

▶▶ EPI-LA Early Psychosis Program (formerly PIER Early Psychosis)

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**DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH**
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▶▶ Program Description

The EPI-LA Program is an evidenced-based model of Coordinated Specialty Care for First Episode Psychosis. It is an early intervention model that focuses on providing treatment and support for youth and their families as they are experiencing the early signs and symptoms of a psychotic episode.

The EPI-LA Program identifies and treats youth and young adults ages 12-25 who are at clinical high risk for developing psychosis or have had a single psychotic episode in the past two years.

The program uses a multidisciplinary approach that offers multifamily group for family education, individual and family therapy, supportive education and employment services, peer services, parent partner services, medication services and case management.

By connecting youth to targeted services early, they can manage symptoms before they develop into a chronic illness and stay on track with their life goals.

▶▶ EPI-LA Early Psychosis Program Details

Item	Response
Level of Service	Early Intervention Services
Will the program be funded by the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA)? (If yes, indicate BHSA funding type)	Yes, Early Intervention Programs (EIP)
If funding type will be Early Intervention (EI), indicate the type of EI component. More than one component may be indicated. (If EI does not apply, delete table row. See notes below for EI component types)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Access and Linkage to Care: Screenings, Assessments and Referrals • Treatment Services and Supports: Services to address first episode psychosis (FEP)
Will the program grow, shrink or stay the same? (Please explain, if its growing or shrinking, will the program expand/decrease services in directly operated, contracted?)	Growth –Expansion will occur over time. Will become a Medi-Cal entitlement for those who meet medical necessity criteria for service.

▶▶ Priority Goal #1: Access to Care

Goal for Improvement

The timely and appropriate use of health services to achieve the best possible health outcomes, inclusive of all modalities. Improving Californians' access to care is necessary for improving outcomes.

- The EPI-LA Program allows youth ages 12-25 the opportunity to access outpatient care for psychosis symptoms earlier, and with services targeted specifically for their age group and symptoms. Clinics are asked to contact youth and families within two days of referral for a phone, video or in-person screening. If youth qualify for the EPI-LA, they are scheduled for an intake within 10 business days and are prioritized for medication services when required.
- While the EPI-LA Program has expanded to eight clinics (one clinic per Service Area) the number of slots are not enough to address the need for early psychosis services in Los Angeles County. The plan is to expand services to additional clinics in areas of high need or geographic need.

▶▶ Priority Goal #3: Institutionalization Goal for Reduction

Minimize time in institutional settings by ensuring timely access to community-based services across the care continuum and in a clinically appropriate setting that is least restrictive. Reducing institutionalization entails maximizing community integration and making supportive housing options with intensive, flexible, voluntary supports and services available to all individuals who would benefit. Stays in institutional settings are sometimes clinically appropriate and therefore the goal is not to reduce institutionalization to zero.

- One of the main goals of the EPI-LA Program is to intervene early with multidisciplinary services when a youth first experiences the signs and symptoms of psychosis to avoid symptoms advancing to the point they require hospitalization. If youth have already been hospitalized once, the goal is to reduce the chances of subsequent hospitalizations.
- EPI-LA focuses on providing both youth and families skills and strategies to help youth remain safely at home with their support system. They also learn how to identify the first signs of relapse so they can be addressed on an outpatient level before symptoms advance to need more acute care.

▶▶ Priority Goal #6: Untreated Behavioral Health Condition Goal for Reduction

An individual's behavioral health condition that has not been diagnosed or attended to with appropriate and timely care.

- The EPI-LA Program addresses untreated early psychosis in youth in Los Angeles County.
- Often early psychosis symptoms in youth are overlooked as behavioral problems or ignored because of stigma around psychosis. The EPI-LA Program provides not only outpatient services, but also provides community education around recognizing and responding to the signs of early psychosis to youth. By educating the community, youth experiencing early psychosis can be linked sooner to treatment before their symptoms progress.
- Nationally, the average duration of untreated psychosis is about 18 months. A goal of the EPI-LA program is to reduce this average for Los Angeles County.