

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
Behavioral Health Services**

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

**Subject: Children's Behavioral Health:
Overview of Services**

Policy No. 2411

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**Responsible for Updating:
Director of Children's Services**

Approval: 
Behavioral Health Director

12-16-2020
Date

BACKGROUND:

In agreement with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Santa Cruz County Mental Health Plan (MHP) shall provide, or arrange and pay for, an array of medically necessary covered Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) mental health services to children and youth who are Santa Cruz County Medi-Cal beneficiaries or other identified special populations.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to providers in the MHP and their representatives.

PURPOSE:

To provide a summary of Children's Behavioral Health services, its specific focus and eligibility criteria.

POLICY:

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services and contract agencies shall provide mental health services to children, youth and families who meet medical necessity criteria for EPSDT Medi-Cal services.

DEFINITIONS:

- 1. The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit** provides comprehensive and preventive health care services for children under age 21 who are enrolled in Medi-Cal.
- 2. Medical Necessity for EPSDT-** Child/adolescent who has a Medi-Cal included diagnosis using current edition of DSM/ICD for criteria, an impairment or probability of not progressing developmentally and the condition that can be ameliorated with mental health treatment.

3. Target Population Child/adolescent Med-Cal beneficiaries who meet Medical Necessity criteria for EPSDT and who require Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS).

PROCEDURES:

1. Mission Statement

To provide strength-based, family-centered, integrated, accessible, culturally and linguistically appropriate behavioral health services to Santa Cruz County children/youth and their families/caregivers in order to promote health and resilience.

Santa Cruz County Children's Behavioral Health utilizes a System of Care (SOC) approach to provide targeted behavioral health services in conjunction with interagency partners and contract providers. All services are provided in order to:

- a. Provide trauma-informed, strength-based and family-centered services.
- b. Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services.
- c. Strengthen family involvement.
- d. Ensure treatment planning guided by the Child and Family Teaming process.
- e. Use evaluation to improve benefits of behavioral health services and to shape policy.
- f. Coordinate service delivery.
- g. Maintain children in their homes whenever possible.
- h. Maintain youth in school and benefiting from their education.
- i. Utilize Pathways To Wellbeing Integrated Core Practice Model.
- j. Provide greater access to services by utilizing individualized, field-based services in homes, schools, and the community whenever possible and appropriate.
- k. Maintain children in the least restrictive, clinically appropriate setting, and within the Santa Cruz community when out of home treatment is required.
- l. Prevent youth from entering the Juvenile Justice system and reduce recidivism for those youth who are already involved.
- m. Promote reunification, permanency, and stability for youth in foster care.
- n. Reduce the need for residential treatment and hospital placements.

2. Referrals for Services

All referrals to the programs described below come from either:

- a. Santa Cruz County Children's Behavioral Health (CBH).
- b. Directly to each program from community-based agencies, Probation, Social Services, schools or individual families. See **Policy 2102: Access Triage, Screening and Assessment for MHP & DMC-ODS** and **Policy 2412: Entry Gates for Children's Mental Health Services**

3. County Operated Programs

- a. **Community Gate** provides intensive outpatient services for children and youth ages 0-20 who have moderate to severe mental health needs. The team works closely with families, schools and the other supports involved in the lives of children and youth with the goal of enhancing client's emotional well-being, reducing mental health symptomatology and related functional impairments, and supporting overall health and wellness. Children's ACCESS, a part of the Community Gate team, provides phone-based navigation and referrals to those seeking behavioral health services for children and youth with full scope Medi-Cal. This is a County SOC program.

