



ADMINISTRATIVE/FISCAL/CLINICAL/PHF POLICY AND PROCEDURES

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
ALCOHOL, DRUG AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Section - QUALITY ASSURANCE	Effective: 4/1/1998
Policy - #9: SERVICE TRIAGE AND AUTHORIZATION- FOR URGENT AND EMERGENCY CONDITIONS	Revised: 5/19/2010
Director's Approval <u>Ann Detrick</u>	Date <u>5/26/10</u>
Deputy Director's Approval <u>[Signature]</u>	Date <u>5/20/10</u>
Form Ref. -	Reviewed:

POLICY:

The Santa Barbara County Mental Health Plan provides access to and authorization for specialty mental health services 24/7 for individuals/beneficiaries presenting with urgent and emergency conditions. Authorizations and triage decisions regarding urgent and emergency conditions are made by LPHA, or PT/LVN clinical staff within one hour of the request. Providers contracted to or identified to furnish services to beneficiaries presenting with urgent and emergency conditions are monitored by the Quality Assurance Department to ensure access to care for these services.

Legal Citations: CFR, Title 42, Section 438.206(c)(1) CCR, Title 9, Chapter 11, Sections 1810.345 & 1810.405 W & IC, Sections 5600.4 (a-k) & 5614(b)(5)

DEFINITIONS:

- A. For purposes of this Policy and Procedure, the following definitions apply:
- Urgent Condition:** As defined in CCR, Title 9, Chapter 11, Section 1810.253 as "a situation experienced by a beneficiary that without timely intervention is certain to result in an immediate emergency psychiatric condition."
 - Mental Health/Psychiatric Emergency:** "a condition that meets medical necessity criteria as determined in CCR, Title 9, Chapter 11, Section 1820.205 when the beneficiary with the condition due to a mental disorder is a danger to self or other OR is immediately unable to provide for or utilize food, shelter, or clothing and requires psychiatric inpatient hospitalization or psychiatric health facility services."

3. **Mobile Crisis / SAFTY Teams**: The Mobile Crisis team is comprised of ADMHS staff and primarily provides services to adults. The SAFTY team is a contracted program which to provide services to children. Both teams perform face-to-face evaluations in the community of all persons reported to be presenting with urgent or emergency conditions, including calls requesting evaluation for potential psychiatric hospitalization. Staff on these teams are trained in emergency mental health assessment and involuntary treatment law and make final decisions regarding psychiatric hospital admission or outpatient referral under the direct supervision of an ADMHS psychiatrist.
4. **Access Team**: The Access Team, comprised of licensed/waivered clinicians, is a 24/7 telephone service with multi-linguistic capabilities designed to assure Medi-Cal beneficiaries and members of the community receive prompt mental health care, authorization and referral for appropriate services. The Access Team primarily receives routine requests for mental health treatment during business hours and is equipped to respond to routine, urgent, and emergency calls 24/7. The Access Team clinician provides telephone based clinical screening, safety plan interventions, crisis de-escalation and serves as a point of contact until the individual has his/her first face-to-face follow-up appointment

PROCEDURE:

- A. Triage/Authorization During Business Hours (Monday- Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm):
 1. Any community member, Medi-Cal beneficiary, or established client of ADMHS/MHP who is experiencing an urgent condition or psychiatric emergency may request assistance/services by:
 - a. Contacting 911 and requesting the services of the Mobile Crisis or SAFTY team for face-to-face evaluation.
 - b. Contacting the Access Team at the toll-free, 24/7, telephone line for screening and triage by a clinician who will either:
 - i. direct the individual to go to a county-operated mental health program for face-to-face evaluation (if it is determined that safe travel and arrival are possible), or Access clinician will schedule an appointment for the client at such a program within 24 hours.
 - ii. initiate a face-to-face evaluation in the community by the Mobile Crisis or SAFTY team
 - iii. authorize urgent services for a client currently receiving treatment from a contracted individual/organizational provider.
 - c. Present themselves at a county mental health program where they will be screened face-to-face by a licensed clinician who will intervene as appropriate.
 2. Individuals evaluated by the Mobile Crisis or SAFTY team (in consultation with a psychiatrist), Access Team, or Clinician at a county mental health program and determined **NOT** to require inpatient psychiatric hospitalization will be directed as appropriate to their presenting symptoms and situation:

- a. Mobile Crisis / SAFTY: Will direct such individuals to contact an Access Team clinician through the toll-free 24/7 telephone line.
- b. Clinician at a county mental health program: Will either provide medically necessary services through the program, or will refer the individual to the Access Team.
- c. Access Team: Will connect such individuals with appropriate mental health services, per P&P #8, "Routine Triage."

Assistance:

Reference:

Replaces: