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DIRECTOR

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



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

DATE: May 23, 2022

Behavioral Health Information Notice No: 22-031

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: Transportation for beneficiaries receiving behavioral health residential, inpatient, or emergency department services

PURPOSE: To clarify the responsibility for transportation for Medi-Cal beneficiaries in behavioral health inpatient and residential facilities, both during the stay and after discharge, and after discharge from an emergency department visit.

REFERENCE: [All Plan Letter \(APL\) 22-008](#) and [APL 22-008 FAQs](#).

BACKGROUND:

There are two types of transportation in the Medi-Cal program:

- **Non-medical transportation (NMT)** for beneficiaries who do not need medical assistance during transit.
- **Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT)** for when the beneficiary's medical and physical condition is such that transport by ordinary means of public or private conveyance is medically contraindicated.

POLICY:

A. Beneficiaries Enrolled in Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans

For beneficiaries enrolled in a Medi-Cal managed care plan (MCP), the beneficiary's MCP must arrange for and provide NMT or NEMT in the following situations:

1. **Transportation to medical, dental or behavioral health appointments for all Medi-Cal services**, including those not covered by the MCP contract, including, but not limited to, specialty mental health services (SMHS), substance use disorder (SUD) services, dental, and any other benefits delivered through the Medi-Cal fee-for-service (FFS) system. This benefit is available to beneficiaries receiving outpatient, inpatient, or residential services.
2. **Transportation for transfer from general acute care hospitals or emergency departments to psychiatric facilities, including psychiatric hospitals, skilled nursing facilities and mental health rehabilitation centers.** MCPs are required to ensure that transportation is provided to medically necessary services within timely access standards. DHCS monitors and has a process in place to work with the MCPs if there are access concerns.
3. **Transportation after discharge** from an admission (inpatient or residential care, whether or not the facility is an Institution for Mental Diseases (IMD)), or emergency department visit, whether or not the emergency department visit was in or out of the beneficiary's county of residence. MCPs are also responsible for transportation between facilities, whether or not the facility is an IMD. (Reference: [APL 22-008 FAQs](#), Question 7).

For NEMT, the treating physician must submit an approved physician certification statement (PCS) form from the member's MCP authorizing the NEMT required, in order to obtain authorization from the MCP.

For NMT, the facility or the beneficiary must contact the MCP to request NMT. MCPs may require prior authorization for NMT services. The MCP phone number is on the beneficiary's health plan card, or can be found on the [DHCS health plan directory](#).

Transportation requirements for Medi-Cal MCPs are outlined in the [APL 22-008](#) and in the [APL 22-008 FAQs](#).

If there is a dispute between a hospital, provider, or beneficiary and the MCP about the need for transportation, the hospital, provider or the beneficiary may file a grievance or

appeal with the MCP, and may also contact the [Ombudsman's office](#): Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm PST; excluding holidays at (888) 452-8609, or MMCDOmbudsmanOffice@dhcs.ca.gov (confidential and protected patient information should not be included in email).

B. Beneficiaries in Fee-For Service Medi-Cal (not enrolled in a Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan)

For beneficiaries in Fee-For-Service Medi-Cal (not enrolled in a MCP), the following applies to NEMT and NMT:

For NEMT:

1. Providers should have access to NEMT providers 24/7 in their area. A list of NEMT providers can be obtained by calling (858) 495-3666.
2. If the provider cannot locate a NEMT provider in their county or area that is available to transport the beneficiary at the requested time, providers or the beneficiary can call (858) 495-3666 and DHCS will attempt to locate a provider.

For NMT:

1. ***Previous NMT provider use:*** If the beneficiary used an NMT provider previously, they can call that provider directly to schedule transportation.
2. ***No previous NMT provider use:***
 - a. Beneficiaries (or beneficiary representatives) can access a provider directly from this list of [approved NMT providers](#).
 - b. If no providers are available in their county, beneficiaries can call NMT providers in nearby counties to see if they are able to transport them.
 - c. However, if they still cannot find an NMT provider that is available to transport them home, the beneficiary or their representative can send an email to DHCSNMT@dhcs.ca.gov during normal business hours, Monday through Friday then complete an information template. DHCS staff will call the person back to retrieve information and can contact NMT providers to see if any are able to transport the beneficiary home.

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- d. DHCS transitioned the NMT benefit to the California Medicaid Management Information System Division in July 2021. Beneficiaries may call the Telephone Service Center (800) 541-5555, who will inform the beneficiary and/or their representative of the NMT request process.

Please e-mail any questions regarding this BHIN to the County/Provider Operations and Monitoring Branch at CountySupport@dhcs.ca.gov. For more information about Medi-Cal covered transportation services, see [DHCS Transportation Webpage](#).

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Shaina Zurlin, PsyD, LCSW, Chief
Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Division