

Partnership Between Mental Health Plan (MHP) & Managed Care Plans (MCPs) Coordinating Care for Medi-Cal Members

January 2026



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
**DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH**
hope. recovery. wellbeing.

▶▶ Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

As the nation's largest public mental health department, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) ensures access to care and treatment for the County's most vulnerable residents, serving a region of more than 10 million people.

With an annual budget of over \$4.4 billion and more than 7,600 budgeted positions, LACDMH is committed to promoting hope, recovery, and wellbeing for all communities across Los Angeles County.

150+

**DIRECTLY
OPERATED SITES**

750

**CO-LOCATED
SITES**

1000

**CONTRACTED
ORGANIZATIONS**

250,000+

**RESIDENTS
SERVED**

▶▶ Delivery Systems for Mental Health Services

Based on the level of need, Medi-Cal members receive either **Non-Specialty Mental Health Services (Non-SMHS)** through the **Managed Care Plans aka MCPs** and/or **Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS)** through the local **Mental Health Plan aka LACDMH** system of care.

Managed Care Plan (NSMHS)

- **Complexity of Care:** *mild/moderate MH conditions*
- **Level of Functioning:** *mild/moderate impairments*

LACDMH (SMHS)

- **Complexity of Care:** *severe/complex MH conditions*
- **Level of Functioning:** *significant impairments*

Roles and Responsibilities

Service Obligations MCP vs MHP

Category	NSMHS – MCP	SMHS –MHP <i>aka</i> LACDMH
Population Served	Mild-to-Moderate Mental Health Conditions	Serious Mental Illness (adults) / Serious Emotional Disturbance (youth)
Provider Types	Primary Care, network therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists	DMH clinics, contracted agencies, crisis providers, hospitals, PHFs
Core Services	Therapy; psych consults; medication monitoring (mild/moderate); testing	Crisis intervention; stabilization; inpatient psych; PHF; residential/day treatment; peer & mobile crisis
Care Management	Basic case management; community referrals,	Targeted Case Management (TCM); ICC; IHBS; Full-Service Partnerships (FSP)
Medications	Prescriptions via Medi-Cal Rx	Medication Support Services (evaluation, prescribing, monitoring)
Special Programs	Enhanced Care Mgmt (ECM); Community Supports	Eating Disorder treatment (SMHS portion); ECT (psychiatric); TMS (depression)
Funding/Authority	MCP contract; APL 22-006, 22-005	MHP contract; Title 9 CCR; BHIN 23-056



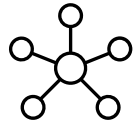
SMHS services Provided by the MHP *aka* LACDMH



Outpatient SMHS: *Individual, group, family therapy, medication support, TCM.*



Crisis Services: *Mobile crisis, urgent care centers, crisis stabilization.*



Intensive Services: *ICC, IHBS, FSP, WRAP, MAT.*



Residential Services: *Adult Residential, Crisis Residential, STRTPs.*



Hospitalization: *Psychiatric inpatient hospital, Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF).*



Specialty Services: *TBS, TFC, Therapeutic Foster Care, Eating Disorder HLOC.*

▶▶ Scope of Services Screening Tools



Screening tools for new clients

Used for clients not currently in mental health treatment, both adult and youth versions



Transition of Care Tool

Used when clients move between delivery systems, from MHP to MCP



Required by APL 22-028 and BHIN 22065 22065

Ensures timely, clinically appropriate linkages
linkages without duplication

Source: [Screening and Transition of Care Tools for Medi-Cal Mental Health Services](#)

Screening and transition tools are crucial for ensuring clients receive the right level of care and level of care and smoothly transition between mental health delivery systems.

►► Scope of Services

No Wrong Door For Mental Health Services

Purpose: These policies ensures that Medi-Cal beneficiaries receive timely mental health services without delay regardless of the delivery system where they seek care and that members maintain treatment relationships with trusted providers with no interruption.



