

# Twelve Things You Should Know about Behavioral Wellness

1. Behavioral Wellness operates the managed care Mental Health Plan for Santa Barbara County. We provide specialty alcohol, drug and mental health services for children with serious emotional disorders (SED) and adults with severe mental illness (SMI) and addiction. (Individuals with mild-to-moderate mental illness may receive behavioral health care through CenCal, community clinics, primary care physicians, low-cost counseling services and other community providers.)
2. The purpose of behavioral health services is to foster resiliency in children and recovery in adults.
3. Most clients are children from low-income families and low-income adults who have Medi-Cal, California's version of Medicaid. Some clients do not have insurance.
4. Behavioral Wellness supports a wide array of programs based on a client's age and the extent of challenges. For example, therapy from network providers is a relatively low-intensity service. Adult clients with greater needs may be served by clinics, supported housing and Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) programs. Individuals the most acute needs may require inpatient care.
5. The first step in obtaining services is calling the 24/7 Access Line, 888-868-1649. A licensed clinician will provide a telephone screening and direct the caller to appropriate next steps.
6. Individuals seeking assistance for problems related to alcohol or drug dependence may call the Alcohol and Drug Program, 681-5440.
7. Behavioral health services are provided by both county staff and contracted community-based organizations (CBOs).
8. Behavioral Wellness receives a substantial share of its funding from the Mental Health Services Act, also known as "MHSA" and "Prop 63." MHSA requires adherence to five guiding principles: community collaboration, cultural competence, client- and family-driven services, integrated service experiences and a focus on wellness, resiliency and recovery.
9. To assist people experiencing mental health crises, call the 24/7 Access Line, 888-868-1649. When a person experiencing a mental health crisis poses a threat of immediate violence, call 911.
10. People with psychiatric disabilities are far more likely to be victims than perpetrators of violent crime (Appleby, et al., 2001). People with severe mental illnesses, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or psychosis, are 2 ½ times more likely to be attacked, raped or mugged than the general population (Hiday, et al.,1999)."
11. Many individuals with mental health challenges "self-medicate" with alcohol or other drugs. Consequently, ongoing efforts to integrate the delivery of alcohol, drug and mental health services are very important. The combination of mental illness and substance use disorders is called "dual diagnosis" or "co-occurring conditions."
12. Behavioral Wellness operates a 16-bed psychiatric hospital, the Psychiatric Health Facility, or PHF. The PHF is currently the only facility in Santa Barbara County offering inpatient care for patients under involuntary holds, or "5150s."

