SECTION IV– ACCESS TO SERVICES

Medi-Cal beneficiaries can access Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) through the Access to Community Care and Effective Services and Support (ACCESS) Center at (800) 854-7771, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Services are organized on a geographic basis to facilitate greater ease of access. However, Medi-Cal beneficiaries are free to request services in any geographic service area of the mental health system, and may secure referrals to any mental health program, whether Directly Operated by, or contracted with, the Local Mental Health Plan (LMHP).

The ACCESS Center (AC) is a major entry point to the LMHP for Medi-Cal beneficiaries and is staffed with multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural and multi-lingual personnel. The AC is the point of contact for Centralized Scheduling for both Directly Operated and Contract programs. The AC provides mental health screening and triage through licensed and unlicensed staff who evaluate treatment needs and assist expedient and appropriate access to LMHP services.

The AC offers the following:

- Information and referrals to Medi-Cal beneficiaries seeking SMHS;
- Determination of appropriateness for SMHS through the LMHP based on medical necessity;
- Crisis intervention;
- Assistance with crisis services such as the Psychiatric Mobile Response Team and other urgent Mobile Field service systems;
- Referrals to Medi-Cal network providers;
- Direct network providers to appropriate LMHP Divisions for authorization of psychological testing and other outpatient professional services;
- Direct out-of-county providers to client enrollment and authorization services;
- Direct out-of-county and out-of-state provider authorization requests to the appropriate resource;
- Direct network providers to Provider Relations Unit;
- Information regarding linkage to community resources;
- Information and referrals for other non-mental health related services;
- Information regarding client problem resolution processes;
- Referral to the Patients' Rights Office; and
- Centralized Ambulance Dispatching