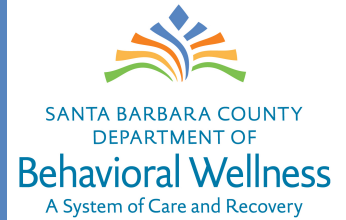


Staff Update



Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness, Alice Gleghorn, Ph.D., Director
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Special Focus on Policies & Procedures

This is the second issue of *Staff Update*, intended to be a means of providing periodic Department-specific updates to all staff.

Several years of system change processes have produced a number of new and revised department policies, with input from staff, system stakeholders, community-based organizations, family members and peers. These policies incorporate key requirements of state and federal government, statutes, regulations, practice standards, audit guidelines and evidence-based principles of care to clearly define how the Department of Behavioral Wellness functions.

The Department appreciates the hours of labor involved in the development and revision of these policies, and we acknowledge the assistance of all those who engaged in this work. Policy development continues in the Policy & Procedure Sub-Committee, Compliance Committee, supervisors' meetings, departmental workgroups and action teams. All interested parties are encouraged to participate with these groups.

New Online Resources

We want our staff members to be fully up-to-date with policy changes and developments. Thus, we created a policy & procedure section of the [Behavioral Wellness website](#) with links to policies in 16 domains and searchable using key words and phrases. Kudos to Yaneris Muñiz and Kathleen Chiarappa, whose dedication to detail has vastly improved access to Department policies on the website!

Anyone may access our policies [on the website](#). It is important that all staff members review, understand and follow Departmental policies. Thus, over the past year, we incorporated a simple attestation process into the Department's E-Learning website, and it is anticipated that your review of Policies & Procedures through attestation will become more robust as we transition to our new electronic training platform, Relias. Key policies will also continue to be distributed to staff via email with links to the website, and some policies will be introduced and reviewed in staff meetings to encourage discussion and give you the opportunity to ask questions. CBO partners and other county contractors must also keep informed of changes in Departmental policy to maintain compliance with requirements and processes, and they may access Policies & Procedures [through the website](#), just like Behavioral Wellness staff.

Accessing a Welcoming and Integrated System of Care

One of the most important System Change policies is "[Accessing a Welcoming and Integrated System of Care](#)" (AQS-2.000). This policy describes the welcoming principles embraced through our System Change process and MHSAs-guided services, and it highlights our commitment to treating mental health and substance use issues in an integrated manner with skilled and knowledgeable staff. The policy also details the federal shift in health care that has resulted in parity of health insurance coverage for mental health and substance abuse treatment for the vast majority of individuals who come in contact with our system. Our eligibility and fiscal staff will continue to verify client insurance coverage.

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Clinicians will continue to validate that a client meets medical necessity for services; complete an assessment; develop a treatment plan in collaboration with the client, their family and their treatment team; deliver evidence-based interventions that are designed to positively impact the diagnosis; and document all clinical care in the client's medical record utilizing the correct service code. Documentation of all clinical services is not just good practice; it is mandated by federal law. All clients are entitled to copies of any/all records of their care as documented in the medical record. See the [Behavioral Wellness Department Notice of Privacy Practices](#) for more information.

Clinicians will soon no longer need to worry if a clinical service is a "bill" or a "non-bill" service. These terms in the service codes will disappear as options, to be replaced by service codes (in development from our IT, fiscal and clinical staff) that describe the service you provided.

Client-oriented care, including collaborative charting, will improve documentation and communication between the client and clinician about treatment goals and progress. To help you achieve both quality care and documentation that is timely, accurate and complete, the Department has published [a new documentation manual](#). You are encouraged to review the following additional policies: [Client Assessment](#), [Client Treatment Plans](#) and [Mental Health Progress Note Documentation Standards](#).

We have also added some features in the Electronic Health Record to help identify needed tasks and deadlines (with more to come!) and provided enhanced training from both QCM staff and recognized experts in the field.

We Value Your Feedback

This Staff Update was designed to provide quick access to a number of important documents and resources related to the information discussed above. We hope you find this useful and informative. Staff Updates will be archived [on the Behavioral Wellness website](#) for easy access. We value your feedback. Please let us know if the format of the Staff Update is useful and/or send suggestions for improvements [using this feedback form](#). If you have any questions, please contact Yaneris Muñiz, 884-1660, ymuniz@sbcbswell.org.

Resources

- [Policies & Procedures Online](#)
- [Systems Change Calendar of Meetings](#) (opportunities to suggest or modify P&Ps)
- [Policies & Procedures Flow Chart](#) (detailing staff/stakeholder involvement opportunities)
- [Use this form](#) to request a new policy & procedure.
- [Notice of Privacy Practices](#)
- [Training Home Page](#) (includes link to online attestation to P&Ps. Note that we are transitioning to a new online provider, Relias).

Be Well!