

# Staff Update



Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness, Alice Gleghorn, Ph.D.,  
Director [www.countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness](http://www.countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness) • Issue 5, January 27, 2017

## Mental Health Plan Requirements Reviewed

As the Mental Health Plan for Santa Barbara County, Behavioral Wellness provides access to routine, urgent and crisis specialty mental health services. Behavioral Wellness adheres to all regulatory requirements. Training is critical to maintain departmental knowledge of these requirements.

On January 5, 2016 all countywide licensed staff, supervisors and regional managers met in Buellton to review the Santa Barbara County Mental Health Plan (MHP) requirements, which governs the clinical operations of the Department of Behavioral Wellness. Core topics included MHP requirements, changes to the 24/7 Access line, Access time requirements for routine, urgent and crisis calls, beneficiary concerns and the problem resolution process (complaints/grievances, request for second opinion, request for change of clinician, State Fair Hearings, beneficiary rights) and how to access information in other languages and for visually and hearing impaired individuals.

Deana Huddleston, MFT, discussed the 21 most common reasons for recoupment in Triennial audits. Topics she covered included medical necessity, client plans, progress notes, the MHP Contract and Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS).

California County Mental Health Plans are required to operate a toll free 24/7 Access Line in which individuals may call for assistance in finding mental health and/or substance use services for themselves or others. During daytime hours, M-F, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, the Access Line is answered by QCM Screeners who provide screening, information and individualized referrals and linkage to services.

Suzanne Grimesey, MFT, summarized 24/7 Access line requirements, including recent changes made by the department to better adhere to regulatory requirements. Among the key changes are the deployment of dedicated access screeners located with Quality Care Management (QCM) answering the line during daytime hours, development of an access contact log that will improve documentation and better tracking of all calls.

John Doyel, Program Administrator for the County Alcohol and Drug Program (ADP), provided training on the new American Society for Addiction Medicine (ASAM) substance use disorder (SUD) screening and assessment tools and protocols. The ASAM multi-dimensional assessment is the new evidenced-based practice of assessing, treating and placing clients with SUD. ASAM will be required as part of the Organized Delivery System plan that promises to expand and enhance Santa Barbara's continuum of SUD care. ASAM replaces the Addiction Severity Index (ASI), which has been used for over 20 years in Santa Barbara and nationally. Mr. Doyel explained that ASAM is easier, yet more comprehensive, than the ASI and other tools. For the first time, client motivation for change and treatment will be measured. Mr. Doyel and his staff will provide a full range of training and technical assistance around ASAM and the fundamentals of differential diagnosis that ASAM will afford.

Through ongoing training and continuous quality improvement, Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness aims to continue to provide outstanding behavioral health care and support in Santa Barbara County. For questions on Mental Health Plan requirements, please feel free to contact Deana Huddleston, QCM Program Manager, [dhuddleston@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:dhuddleston@co.santa-barbara.ca.us).

## Resources

Access Screener Resource Page

<http://www.countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness/screenerinfo.sbc>

Access Process Step-by-Step

<http://www.countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness/asset.c/3505>

Access Line Script

<http://www.countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness/asset.c/3507>

Access Line Screening Guidelines

<http://www.countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness/asset.c/3536>

Understanding the ASAM Criteria in the Context of the California Treatment System

<http://www.countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness/asset.c/3537>

ASAM Severity Rating Scales

<http://www.countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness/asset.c/3538>