

**Date:** July 2, 2018

**CYF Memo:** #01 – 18/19

**To:** CYF Mental Health System of Care Providers

**From:** Yael Koenig, CYF Deputy Director

**Re:** Serving Children and Youth with Mild, Moderate and Significant Mental Health Impairment

With the Healthy Families (HF) transition in 2013 and the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2014, the Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans (MCP's) obtained responsibility for the delivery of certain mental health services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries with mild to moderate impairment of mental, emotional, or behavioral functioning.

- [APL 13-018 \(PDF\)](#) All Plan Letter 13-018
- [14-020](#) MHSUDS Information Notice No.: 14-020
- [APL 13-021 \(PDF\)](#) All Plan Letter 13-021
- [APL 14-017 \(PDF\)](#) All Plan Letter 14-017

The County as the Mental Health Plan (MHP) issued direction and various tools to the CYF Organizational Provider System to delineate when the MHP vs. the MCP would serve a youth presenting with mental health needs. However, with subsequent direction from the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) it was clarified that for children and youth, under Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT), the 'impairment' criteria component of Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) medical necessity is less stringent than it is for adults, therefore children with low level of impairment may meet medical necessity for SMHS, whereas adults must have significant level of impairment. Therefore tools such as the San Diego County Children & Youth Medi-Cal Mental Health Severity Analysis are retired and no longer utilized to delineate if a child/youth is to be served by the MHP or MCP. In other words, Medi-Cal beneficiaries (as well as unfunded youth) under the age of 21 who meet medical necessity for SMHS, are eligible for services through the MHP and therefore via Organizational Providers and the Fee for Service Network managed by Optum regardless of mild, moderate or significant impairment in functioning.

- [16-061](#) MHSUDS Information Notice No.: 16-061
- [APL 17-018 \(PDF\)](#) All Plan Letter 17-018

The MCP and the Primary Care Providers (PCP) continue to have a role in serving children and youth with mental health needs and coordination of care is expected to continue, involving families and youth in the process.

**CC:** Healthy San Diego Behavioral Health Workgroup  
Optum Health