

Monterey County Behavioral Health Quality Improvement

RE:	Initial and Follow-up Appointment Timeliness for Specialty Mental Health Services
Avatar Forms	Admission Adult/Youth Medi-Cal Screening Tool Clinical Progress Note MC Scheduling Calendar Discharge
EFFECTIVE	4/1/2024

Background

Monterey County Behavioral Health (MCBH) aims to offer timely access to specialty mental health services (SMHS) for all beneficiaries. As such, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) requires MCBH to develop and enforce network adequacy standards that meet standards of timely access to care for initial and follow-up behavioral health services.

Beginning 4/1/2024 the **New Client form will no longer be used** to track timeliness. Data will be drawn from the admission form, adult/youth medi-cal screening tool, progress notes, the scheduling calendar, and the discharge form in Avatar to calculate timeliness.

Timely Access Standards for SMHS – This applies to new beneficiaries with no current episodes open OR has been closed AND/OR has not received a service in the last 365 days.

- Outpatient Non-urgent SMHS: the offered first appointment shall be within 10 business days of request for services.
- Non-urgent Follow-up Appointments: the offered follow-up appointment shall be within 10 business days of the first appointment rendered.
- Urgent Appointments: the offered appointment shall be within 48 hours of request for services not requiring a prior authorization and 96 hours of request for services requiring a prior authorization.

Procedures

1. Effective 4/1/2024.
2. Applies to all new beneficiaries.
3. The New Client form will no longer be used to capture timeliness.
4. Data will be drawn from the admission form, adult/youth medi-cal screening tool, progress notes, scheduling calendar, and the discharge form in Avatar to calculate timeliness.
5. With this new process, staff will be required to use their scheduling calendars to record first and follow-up appointments, as applicable.
6. The following programs will begin using this new process to capture timeliness: Access

Salinas; Access Marina; Access Soledad; Access King City; Access CalWORKs; and Access Adult Post Hospital.

7. Other MCBH programs will be required to initiate this new process into their operations over the next year. An updated Memo will be forthcoming.

Definitions:

Initial Outpatient SMHS Request: this applies to all new clients requesting outpatient specialty mental health services for the first time.

New Client: an individual who has never received care in our systems or if received care in the past, all outpatient episodes have been closed for longer than 365 days.

Urgent: refers to cases in which a beneficiary or provider indicates, or MCBH determines, that the standard timeframe could seriously jeopardize the beneficiary's life or health or ability to attain, maintain, or regain maximum function (i.e. if the beneficiary is not seen within 48 hours of request, a crisis will most likely result).

See decision trees below:





