



Michelle Baass | Director

DATE: October 3, 2023

Behavioral Health Information Notice No.: 23-052

TO: California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California Association for Alcohol/Drug Educators
California Association of Alcohol & Drug Program Executives, Inc.
California Association of DUI Treatment Programs
California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies
California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals
California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies
California Hospital Association
California Opioid Maintenance Providers
California State Association of Counties
Coalition of Alcohol and Drug Associations
County Behavioral Health Directors
County Behavioral Health Directors Association of
California County Drug & Alcohol Administrators

SUBJECT: Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act
Data and Reporting Guidelines

PURPOSE: To provide guidance to the counties on the data reporting requirements to monitor the performance of the CARE Act model using the standards set forth in the CARE Act Data Dictionary.

REFERENCE: [Senate Bill \(SB\) 1338 \(Umberg, Chapter 319, Statutes of 2022\); Welfare and Institutions \(W&I\) Code Sections 5970 through 5987; Behavioral Health Information Notice \(BHIN\) 22-059; BHIN 23-016; Assembly Bill \(AB\) 102 \(Ting, Section 133, Provision 24\(a\)-\(d\), Budget Act of 2023\)](#)

BACKGROUND:

On September 14, 2022, the Governor approved SB 1338, which enacted the CARE Act. The CARE Act creates a new civil court process to provide earlier action, support, and community-based behavioral health services for individuals with untreated schizophrenia spectrum or psychotic disorders. The CARE process will provide accountability for CARE clients as well as the local governments responsible for



providing behavioral health services to these individuals. The CARE Act will be implemented in two phases, with Glenn, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and San Francisco Counties (Cohort I) required to implement the CARE Act by October 1, 2023. Los Angeles will implement by December 1, 2023. All other counties (Cohort II) are required to implement the CARE Act by December 1, 2024.

The Department of Health Care Service (DHCS) is required to develop and publish an annual report.¹ The report must include, at a minimum, the data and information listed in subdivisions (e) and (f) of W&I Code section 5985. The report may include additional data and information, as determined by DHCS.² County behavioral health shall provide data specified by DHCS related to CARE Act participants, services, and supports for use in the annual reports.³ DHCS is authorized to specify the format and frequency of county data reporting.⁴

In addition, DHCS is required to retain an independent research-based entity to develop an independent evaluation of the CARE Act.⁵ County behavioral health agencies shall also provide DHCS with the data required for this report, in a format and frequency specified by DHCS.⁶

POLICY:

This BHIN provides guidance on the data measures and specifications that will be used to examine the scope of impact and monitor the performance of CARE Act implementation and to develop the annual report and the independent evaluation.⁷

County behavioral health agencies shall provide data in a format and frequency as directed by DHCS.⁸ County behavioral health agencies shall comply with all statutory provisions, the CARE Act Data Dictionary, and the guidance set forth in this BHIN to fulfill CARE Act data collection and reporting requirements.

¹ W&I Code, § [5985](#), subd. (a).

² See *id.*, § [5985](#), subd. (b).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Id.*, § [5985](#), subd. (c).

⁵ *Id.*, § [5986](#), subd. (a).

⁶ *Id.*, § [5986](#), subd. (c).

⁷ *Id.*, § [5985](#), subds. (b) and (e).

⁸ *Id.*, § [5985](#), subd. (c).

CARE Act Data Dictionary

DHCS developed the CARE Act Data Dictionary (Enclosure I) to guide county behavioral health agencies in fulfilling the data reporting requirements in W&I Code sections 5985 and 5986. DHCS has included the data elements and data points in the CARE Act Data Dictionary necessary to satisfy those specified reporting requirements.

The CARE Act Data Dictionary defines and standardizes the required data elements by describing the structure and content of the data that county behavioral health agencies shall submit. The CARE Act Data Dictionary additionally provides corresponding measurement questions and valid response options for each data element. To the extent possible, the content is aligned with existing state and federal data systems requirements, industry standards, and evidenced-informed typologies. The CARE Act Data Dictionary also provides relevant information for county behavioral health agencies and their vendors to build or modify information technology systems and applications for the purposes of data reporting.

