



Quality Assurance Bulletin

Quality Assurance Unit

County of Los Angeles – Department of Mental Health

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TRACKING TIMELY ACCESS TO PSYCHIATRY APPOINTMENTS

This Bulletin provides additional guidance to Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) outpatient providers regarding tracking timely access to psychiatry appointments. LACDMH is committed to providing our clients with timely access to mental health care for all requests for service whether at the time of initial request or at any point during the course of treatment. Timely access refers to the timeframes identified in [DMH Policy 302.07 Access to Care](#) and in accord with professionally recognized standards of practice. As a reminder, timely access for a *routine psychiatry* appointment is 15 business days from the date of request.

TRACKING TIMELY ACCESS FOR INITIAL MEDICATION EVALUATIONS (IME)

Per Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) 24-020 regarding Network Certification Requirements, LACDMH is required to track all initial requests for medication (i.e. psychiatry) services, no matter when the request is made (i.e., at the time of the initial request for Specialty Mental Health Services, after the initial psychosocial assessment or later in treatment). All LACDMH outpatient providers must track initial requests for medication services along with all required data elements to track timely access to care. This includes the “Date of Request” for medication services which “starts the clock” for timely access, and the “Date of First Offered IME Appointment” which “stops the clock” for timely access.

The following applications are used to track data related to timely access:

- Integrated Behavioral Health Information System (IBHIS) – used by Directly Operated providers
- Service Request Tracking System (SRTS) – used by both Directly Operated and Contracted providers
- Webservices – used by Contracted providers to electronically submit data to LACDMH
<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/pc/cp/ti/>

The table below provides details on the way in which this data must be tracked and submitted to LACDMH. All providers must report this data to LACDMH on a regular basis and no later than thirty (30) days from the date of request.

Directly Operated Providers:

| Phase | Application / Form | Instructions |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| At the time of initial request | SRL or SRTS | If the client requests medication (i.e. an appointment to be evaluated for medications by a psychiatrist) or staff determine the client should be evaluated for medications <u>at the time of initial request</u> , then the date of the first offered IME appointment is entered. |
| After the first contact/assessment | IBHIS – Assessment | If the client is interested in or appropriate for an IME <u>at the close of the initial assessment</u> , then the date of the first offered IME appointment is entered. |
| Later in treatment | IBHIS IME Service Request Log (available May 2025) | If it is determined <u>at any point during the course of treatment</u> that the client is interested in or appropriate for an IME, then the practitioner would complete this form, entering the first offered IME appointment. |

| Legal Entity/Contracted Providers | | |
|---|---|--|
| Phase | Application | Instructions |
| At the time of initial request | SRL webservice or SRTS | If the client requests medication (i.e. an appointment to be evaluated for medications by a psychiatrist) or staff determine the client should be evaluated for medications <u>at the time of initial request</u> , then the date of the first offered IME appointment is entered into SRTS or SRL webservice. |
| After the first contact/assessment | Client Services webservice: Client Service Information (CSI) Assessment | If the client is interested in or appropriate for an IME after the first contact/assessment, then submit the webservice and select YES to 'interestedappropriateinitialmedeval' and enter the first offered IME appointment |
| Later in treatment | Client Services webservice: Client Service Information (CSI) Assessment | If it is determined at any point during the course of treatment that the client is interested in or appropriate for an IME, then the practitioner would send an <u>update</u> webservice and change 'interestedappropriateinitialmedeval' to YES and enter the first offered IME appointment |

Legal Entity providers were notified in October 2024 that the Client Services webservice detailing the requirements to track medication timeliness in the CSI Assessment were in the TEST environment. The updates were deployed to the LIVE environment in late December 2024. Legal Entity providers had two months to complete updates in their electronic health record systems (EHRS) to begin submitting data to LACDMH.

Note: LACDMH is aware fixes to the webservice were required and may impact providers' ability to begin submitting data. Providers should submit data as soon as possible when the fixes are deployed.

If directly operated or contracted providers have questions related to this Bulletin, please contact the QA Unit at QAPolicy@dmh.lacounty.gov

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