

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZED NETWORKS OF EQUITABLE CARE AND TREATMENT (BH-CONNECT)

## What is BH-CONNECT?

BH-CONNECT is a transformative initiative to improve mental health and substance use disorder (i.e. behavioral health) services for Medi-Cal members living with significant behavioral health needs. BH-CONNECT aims to expand access to care, improve outcomes, and address long-standing gaps in mental health and substance use disorder services across California.

## Why It Matters

BH-CONNECT addresses California's growing mental health crisis by focusing on:

- » Adults and children with the most significant behavioral health needs.
- » Children and youth involved in child welfare.
- » People involved in the justice system.
- » Individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

BH-CONNECT will:

- » **Enhance the continuum of care:** Offer a broader range of community-based services to meet diverse individual needs.
- » **Standardize and scale evidence-based practices:** Use proven treatment methods to improve recovery outcomes.
- » **Increase access:** Direct resources to populations and communities that have historically faced barriers to accessing care.

## Key Features of BH-CONNECT

- » **Workforce Support:** Builds a larger, more diverse, and well-trained workforce through scholarships, loan repayment programs, training opportunities, recruitment and retention payments, and more.
- » **Support for Children and Youth:** Enhances care and resources for youth involved in child welfare who need specialty mental health services, improving outcomes and support systems for families.

- » **Transitional Rent Assistance:** Provides up to six months of rental support for eligible Medi-Cal members experiencing or at risk of homelessness or transitioning out of institutional, congregate, carceral, or other eligible settings. Transitional Rent is intended to serve as a bridge to permanent housing and help stabilize and connect members to permanent housing options. For members with significant behavioral health needs, the Behavioral Health Transformation funding dedicated to Housing Interventions will provide permanent rental subsidies and housing following Transitional Rent, providing seamless continuity, and supporting members in achieving long-term housing stability.
- » **Performance-based Incentives:** Rewards behavioral health plans for improving access to care, reducing disparities, and achieving measurable results for Medi-Cal members.
- » **Community Transition Services:** Ensures individuals transitioning from long-term institutional care receive continuous support and services to successfully reintegrate into their communities.
- » **Short-term Inpatient Psychiatric Care:** Provides new flexibility for federal Medi-Cal funding short-term mental health care provided in inpatient and residential treatment settings that meet the federal institution for mental diseases (IMD) criteria.
- » **New Evidence-Based Services:** Offers new proven community-based programs such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), Forensic ACT, Coordinated Specialty Care for First Episode Psychosis, Supported Employment, Community Health Worker Services, and Clubhouse Services.
- » **Clarified Existing Evidence-Based Services:** Clarifies coverage and guidelines for existing Medi-Cal therapies for children and youth, like Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy to ensure that more children and youth in California have access to these effective treatments.

BH-CONNECT is a key pillar of [Governor Newsom's Mental Health for All](#) and is strategically aligned with Behavioral Health Transformation efforts to modernize California's behavioral health system, expand access to evidence-based service models on a statewide basis, and address the housing needs of Californians with significant behavioral health conditions.

For more information, please see the [BH-CONNECT webpage](#).