▶▶ LACDMH Criteria to access SMHS

Clients ages

21+

Both #1 AND #2 below must apply

1. Client has one or both of the following:
 1. Significant impairment, where impairment is defined as distress, disability, or dysfunction in social, occupational, or other important activities
 2. A reasonable probability of significant deterioration in an important area of life functioning

AND

2. The clients above condition is due to either of the following:
 1. A diagnosed mental health disorder, according to the criteria of the current editions of the DSM and ICD
 2. A suspected mental disorder that has not yet been diagnosed

▶▶ LACDMH Criteria to access SMHS Clients **under** **age 21**

Criteria 1

1. The client has a condition placing them at high-risk for a mental health disorder due to experience of trauma evidenced by any of the following:
 - Scoring in the high-risk range under a trauma screening tool approved by DHCS (pending approval from DHCS)
 - Involvement in the Child Welfare System
 - Juvenile Justice involvement
 - Experiencing homelessness

OR

Criteria 2

2. The beneficiary has at least one of the following:
 - A significant impairment
 - A reasonable probability of significant deterioration in an important area of life functioning
 - A reasonable probability of not progressing developmentally as appropriate
 - A need for SMHS, regardless of presence of impairment, that are not included within the mental health benefits that a Medi-Cal managed care plan is required to provide

AND

The beneficiary's condition as described above is due to one of the following:

- A diagnosed mental health disorder, according to criteria of the current editions of the DSM-V and ICD
- A suspected mental health disorder that has not yet been diagnosed
- Significant trauma placing the beneficiary at risk of a future mental health condition, based on the assessment of a licensed mental health professional.

▶▶ How to refer to SMHS

Pathways to Refer to Services

Contact LAC DMH Helpline

Operates 24 hours/day, 7 days/week as the entry point for mental health services in Los Angeles County. Services include deployment of crisis evaluation teams, information and referrals, gatekeeping of acute inpatient psychiatric beds, interpreter services and client transport.

Phone: 1-800-854-7771

Referral from Managed Care Plan

Use Screening Tool or [Transition of Care Tool](#) to refer to SMHS (Youth and Adult Tools)

- [Adult Screening Tool for Medi-Cal Mental Health Services](#)
- [Youth Screening Tool for Medi-Cal Mental Health Services](#)
- [Transition of Care Tool for Medi-Cal Mental Health Services \(Adult and Youth\)](#)

Website: [LA COUNTY MEDI-CAL HEALTH PLANS PORTAL](#)

Phone: 1-800-854-7771

Email: DMH-Referrals@dmh.lacounty.gov

Full-Service Partnership (FSP)

Adult referrals forms can be located [here](#)

Child/Youth referral forms can be located [here](#)

Adult Services

Website: [Adult Full-Service Partnership Program - Department of Mental Health](#)

Email: AdultOAFSP@dmh.lacounty.gov

Youth Services

Website: [Full-Service Partnership and Children's Field Capable Clinical Services](#)

Email: ChildYAFSP@dmh.lacounty.gov


Phone: 1-800-854-7771

▶▶ How to refer to SMHS

Pathways to Refer to Services

Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)

Referrals forms can be located here [form](#) or on the DMH AOT website.

 **Website:** [Assisted Outpatient Treatment for Los Angeles \(AOT-LA\) - Department of Mental Health](#)


 **Phone:** [213-738-2440](tel:213-738-2440)

 **Email:** AOTLAOE@dmh.lacounty.gov

Referrals for Eating Disorders and ECT/TMS

Referral forms can be found here (insert link when finalized by CIOB) or on the DMH LA County Medi-Cal Health Plan Portal website.


 **Website:** [LA COUNTY MEDI-CAL HEALTH PLANS PORTAL](#)


 **Phone:** 1-800-854-7771

 **Email:** DMH-Referrals@dmh.lacounty.gov

CARE Court for Severe Mental Illness

Referrals forms can be located [here](#) or on the DMH Care Court website.

 **Website:** [CARECourt](#)

 **Phone:** 1-800-854-7771

 **Email:** AdultOAFSP@dmh.lacounty.gov

▶▶ Things to Remember for Care



Mental Health Services are on a continuum of care



As clients move throughout recovery, their service needs will change



Ensuring that clients have access to a suitable level of care will provide them the proper support they need, while also staying recovery-focused



The goal is to get the client into the most appropriate mental health delivery system and treatment to meet their current needs. *Hence the need to meet criteria and authorization review process*

Thank You!