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# Quality Assurance Bulletin

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Program Support Bureau

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health

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## CLAIMING FOR TRAVEL TIME

This Bulletin is to notify all providers of modifications made to the Organizational Provider's Manual as well as to provide reminders and clarification related to claiming for travel time. As a reminder, travel time is reimbursable when it is part of a reimbursable service activity (California Code of Regulations 1840.316 and Organizational Provider's Manual page 8). Travel time may never be claimed if a reimbursable service activity was not provided. Below are additional guidelines related to claiming for travel time. *NOTE: Items in bold italics have been added to the Organizational Provider's Manual.*

### Travel time may be claimed:

- If staff is traveling from a provider site to an off-site location
- ***If staff is traveling from their residence to a client's residence.***

### Travel time may not be claimed:

- If staff is traveling from one provider site to another provider site
- ***If staff is traveling from their residence to a provider site.***

Neither California regulations, nor State DHCS contractual language or other official DHCS guidelines, provide any additional guidance related to what is claimable in regards to travel time. For this reason, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) has issued guidance that travel time claimed should be "reasonable and appropriate given normal circumstances" (Organizational Provider's Manual page 8). LACDMH cannot provide more specific guidance without official guidance from DHCS; however, it can be noted that:

- Excessive travel time is not specifically mentioned as an official DHCS reason for audit disallowance;
- LACDMH has not encountered DHCS audit disallowances related to excessive travel;
- There is no specific DHCS guidance as to whether normal traffic congestion, or heightened traffic due to accidents and the like, can be taken into account or not;
- There is no DHCS requirement to claim in accord with a computer application such as mapquest;
- There is no DHCS prohibition against claiming both ways to and from an off-site location.

**Lacking specific DHCS guidance, each provider/practitioner is responsible for making the determination as to what constitutes reasonable and appropriate travel time in each specific situation according to their own best judgment.**

If directly-operated or contracted providers have any questions regarding this Bulletin, please contact your Service Area QA Liaison.

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