

Assembly Bill No. 422

CHAPTER 440

An act to amend Section 49557.2 of the Education Code, relating to public schools.

[Approved by Governor October 1, 2013. Filed with
Secretary of State October 1, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 422, Nazarian. School lunch program applications: health care notice.

Existing law creates various programs to provide health care services to persons who have limited incomes and meet various eligibility requirements. These programs include the Healthy Families Program administered by the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board, and the Medi-Cal program administered by the State Department of Health Care Services.

Existing law provides for a school lunch program under which eligible pupils receive free or reduced-price meals. Existing law authorizes the sharing of the school lunch program application with the county agency administering the Medi-Cal program for use in making an accelerated Medi-Cal eligibility determination for pupils eligible for free meals. Existing law provides for the sending of a Healthy Families Program application to pupils determined to be ineligible for Medi-Cal coverage.

This bill would, commencing January 1, 2014, require the notices to include prescribed advisements about the availability of free or reduced-cost comprehensive health care coverage through Medi-Cal or the California Health Benefit Exchange, respectively. The bill would authorize a school district also to include the notices in certain notifications required at the beginning of the first semester or quarter of the regular school term. The bill would require a county that receives the information provided on a school lunch program application, for a pupil who is not already enrolled in a health insurance affordability program, to treat the school lunch program application as an application for a health insurance affordability program, as specified.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 49557.2 of the Education Code is amended to read:
49557.2. (a) (1) At the option of the school district or county superintendent, and to the extent necessary to implement Section 14005.41 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the following information may be incorporated into the School Lunch Program application packet or

notification of eligibility for the School Lunch Program using simple and culturally appropriate language:

(A) A notification that if a child qualifies for free school lunches, then the child may qualify for free or reduced-cost health coverage.

(B) A request for the applicant's consent for the child to participate in the Medi-Cal program, if eligible for free school lunches, and to have the information on the school lunch application shared with the entity designated by the State Department of Health Care Services to make an accelerated determination and the local agency that determines eligibility under the Medi-Cal program.

(C) A notification that the school district will not forward the school lunch application to the entity designated by the State Department of Health Care Services to make an accelerated determination and the local agency that determines eligibility under the Medi-Cal program, without the consent of the child's parent or guardian.

(D) A notification that the school lunch application is confidential and, with the exception of forwarding the information for use in health program enrollment upon the consent of the child's parent or guardian, the school district will not share the information with any other governmental agency, including the federal Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration.

(E) A notification that the school lunch application information will only be used by the entity designated by the State Department of Health Care Services to make an accelerated determination and the state and local agencies that administer the Medi-Cal program for purposes directly related to the administration of the program and will not be shared with other government agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration for any purpose other than the administration of the Medi-Cal program.

(F) Information regarding the Medi-Cal program, including available services, program requirements, rights and responsibilities, and privacy and confidentiality requirements.

(2) The department, in consultation with school districts, county superintendents of schools, consumer advocates, counties, the State Department of Health Care Services, and other stakeholders, shall make recommendations regarding the School Lunch Program application, on or before February 1, 2003. The recommendations shall include specific changes to the School Lunch Program application materials as necessary to implement Section 14005.41 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, information for staff as to how to implement the changes, and a description of the process by which information on the School Lunch Program application will be shared with the county, as the local agency that determines eligibility under the Medi-Cal program.

(3) At the option of the school, the request for consent in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1) may be modified so that the parent or guardian can also consent to allowing Medi-Cal to inform the school as provided in subdivision (n) of Section 14005.41 of the Welfare and Institutions Code

when followup is needed in order to complete the Medi-Cal application process.

(b) (1) School districts and county superintendents of schools may implement a process to share information provided on the School Lunch Program application with the entity designated by the State Department of Health Care Services to make an accelerated determination and with the local agency that determines eligibility under the Medi-Cal program, and shall share this information with those entities, if the applicant consents to that sharing of information. Schools may designate, only as necessary to implement this section, non-food service staff to assist in the administration of free, reduced price, or paid school lunch applications that have applicant consent, but only if that designation does not displace or have an adverse effect on food service staff. This information may be shared electronically, physically, or through whatever method is determined appropriate.

(2) If a school is aware that a child, who has been found eligible for free school lunches under the National School Lunch Program, and for whom the parent or guardian has consented to share the information provided on the application, already has an active Medi-Cal or Healthy Families case, the application shall not be processed for an accelerated determination but shall be forwarded to the local agency that determines eligibility under the Medi-Cal program pursuant to Section 14005.41 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. The school shall notify the parent or guardian of the child's ineligibility for an accelerated Medi-Cal determination due to the current eligibility status and that the child's application will be forwarded to the county pursuant to this section. The notice shall include a statement, with contact information, advising the parent or guardian to contact the Medi-Cal or Healthy Families programs regarding the child's eligibility status.

(3) Each school district or county superintendent that chooses to share information pursuant to this subdivision shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the local agency that determines eligibility under the Medi-Cal program, that sets forth the roles and responsibilities of each agency and the process to be used in sharing the information.

(4) The local agency that determines eligibility under the Medi-Cal program shall only use information provided by applicants on the school lunch application for purposes directly related to the administration of the Medi-Cal program.

(5) After school districts share information regarding the school lunch application with the entity designated by the State Department of Health Care Services to make an accelerated determination and the local agency that determines eligibility under the Medi-Cal program, for the purpose of determining Medi-Cal program eligibility, the local agency and the school district shall not share information about school lunch participation or the Medi-Cal program eligibility information with each other except as specifically authorized under subdivision (n) of Section 14005.41 of the Welfare and Institutions Code and other provisions of law.

(c) Effective July 1, 2005, the notifications and consent referenced in subdivision (a) and the procedures set out in subdivision (b) shall include the Healthy Families Program and any relevant county- and local-sponsored health insurance programs as necessary to implement Section 14005.41 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(d) Effective January 1, 2014, the notifications referenced in subdivision (a) shall do all of the following:

(1) Advise the applicant that the applicant may be eligible for reduced-cost comprehensive health care coverage through the California Health Benefit Exchange.

(2) Advise that, if the applicant's family income is low, the applicant may be eligible for no-cost coverage through Medi-Cal.

(3) Provide the applicant with the contact information for the California Health Benefit Exchange, including its Internet Web site and telephone number.

(4) Comply with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101 et seq.) and any other applicable federal or state disabled access law.

(e) If a school district finds that the child is eligible for reduced price or paid meals under the National School Lunch Program and consent was provided as described in subdivision (b), the entity designated by the State Department of Health Care Services to make an accelerated determination shall notify the parent or guardian of the child's ineligibility for an accelerated Medi-Cal determination pursuant to Section 14005.41 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. The notification shall include information on other available health programs for which the child may be eligible.

(f) A school district may also include the notifications in the notifications at the beginning of the first semester or quarter of the regular school term required pursuant to Section 48980.

(g) Upon receipt of information provided on the School Lunch Program application pursuant to this section, for a pupil who is not already enrolled in a health insurance affordability program, the county shall treat the School Lunch Program application as an application for a health insurance affordability program. For purposes of administration of the Medi-Cal program, the application date shall be the date that the School Lunch Program application is received by the county human services department. The county shall take no further action if it determines that the pupil is already enrolled in a health insurance affordability program.