



Quality Assurance Bulletin

Quality Assurance Unit

County of Los Angeles – Department of Mental Health

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CALAIM: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION INTEGRATION 24/7 ACCESS LINE CENTRALIZATION

This Bulletin provides information about Behavioral Health Administration Integration, specifically the implementation of a centralized 24/7 access line, under the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) initiative.

Behavioral Health Administration Integration

Currently, Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment services are administered by the State using separate and unique structures and contracts. Within Los Angeles County, the contracts are with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) for SMHS and with the Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Bureau (DPH SAPC) for SUD. Under the CalAIM Behavioral Health Administrative Integration initiative, DHCS is requiring specific administrative components of SMHS and SUD services to be integrated as outlined below with target timelines identified by DMH and DPH-SAPC ([DHCS Concept Paper](#)).

Streamlining the Beneficiary Experience	Integrating County Structures and Processes	Integrating DHCS Oversight Functions
1. County-operated 24/7 Access Line (July 2024)	4. DHCS-County Contracts (June 2027+)	8. External Quality Reviews (June 2027+)
2. Screening, Assessment & Treatment Planning (June 2025)	5. Data Sharing & Privacy (June 2026)	9. DHCS Compliance Reviews (June 2027+)
3. Beneficiary Materials, Appeals & Grievances (June 2025)	6. Cultural Competence Plans (June 2024)	10. Network Adequacy (June 2027+)
	7. Quality Improvement (June 2026)	11. Provider Oversight (DHCS responsibility)

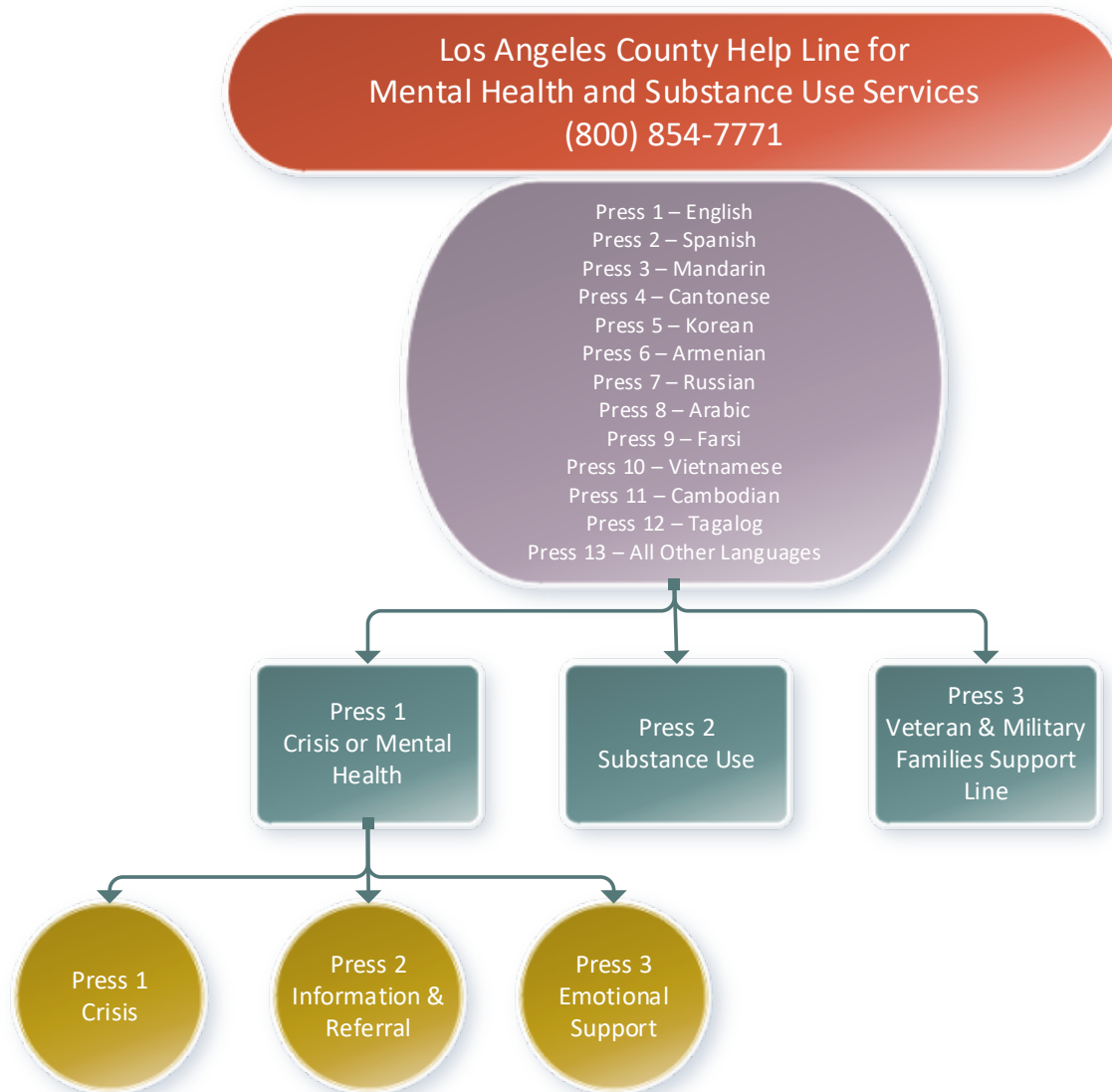
This administrative integration does not require DMH and DPH-SAPC to merge into a single entity but does require the reduction of administrative burden through the above integration initiatives. The two primary goals of the integration initiative are 1) the improvement of health care outcomes and 2) an improved experience of care for Medi-Cal members (formerly known as beneficiaries), particularly those living with co-occurring mental health and substance use issues.

The administrative integration began with the implementation of several CalAIM policies including the updated criteria for SMHS, policy improvements in the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS), and behavioral health payment reform. By January 2027, DHCS plans to establish a single, integrated behavioral health plan contract in each county responsible for providing and arranging for the provision of SMHS and SUD. The initiatives are to be reported out on by directive of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors ([Board Motion](#)).

24/7 Access Line Centralization

Counties are expected to operate a single 24/7 hour access line for all Medi-Cal members seeking behavioral health (mental health and/or substance use) services. Currently, DMH operates the DMH ACCESS Help Line (800-854-7771) and DPH SAPC operates the Substance Abuse Services Helpline (SASH) (844-804-7500). Effective July 9, 2024, the SASH phone number will be routed to the re-named Los Angeles County Help Line for Mental Health and Substance Use Services. All Medi-Cal members may call the 800-854-7771 number and access either mental health or substance use service assistance.

In addition to centralizing mental health and substance use call centers, DMH and DPH SAPC have ensured the call center offers language options up front for all threshold languages in Los Angeles County and has simplified the menu options prior to reaching a live call agent. When calling the line, the options will be:



Please note effective July 9, 2024, there will no longer be an option for ambulance and bed management on the main 24/7 access line (800-854-7771). If any DMH provider is in need of an ambulance or assistance with 24/7 facility placement, please utilize the DMH Provider Line at 800-801-7886. Field Intervention Teams (FIT), including PMRT and MCOT, should utilize existing protocols for requesting an ambulance and/or 24/7 facility placement.

If directly-operated or contracted providers have any questions related to this Bulletin, please contact the QA Policy & Technical Development team at QAPolicy@dmh.lacounty.gov.

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