



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

January 30, 2013

MHSD INFORMATION NOTICE No: 13-01

TO: LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
LOCAL WELFARE DIRECTORS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM CHIEFS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
CHAIRPERSONS, LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH BOARDS

SUBJECT: REMINDER OF MHP RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROVIDING
SPECIALTY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO MEDI-CAL
BENEFICIARIES

This Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Mental Health Services Division (MHSD) Information Notice serves to remind Mental Health Plans (MHPs) that they must provide, or arrange for the provision of, Medi-Cal specialty mental health services, including specialty mental health services under the Early and Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit. The requirement that the MHP provide, or arrange for the provision of, Medi-Cal specialty mental health services, including EPSDT services, is not abrogated or diminished in any way under the 2011 Public Safety Realignment.

The Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Services program is authorized pursuant to a waiver approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) under Section 1915(b) of the Social Security Act. Under the Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Services Waiver, MHPs must ensure provision of Medi-Cal specialty mental health services, as described in California's Medicaid State Plan and Title 9, California Code of Regulations (CCR), Section 1810.247, to all Medi-Cal beneficiaries who meet medical necessity criteria.

The EPSDT benefit, mandated under the Medi-Cal program pursuant to federal law, requires MHPs to provide, or arrange for the provision of, specialty mental health services to beneficiaries under age 21 who meet medical necessity criteria for those services and are eligible for the full scope of Medi-Cal services. This applies whether or not such specialty mental health services are specified in the State Plan, as long as they are covered under federal Medicaid law.

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In the event that the MHP intends to provide an equally effective alternative to a covered service that is medically necessary, the MHP must ensure that the alternative is provided with reasonable promptness and is sufficient in amount, duration and scope for maximum reduction of mental disability and restoration of an individual to the best possible functional level.

MHPs must continue to provide, or arrange for the provision of, medically necessary Medi-Cal specialty mental health services to eligible Medi-Cal beneficiaries, including EPSDT specialty mental health services for beneficiaries under the age of 21. This guidance is intended to reinforce existing requirements of state and federal law regarding the provision of Medicaid/Medi-Cal services, including EPSDT, in each county and does not represent any change in policy.

Questions regarding this DHCS MHSD Information Notice may be directed to Dina Kokkos-Gonzales at (916) 654-2147.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Vanessa Baird, Deputy Director
Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services