

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH



Policy Title: Opening and Closing of Service Episodes

Policy Number: 312.02

Policy Category: Clinical

Distribution Level: Directly-Operated Programs and Contracted Agencies

Responsible Party: Quality Assurance

I. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy establishes appropriate and timely opening and closing of service episodes. It is applicable to all Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH/Department) facilities, providers, and workforce members.

Contracted agencies shall develop an internal policy and associated procedures that are consistent with their organizational practices and meet the requirements set forth in this policy.

II. DEFINITIONS

Assessment: An evaluation of a client's mental, physical, and emotional health used to create a comprehensive description of the client, provide a diagnosis, determine whether a client meets medical necessity, and guide the development of a treatment plan. Assessment services may include face-to-face evaluation, collateral interview, and record review.

Emergency Psychiatric Condition: A condition in which the potential client/client is a current danger to self or others or immediately unable to provide for or utilize food, shelter, or clothing, and requires psychiatric inpatient hospital or psychiatric health facility services. (9 CCR § 1810.216)

Face-to-Face: Situations in which the practitioner and the client interact within visual contact of one another, whether physically present or via video link.

Service Episode: A period of treatment with a defined start and end date that indicates a formal relationship between a client and service delivery entity.

III. POLICY

Prior to opening an episode, the potential client/client must be notified by the provider opening the episode that he/she will be entered into the DMH information system unless otherwise specified in Procedures Section A4.

- For directly-operated and legal entity outpatient episodes, the episode is at the legal entity level.
- The episode admission date shall be the day of first assessment contact.

Prior to conducting an assessment, the potential client/client or his/her legal representative must be:

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- Informed that he/she will be entered into the DMH information system;
- Informed about the assessment process; and
- Financially screened and be informed of the results of the screening.

The first assessment contact with the client shall be face-to-face unless otherwise specified in Procedures Section C.

Outpatient episodes shall be closed only upon the death of a client or instruction by DMH Quality Assurance.

- All documentation must be completed prior to closing the episode.
- The episode closure date shall be the date action is taken to close the episode.

Inpatient and residential episodes must be closed upon the discharge of a client from the facility.

IV. PROCEDURES

[Click here to view procedures.](#)

V. AUTHORITIES

[California Code of Regulations Title 9 Section 1810.216, Emergency Psychiatric Condition](#)

[California Welfare and Institutions Code Division 5 Sections 5709 and 5710](#)

[California Welfare and Institutions Code Division 9 Section 14705](#)

[DMH Policy 807.01, Revenue Management Policy and Procedure Manual](#)

VI. ATTACHMENT

[Consent for Services \(MH 500\)](#)

[Short-Doyle/Medi-Cal Organizational Provider's Manual](#)

VII. EFFECTIVE DATES

This policy was effective January 25, 1989.

Review Dates: May 1, 1991 Reviewed with Revisions
September 1, 2011 Reviewed with Revisions
August 22, 2011 Reviewed without Revisions
March 27, 2019 Reviewed with Revisions

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VIII. SIGNATURE, TITLE, and DATE OF APPROVAL

Required for initial approvals and all subsequent reviews and updates.

	<i>Aranda, MD</i>	<i>5/28/19</i>
Name/Title	Chief Deputy Director, Clinical Operations	Date