To ensure consistency in the meaning, relevance, and quality of data elements, the data dictionary includes the following specifications for the required data elements and measures:

- Format Type
- Measurement Period
- Data Type
- Variable Source
- Value Codes

Data Collection and Reporting

Each county behavioral health agency shall begin collecting data on all CARE Act participants and elective clients (as defined below) at the time the county behavioral health agency begins implementation. "CARE Act participants" are respondents who meet or may meet the CARE Act criteria,⁹ as determined by the court, and for whom a CARE plan was ordered by the court, or a CARE agreement was approved by the court. County behavioral health agencies shall collect and report data on CARE Act participants for the entire duration of time that the participants are receiving services and supports provided through a CARE agreement or CARE plan and for a 12-month

⁹ See W&I Code, § [5972](#) [including criteria for individuals qualifying for CARE process].

follow-up period thereafter.¹⁰ In accordance with W&I Code section 5977.3, subdivisions (a)(3)(B)-(C), the court may issue an order permitting a CARE Act participant to continue in the CARE plan after the initial 12-month period. County behavioral health agencies shall collect and report data on the CARE Act participant for the entire duration of time that the participant continues to receive services and supports through the CARE plan, and for a 12-month follow-up period thereafter, to the extent the administrative data are available.

“Elective clients” are former CARE Act respondents who meet prima facie and CARE criteria but are diverted to county services and supports through voluntary engagement, resulting in the CARE petition being dismissed by the court.¹¹ County behavioral health agencies shall collect and report data on an elective client for up to two years after the client’s matter has been dismissed or until county services for the client are terminated, whichever occurs first.

Data Submission

Effective January 1, 2024, county behavioral health agencies that have implemented the CARE Act pursuant to W&I Code section 5970.5 shall submit their data in accordance with the reporting and submission schedule outlined below.

County behavioral health agencies shall submit monthly data to DHCS on a quarterly basis through the CARE Act Data Collection and Reporting Tool or a file submission. The reporting period spans three months, and data submissions are due by the 60 days following the close of a reporting period of the following quarter. County behavioral health agencies may alternatively submit monthly data as soon as it is available, or at any time during the months within a reporting period prior to the data submission deadline.

¹⁰ See, e.g., *id.*, § 5985, subd. (e)(3)-(7), (17) [identifying specific data related to outcomes, and data for participants following termination of the CARE plan].

¹¹ See *id.*, § 5977, subd. (a)(5)(A) [stating that “[i]f the court determines that voluntary engagement with the respondent is effective, and that the individual has enrolled or is likely to enroll in voluntary behavioral health treatment, the court shall dismiss the matter”].

CARE Act Reporting and Submission Schedule

Reporting Period	Submission Deadline
January 1 – March 31	May 30
April 1 – June 30	August 29
July 1 – September 30	November 29
October 1 – December 31	March 1

Prior to submission, county behavioral health agencies shall ensure that all data, including data received by contracted providers, is accurate and complete. County behavioral health agencies shall verify the accuracy and timeliness of all reported data; screen data for completeness, logic, and consistency; and ensure the data submission follows the CARE Act Data Dictionary's requirements and guidelines.

County behavioral health agencies shall submit data that includes personally identifiable information (PII) and personal health information (PHI) to DHCS for the purposes of CARE Act reporting.¹² County behavioral health agencies shall implement all applicable privacy and security features such as those required to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Security Rule requirements, and any other laws protecting the privacy and security of individually identifiable data.

Technical Assistance

DHCS has contracted with a vendor to provide technical assistance (TA) and consultation to county behavioral health agencies and their providers to support implementation of the CARE Act.¹³ Upon DHCS' receipt of a county behavioral health agency's quarterly data submission, the contracted vendor will assess the data for completeness, accuracy, and timeliness. This includes verifying adherence to the CARE Act Data Dictionary to ensure that each data point has been reported correctly.

¹² W&I Code, § [5985](#), subd. (e) [requiring that the annual report include data such as demographics of participants, including PII and PHI].

¹³ See *id.*, § [5983](#), subd. (b) [stating that DHCS shall provide training and technical assistance, including training regarding data collection]; § [5984](#), subd. (a) [allowing DHCS to enter into contracts, or amend existing contracts, for purposes of implementing the CARE Act].

Behavioral Health Information Notice No.: 23-052
Page 6
October 3, 2023

DHCS' contracted vendor will contact a county behavioral health agency to correct any data inaccuracies it identifies. The county behavioral health agency shall correct any errors within 15 business days of receipt of the contracted vendor's request.

Requests for TA may be submitted to info@CARE-Act.org.

Questions regarding this BHIN may be directed to DHCS CARE Act@dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Ivan Bhardwaj, Chief
Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Policy Division

Enclosure
CARE Act Data Dictionary V.1