

# Behavioral Health-Related Contract Language for MCPs & BHDS (1/2)

This contract language is expected to be effective in the managed care plan (MCP) contract on July 1, 2026, and in the integrated behavioral health delivery systems (BHDS) contract on January 1, 2027.

- » During Member and partner engagement in the design of the Birthing Care Pathway, DHCS learned of the gap in access to behavioral health care during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Specifically, Members face **challenges accessing timely behavioral health care** with limited mental health providers who accept Medi-Cal, take new patients, and have perinatal experience.
- » To address this feedback, DHCS is amending and revising plan contracts – including the Managed Care Plan (MCP) contract and the integrated behavioral health contract inclusive of Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS), Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS), and Drug Medi-Cal (DMC) – to strengthen language to **ensure pregnant and postpartum Medi-Cal Members have access to qualified behavioral health providers** and their **perinatal care is integrated with behavioral health care**. These contract language updates reinforce current expectations.

# Behavioral Health-Related Contract Language for MCPs & BHDS (2/2)

**Contract revisions in both the MCP and integrated BHP contracts to strengthen behavioral health services during pregnancy and postpartum include:**

- » Emphasize the requirement for **timely access to behavioral health services** during pregnancy and postpartum and **out-of-network provider access**.
- » Require a perinatal behavioral health focus in MCPs' **continuous quality improvement** programs.
- » Require plans to **increase Members' awareness** of available mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) services.
- » Require adherence to **evidence-based clinical practice guidelines** for mental health and SUD care administered during pregnancy and postpartum.
- » Reinforce **coordination requirements and responsibilities across managed care plans and behavioral health delivery system plans** for pregnant and postpartum Members receiving SMHS and/or SUD care.