

## **School Medi-Cal Programs Alternative Format Plan**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Alternative Format Plan is to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to their school health information and communications by providing such information in a format that is appropriate and accessible to them. The plan is designed to comply with state and federal laws mandating equal access to healthcare services for individuals with disabilities and to support the coordinated system of care and support for students and families provided by Newhall School District. The alternative format plan aims to address individual communication and accessibility needs.

### **Background**

In compliance with state and federal laws, including the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA), Newhall School District is required to establish policies and procedures for ensuring that individuals with disabilities can access their school health information and communications in an appropriate and accessible format. This includes providing information in alternative formats, such as large print, audio, or electronic formats, to ensure that individuals with disabilities can better understand and participate in their school health decisions. Newhall School District already provides services to students with disabilities to address their individual needs, including accessibility needs, as part of our commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment. This alternative format plan builds on Newhall School District's system of care and support by ensuring that students with disabilities have access to their health information and communications in a format that is accessible to their needs.

Newhall School District is committed to complying with state and federal civil rights laws, including laws related to accessibility and accommodations for individuals with disabilities. To ensure compliance, the District has designated the following as its ADA Coordinator:

**Ken Hintz, Director of Human Resources , [khintz@newhallsd.com](mailto:khintz@newhallsd.com)**

### **Accessibility to Alternative Formats**

There are several types of alternative formats available to Newhall School District students and families to assist with access to school health information and communications. Some examples include:

- Large print: Printed materials that are enlarged to make it easier for individuals with visual impairments to read.
- Audio: Recordings or audio files that provide spoken or auditory information, which can be helpful for individuals with visual or reading impairments.
- Braille: Written materials that use a system of raised dots to represent letters and words, which can be read by individuals who are blind or have low vision.

- Electronic formats: Digital versions of print materials, which may be read with screen readers, text-to-speech software, or magnification tools, which can be helpful for individuals who use assistive technologies, such as screen readers or speech recognition software.
- Captioning: Text displayed on a screen that provides a written representation of spoken dialogue, sound effects, and other auditory information.
- Closed captioning: A type of captioning that can be turned on and off by the viewer, typically used for TV and video content.
- Closed Captioning: A type of captioning that can be turned on and off by the viewer, typically used for TV and video content.
- Text-to-Speech: converts written text into spoken language. It can be used as an alternative format to provide access to information for people who are blind or have low vision, or who have other reading or learning disabilities.
- Voice-to-Text: technology that converts spoken language into written text. It can be used as an alternative format to provide access to information for people who have difficulty typing or writing, or who have other communication or learning disabilities.

The specific type of alternative format used will depend on the individual's needs and preferences, as well as the type of information being communicated. The following steps, while not limited to, are typically followed to provide alternative formats for students:

1. A parent, teacher, or healthcare provider submits a request for an alternative format or accommodation to the student's health care plan team.
2. The student is assessed to determine the appropriateness of the request and its potential benefit to the student.
3. The alternative format or accommodation is documented in the student's health care plan (IEP, IFSP, 504, or other).
4. If the alternative format or accommodation requires a tangible object that needs to be purchased, proper authorization for the purchase is obtained, and internal processes are followed to place the corresponding order.
5. If the alternative format or accommodation is a service, such as American Sign Language, the school district has contracts in place to fulfill this accommodation.
6. Once the alternative format or accommodation is obtained, the requesting party is notified, and the product and/or service is delivered to the student. Adequate training is provided if needed.

Healthcare providers and schools will ensure that alternative formats are provided in a timely manner and in a format that is accessible to the individual, without discrimination or exclusion.

### **Coordination with Medi-Cal**

As a provider of service enrolled with Medi-Cal and participating in Medi-Cal billing, Newhall School District is required to verify any alternative format requests a student/family may have already provided

to Medi-Cal. To accomplish this, Newhall School District partners with the District's Medi-Cal billing vendor, who provides a report of alternative format requests on a quarterly basis.

The information obtained from this report is provided by the Medi-Cal billing coordinator to the healthcare teams managing school health services for Medi-Cal eligible students, who will update a student's health care plan as needed to ensure that alternative formats are provided. On a quarterly basis, the Medi-Cal billing coordinator will report any new alternative format requests received to Medi-Cal via its Alternative Format Request portal (<https://afs.dhcs.ca.gov/>), if they are not already on file with Medi-Cal.

The District's Medi-Cal billing coordinator has access to the required information to perform this task via the report supplied by the district's Medi-Cal billing vendor. Through this coordinated approach, Newhall School District can comply with state and federal laws, ensure equal access to healthcare information and communications, and support the success of students with disabilities.