.*	Providers must bill this HCPCS when the patient's ACE score is between 0-3 (lower risk) .

* Billing and coding are based solely on the total ACE score. The ACE score refers to the total reported categories of exposure from among the 10 ACEs, indicated in the ACE Questionnaire for Adults or Part 1 of the pediatric PEARLS. ACE scores range from 0 to 10.

Providers must document all of the following:

- The screening tool that was used;
- That the completed screen was reviewed;
- The results of the screen;
- The interpretation of results; and
- What was discussed with the patient and/or family.

This documentation must remain in the patient's medical record, and be available upon request.

Step 4 Help Advance the Health Care System

ACEs Aware is hosting a series of activities to promote shared learning and quality improvement among Medi-Cal providers in implementing ACE screenings and providing evidence-based care. For [information about upcoming events](#), visit [ACEsAware.org/educational-events](https://www.acesaware.org/educational-events).

ACE Aware is also providing grants to extend the reach and impact of the initiative. For [information on grants](#), visit [ACEsAware.org/request-for-proposals](https://www.acesaware.org/request-for-proposals).

Additionally, the California ACEs Learning and Quality Improvement Collaborative (CALQIC) will run an 18-month statewide effort among at least 50 diverse pediatric and adult clinics across five regions. CALQIC will identify promising evidence-informed practices, tools, resources, and partnerships that will inform future phases of the ACEs Aware initiative.

Not a Medi-Cal provider? The \$29 payment for ACE screenings is funded by Prop. 56 and is only available to Medi-Cal providers.

You can still get trained and use the [ACE Screening Workflows, Risk Assessment and Treatment Algorithms, and ACE-Associated Health Conditions](#) at [ACEsAware.org/assessment-and-treatment](https://www.acesaware.org/assessment-and-treatment).

If you are interested in becoming a Medi-Cal provider, visit the [DHCS Provider Enrollment web page](#) at bit.ly/providerenrollment.



Visit [ACEsAware.org](https://www.acesaware.org) and join us as we launch a movement — led by the Office of the California Surgeon General and the California Department of Health Care Services — to ensure everyone is ACEs Aware.