

# DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTOR'S UPDATE



## Behavioral Health Commission (formerly Mental Health Commission)

Dr. Lisa Wong, Director  
January 9, 2025



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
**DEPARTMENT OF  
MENTAL HEALTH**  
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# ▶▶ Behavioral Health Community Based Organized Networks of Equitable Care and Treatment (BH-CONNECT) Update

- December 16, 2024: California received approval of it's BH-CONNECT proposal. It is a Medicaid Waiver (section 1115) and will be in effect for 5 years, starting 2025.
- BH-CONNECT is one of several State initiatives transforming how California delivers mental health care to Medi-Cal members
- Federally full/partially funded initiatives
- Focus Population: Individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness, Justice-involved individuals, Children/Youth involved in child welfare
- Information may change as new information/guidance is released by the State
  - ◀ DMH does not know the local impact because we do not yet have guidance from the State about how it will be implemented

# ▶▶ BH-CONNECT: MAIN ELEMENTS

- Transition Rent Assistance: Up to 6 months rental assistance issued through Managed Care Plans for eligible Medi-Cal members transitioning from institutions, congregate settings, or homelessness (funded by the Federal and State)
  - ◀ Major precedent: First time we will be able to use Federal Medicaid funding for housing
- Short Inpatient Psychiatric Care: Federal Medi-Cal funding for short-term mental health care provided in inpatient and residential treatment settings that meet the criteria of Institution for Mental Diseases (IMDs)
  - ◀ Major precedent: First time we will be able to receive Federal Medicaid reimbursement for care delivered in an IMD; however, it will not apply to all IMD clients due to length of stay limits

# ▶▶ BH-CONNECT: MAIN ELEMENTS

- Support for Children and Youth: This benefit will be issued through the Managed Care Plans and includes activity funds to improve access and outcomes for youth involved in child welfare receiving mental health services (partially funded by the State)
  - ◀ Some eligible activities that could be funded include activities designed to promote a child's physical wellness
- Community Transition In-Reach Services: Supports members transitioning from long-term institutional stays to ensure continuity of care and successful reintegration into the community (partially funded by participating counties)

# ▶▶ BH-CONNECT: MAIN ELEMENTS

- Incentives for Counties: \$1.9 billion Access, Reform, and Outcomes Incentive Program to reward county behavioral health plans for improving access, reducing disparities, and strengthening behavioral health quality improvements (partially funded by participating counties)
- Expansion of Evidence-Based Programs: New benefits under this section will include Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)/Forensic ACT Full Service Partnerships (FSPs); Coordinated Specialty Care for First Episode Psychosis; Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment, Enhanced Community Health Worker (CHW) Services and Clubhouse Services (partially funded by participating counties)
- Workforce: \$1.9 behavioral health workforce initiative that includes scholarships, loan repayments, recruitment initiatives, residency and fellowship expansions, and professional development (partially funded by the State)

# Questions?



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