

# QUALITY MANAGEMENT MEMO

## COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

**To: Mental Health System of Care and DMC-ODS Providers**

**Date: 3/26/20**

**From: Heather Parson, LMFT, Interim BHPC - Quality Management  
Teresa (Terri ) Kang, LCSW, Quality Management Supervisor**

**Re: Telehealth Resources during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency**

DHCS issued [Information Notice 20-009](#) , updated March 19, 2020, as guidance to counties and Medi-Cal providers in providing medically necessary health care services in a timely fashion for clients impacted by COVID-19. In this notice, DHCS strongly encourages counties to work with providers to maximize the number of services that can be provided by telephone and telehealth, to minimize community spread of COVID-19, as well as to protect the behavioral health workforce from illness.

Telehealth is the provision of services via audio-visual two-way real time communication. Provision of services through telehealth during the current COVID-19 public health emergency may utilize any non-public facing platform for communicating with clients that includes a video component. Please refer to the March 23, 2020 memo: [3-23-20 – Guidance for County Staff and Contractors Regarding Telehealth](#) , and the March 19, 2020 provider communication: [Information for Behavioral Health Services Providers Related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Quality](#) for information on services that may be provided through telehealth.

The following webinars and other educational resources are available free of charge to provider personnel seeking to learn more about providing mental health and SUD services using telehealth in the current environment:

### Mental Health and SUD Resources

#### [Telebehavioral Health Institute](#)

- Focus is on Behavioral Health, including SUD providers.
- To access this webinar, registration is required using the COVID coupon code.
- Addresses confidentiality and how to provide telehealth from home while maintaining appropriate boundaries.

#### [California Telehealth Resource Center](#)

- California-specific site which provides a COVID-19 Toolbox with general information about telehealth in addition to the changes brought about by COVID-19.
- Includes samples of releases and authorization forms as well as links to federal and state sites.



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### [National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Center](#)

- Includes a Tool Kit issued March 18, 2020.
- Addresses how telehealth can be used in response to COVID-19, and how telehealth has helped in the past epidemic/pandemic incidences.

### [Telehealth Resource Center COVID-19 Webinar](#)

- This March 19, 2020 webinar is primarily focused on telehealth in medical settings. Participants are directed to follow up with behavioral health-related questions. Free follow-up support is offered.

### [The National Council](#)

- Focus is on telehealth best practices.
- Addresses key considerations for adopting/expanding telehealth.

### [SUD-Specific Resources](#)

#### [SAMHSA SUD Services in the Days of a Pandemic: You Need a Bigger Boat](#)

- Addresses providing SUD services during a pandemic, taking into account disaster preparedness, safety precautions, telehealth, and ethics.
- Disclaimer trainer is from Wisconsin
- Webinar participants will learn how to move services to telehealth.

#### [Hazelden Betty Ford Enhancing Care through Virtual Visits](#)

- This training, which will be held **March 31, 2020**, covers the following:
  - Overview of telehealth and virtual services
  - Expansion of virtual services in behavioral health
  - Hazelden Betty Ford continuum of digital services
  - How to use virtual and digital solutions to support clients and communities.

*If you have questions and/or comments, please direct them to the QI Matters*

*Email: [QIMatters.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:QIMatters.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov)*



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