



**PROVIDER INFORMATION NOTICE (PIN)**

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*To ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, cost-effective health care to Los Angeles County residents through direct services at DHS facilities and through collaboration with community and university partners.*



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**PIN:** 19 - 02  
**TITLE:** MHLA Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Services – **INFORMATION UPDATES**  
**DATE:** September 5, 2019

This updated PIN reflects the changes to Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment services available to MHLA participants. It includes information about the expanded benefits under the specialty SUD treatment services, the new and more accessible referral pathways and other communications.

**Background**

On December 11, 2015, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors approved the inclusion of SUD treatment services to the MHLA program. The Department of Public Health's (DPH) Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Division (SAPC) and its contracted service providers are responsible for providing SUD care for any MHLA participant either self-referred or referred by their medical home. The care is based on an assessment and clinical standards.

The expansion of SUD treatment services to MHLA participants is consistent with the existing definition of Medical Home in the MHLA Agreement, which states that the Medical Home facilitates outreach to and communication with SUD providers, as appropriate. The intent of that language is to connect MHLA participants with medically necessary substance use disorder care and to ensure MHLA Community Partners (CPs) refer MHLA participants requesting or screened for Substance Use Disorder to SAPC's network of SUD treatment providers at no additional cost to the CP. Therefore, the MHLA Agreement did not need to be amended to implement this change.

**Expanded SUD Services Available, as of July 1, 2017**

Below are the expanded SUD treatment services that became available, free of charge, for MHLA participants, on July 1, 2017. The provider manual and patient handbook provide more detailed information on available services.

<b>LEVEL OF CARE</b> (These services are for clinically appropriate and medically necessary treatment for all SUDs).	<b>ADULT MHLA-SUD BENEFIT</b>
Early Intervention (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment [SBIRT]) in Primary Care Settings**	Yes
Outpatient (maximum of 9 hours per week for adults)	Yes
Intensive Outpatient (9-19 hours per week for adults)	Yes
Residential	Yes
Ambulatory and Residential Withdrawal Management	Yes
Inpatient Withdrawal Management (detox)	Yes
Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP)	Yes
Medications For Addiction Treatment	Yes
Recovery Bridge Housing	Yes
Case Management	Yes
Recovery Support Services	Yes

\*\*SBIRT is not provided within the SAPC network of providers, but is available via other systems of care (e.g., DHS) and providers within Los Angeles County.

**Eligibility for SUD Treatment Services:**

The Los Angeles County specialty SUD system is responsible for treating the spectrum (from mild to severe) of SUD treatment services. These services are available to all MHLA participants who meet medical necessity (or clinical appropriateness) for SUD treatment. Medical necessity is a standard applied to justify services as reasonable, necessary, and/or appropriate, based on evidence-based clinical standards of care. Medical necessity is determined by a Licensed Practitioner of the Healing Arts, working within their scope of practice, as part of the assessment and intake process conducted in the SAPC-contracted SUD treatment provider location.

**Patient Referrals to the Department of Public Health SAPC Providers for MHLA**

Services under Los Angeles County's specialty SUD treatment system are available to all MHLA participants. There are three ways that a MHLA participant can obtain SUD covered services:

1. MHLA participants can talk to their medical home clinic and see if they can get SUD services in their medical home.
2. MHLA participants can self-refer directly into SAPC's specialty SUD Treatment System through the following channels:
  - Call the Substance Abuse Service Helpline or SASH (SAPC's SUD beneficiary access line), available toll free, 24/7 at 1-844-804-7500. A team of qualified professionals are available to answer calls, assist individuals who have a substance use disorder to determine their treatment options, and help directly connect eligible individuals to qualified treating providers (direct connection only available during regular business hours).
  - Find a provider using SAPCs online provider directory for substance use disorder treatment services. The provider directory, called the Service and Bed Availability Tool (SBAT), is a web-based, real time directory that includes a searchable and filterable map to identify existing treatment providers offering SUD covered services as well as information on service availability. All locations providing specialty SUD treatment services accept MHLA. To access the SBAT go to <http://sapccis.ph.lacounty.gov/sbat/>
3. MHLA CP's can refer a MHLA participant to any provider in SAPCs treatment network using existing/current referral channels.
  - Refer through one of the entryways into SAPCs SUD treatment system (see above):
  - All clinics who refer a MHLA participant will be required to complete a Universal Release Form (attached) with the participant's signature, which is essential should the MHLA CP provider request SUD information from a SAPC service provider. The signed and dated Universal Release Form must be placed in the participant's medical record.
  - MHLA CPs should complete a SUD screening tool prior to referral to a SAPC provider. The attached Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) tool is an example of what many clinics use to assess patients for referrals to SAPC providers.

**DPH Communication with SAPC Providers**

SAPC's provider manual and patient handbook provide relevant information on how its network of SUD treatment providers can identify MHLA participants at time of admission or treatment, enroll MHLA Participants into SUD treatment, the specific SUD treatment services available to MHLA participants, billing procedures, and other relevant reporting procedures. This includes the requirement that MHLA participants are not to be charged for any covered SUD service. Providers are encouraged to visit the following link to receive the most recent information:  
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc/NetworkProviders/Privacy/ProviderManual.pdf>

**MHLA Participant Communications**

The MHLA handbook, ID card and website have been updated to reflect the addition of SUD services to the MHLA program. In addition, new English and Spanish fact sheets are available explaining the new SUD services that can be provided to participants in your clinic. MHLA has translated the SUD fact sheet into six (6) additional languages: Armenian, Korean, Tagalog, Thai, Chinese, and Vietnamese. The English and Spanish fact sheets are attached to this PIN, and the fact sheets in additional languages can be found on the MHLA website.

**SAPC Substance Use Disorder Information System**

Sage is Los Angeles County's SUD Information System, serving as the specialty SUD treatment system's electronic health record. Sage includes information about a patient's MHLA enrollment status and Patient Identification (PID) number. If a MHLA participant self-identifies as MHLA but does not have their ID card, SAPC and its contracted providers are instructed to call MHLA member services so that the MHLA ID number can be provided and inputted into Sage.

**MHLA Payments**

MHLA payments to CPs will not change. SUD services for MHLA participants will be provided by SAPC's existing network of SUD providers, and all SUD services will be reimbursed directly by SAPC to those SUD providers. While some CP clinics are also SAPC providers, any SUD service provided by a SAPC provider should continue to be billed to, and reimbursed by, SAPC in accordance with SAPC procedures. MHLA does not audit SAPC providers, and CP audits by the MHLA program will not change as a result of the addition of SUD services to MHLA.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact your Program Advocate.



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Los Angeles County Department of Health Services

**Attachments**

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- MHLA SUD Fact Sheets – English and Spanish
- Universal Release Form
- Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) tool