

Providers' Frequently Asked Questions: Medi-Cal Mental Health and Substance Abuse Benefits

The following information addresses the latest questions raised by providers about CalOptima's Medi-Cal mental health and substance abuse services. CalOptima looks forward to your input for future updates.

Q: What Medi-Cal mental health services does CalOptima cover?

*A: CalOptima covers outpatient mental health services for the treatment of mild to moderate mental health conditions, which include:**

- *Individual and group mental health testing and treatment (psychotherapy)*
- *Psychological testing to evaluate a mental health condition*
- *Outpatient services that include lab work, drugs and supplies*
- *Outpatient services to monitor drug therapy*
- *Psychiatric consultation*

CalOptima also covers Behavioral Health Treatment (BHT) for children under 21 years old diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Specialty mental health services continue to be available through the County of Orange at 1-800-723-8641. Substance abuse services are available through Drug Medi-Cal providers.

**As defined by the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*

Q: What Medi-Cal substance use services does CalOptima cover?

A: CalOptima covers alcohol misuse screening services for all members ages 18 and older. These services for alcohol misuse cover Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT).

- Covered services:
 - One expanded screening for risky alcohol use per year
 - Three 15-minute brief intervention sessions per year to address risky alcohol use
- Not covered:
 - CalOptima does not cover services for major alcohol problems, but you can refer to County alcohol and drug programs. Contact CalOptima Behavioral Health at 1-855-877-3885 for more information.

Q: What is SBIRT?

A: SBIRT is a comprehensive, integrated, public health approach to the delivery of early intervention and treatment services for persons with substance use disorders, as well as those who are at risk of developing these disorders. A comprehensive SBIRT model includes screening (e.g., AUDIT-C), brief intervention and referral to treatment.

Q: What can a provider do if a member appears to have persistent mental illness that is unresponsive to primary care treatment?

A. Complete a screening with the patient to identify evidence of a possible mental health or substance abuse issue.

Q: What is the process for referring a patient for services?

*A: After the initial screening, if the conditions identified by the provider are not within the scope of practice, the primary care provider should contact or refer the member to **CalOptima Behavioral Health** at **1-855-877-3885** to obtain a referral to appropriate services. Specialty mental health services are still available through the Orange County Mental Health Plan (MHP), which provides services for the severely and persistently mentally ill (SPMI) in coordination with county-level services for additional care and can be reached at 1-800-723-8641.*

Q: Are there any screening tools that will help determine whether to refer a member to CalOptima Behavioral Health or County MHP?

A: Providers can complete the Mental Health Screening tool provided by CalOptima to determine appropriate level of care placement. To obtain a copy of the screening tool, please email the CalOptima behavioral health department at behavioralhealth@caloptima.org.

Q: Who can I call for more information?

*A: For questions regarding mental health and substance abuse, please contact **CalOptima Behavioral Health** at **1-855-877-3885**.*