- b. **Social Services Gate** provides intensive outpatient services to children and youth ages 0-20 who are in foster care, group homes, Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs), or are at imminent risk for being removed due to abuse or neglect. The team seek to provide support and effective treatment to youth who are involved in the child welfare system. They strive to maintain foster home stability, support reunification whenever possible, and permanency for youth. Referrals to this team are made by social workers from the Family and Children's Services (FCS) Division. This is a County SOC program.
- c. **School Treatment Programs:** Children's Behavioral Health is contracted by the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) to provide Educationally Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS) to Special Education eligible students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in specifically identified schools. PVUSD is a single district Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA). They oversee and provide educational services for district students with an IEP. This is a County SOC program.
- d. **Juvenile Justice Intensive Outpatient and Case Management.** This program is for juvenile probation youth at risk of out of home placement and emphasizes individualized care approaches, particularly for older youth on an emancipation track, and for families unable to participate in the Wraparound process. Services are provided in collaboration with the Juvenile Division of the Probation Department. This is a County SOC program.
- e. **Evening Center** is a collaboration between the Juvenile Division of the Probation Department and Children's Behavioral Health. It is a detention alternative with focused programming, that serves as an immediate response for probation involved youth who are struggling with mental health/substance abuse problems, failing to comply with conditions of probation, and/or as a response to new violations.
- f. **Juvenile Hall Services** include crisis, assessment, brief treatment and substance abuse psychoeducation for youth detained in Juvenile Hall. This is a County SOC program.
- g. **Mobile Emergency Response Team for Youth (MERTY)** is a Crisis Intervention and Evaluation service team for youth and families living in Santa Cruz County. MERTY is a program that provides payer blind crisis intervention, stabilization, and field-based response to youth acute crisis situations in the community. The program works with youth and families around safety planning and provides short-term clinical follow-up and linkage to appropriate treatment services.

4. Contract Partner Services

- a. **Encompass Community Services** provides a variety of mental health and substance abuse outpatient services. These are Contract EPSDT programs.
 - i. **Youth Services** offers intensive outpatient services in North and South county offices. This program focuses service delivery on general community, probation referrals, at school sites, and in the community.
 - ii. **Families Together** is a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary team of services providers that work with families at risk for child abuse and neglect in Santa Cruz County. Families Together focuses on reducing the number of re-referrals to Family and Children's Services Division by improving safety, child development, and family relationships.
 - iii. **Fuerte Wraparound** is an intensive program that aims to address the mental health needs of youth on probation and increase parental capacity and skills to

care for and address the mental health needs of their children involved in the justice system.

- iv. **Transition Housing Program/Independent Living Program (THP/ILP)** assists current and former foster and probation placement youth aged 15-21 to develop independent living skills and achieve educational/vocational goals to successfully transition to self-sufficiency. These EPSDT services focus on providing transitional housing and related support services for social service and probation youth approaching their 18th birthday and “aging out” of the system.
 - v. **Tyler House** is a Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) for youth ages 12-17 referred by Probation, Social Services, Aid to Adoptive Families and other out of county placement agencies.
 - vi. **Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS)** are intensive home or community-based services that address targeted behavioral issues in order to avoid initial or subsequent out of home placement. These services are ancillary to existing SMHS and do not offer the primary service entry or coordination.
- b. **Haven of Hope** is a Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) for youth ages 11– 17 and limited non-minor dependents. Referrals are made by Probation, Social Services, Aid to Adoptive Families and other out of county placement agencies.
 - c. **Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance (PVPSA)** provides intensive outpatient services and substance abuse services to Pajaro Valley Unified School District students and Watsonville community youth, as well as probation-related services.
 - d. **Parents Center** provides intensive outpatient services to children, youth and families in both North and South County, and to youth referred by the Family and Children’s Services Division.
 - e. **Volunteer Center**
 - i. **Family Partnership Program** models its goals on the Federation of Family philosophy and principles with the intent of establishing and supporting full partnership between caregivers and Santa Cruz County Children’s Behavioral Health. It is a parent-run program that provides peer support, education, and advocacy for families within our system of care. These services are ancillary to existing SMHS and do not offer the primary service entry or coordination.
 - ii. **Mobile Emergency Response Team for Youth (MERTY)**- As part of a CHFFA Grant and EPSDT contracted services, this program’s focus is to provide family outreach, education, advocacy, referrals and support, the Family Specialist helps parents/caregivers of children and youth experiencing behavioral health crises avoid more costly and restrictive institutional care.

PRIOR VERSIONS: 2/14/2018; 1/10/2018; 2/4/2011

REFERENCES: Welfare & Institutions Code (WIC) 5600.3; U.S. Government Code Section 7572; Education Code Section 56026 (c)(4); CCR Title 9, Chapter 11, Section 1810.215; CA Integrated Core Practices for Children, Youth and Families

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS: None