

Definition of Mental Health Target Population and Scope of Services

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San Diego County Adult / Older Adult Outpatient Mental Health provides recovery oriented services to promote both clinical improvement and self-sufficiency, with the goal of ultimately freeing clients of the need for our services. By definition, clients eligible for our Specialty Mental Health System services are those that cannot be appropriately treated within an integrated care environment, by a Health Plan network provider or by a primary care physician. Every effort will be made to serve clients within the recovery-oriented Mental Health System until they are either stabilized (able to function safely without Mental Health resources), or until they no longer require complex biopsychosocial services in order to maintain stability.

Individuals we serve include:

1. Individuals with a serious psychiatric illness that threatens personal or community safety, or that places the individual at significant risk of grave disability due to functional impairment, up to and including those meeting criteria for LPS Conservatorship or other type of involuntary treatment interventions.
2. People with a serious, persistent psychiatric illness who, in order to sustain illness stabilization, require complex psychosocial services, case management and / or who require unusually complex medication regimens. Required psychosocial services may include illness management, or skill development to sustain housing, long term care placement, social, vocational and educational goals.

Individuals who may be referred to other providers, including the Health Plans, include:

1. Individuals with moderate psychiatric illness that may be adequately addressed either by a primary care practitioner or an affiliated mental health professional within an integrated care practice setting, when the acute symptoms do not place the individual at risk of danger to self or others, and do not threaten the individual's ability to sustain independent functioning and housing within the community.
2. Individuals with lesser psychiatric illness, such as adjustment reactions, anxiety and depressive syndromes that do not cause significant, functional impairment that could be addressed within the context of a primary care setting or other community resources.

Such individuals may also have their needs addressed, either alone or in combination with medication prescribed within their primary care practice, a Health Plan network provider or through community supports such as supportive therapy, peer and other support groups, or self-help and educational groups. When co-occurring substance abuse is a factor, Co-occurring Disorders Programs might also constitute an alternative resource.

The Specialty Mental Health System will provide expedited evaluation and/or access for clients who are being maintained in the community with other resources, at such time as their condition destabilizes and they meet one of the criteria for inclusion, above. In order to accomplish these goals, the Specialty Mental Health System will make every effort to provide:

1. Crisis screening services for individuals with acute symptoms, to provide triage to appropriate services within the specialty Mental Health System when needed.
2. Psychiatric consultation, as needed, to health care providers for clients referred to Health Plans after treatment in the Mental Health System.

San Diego County Children Youth and Family Mental Health provides services to a broad and diverse population of children, adolescents, transitional youth and families throughout San Diego County. Services are provided in a manner consistent with the Children, Youth and Families System of Care philosophy and principles, are community-based and emphasize the strengths of the client and family.

The Children's System of Care serves:

- Clients who are seriously emotionally disturbed (SED), as defined below, and who are:
 - Youth up to age 18 (EPSDT services up to age 21),
 - Clients with co-occurring mental health and substance use,
 - Medi-Cal eligible and meet medical necessity,
 - Indigent, and/or
 - Low income/underinsured.

SED Clients:

The priority population for Children, Youth and Family Services, including clients seen under MHSA, are seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) children and youth. SED clients must meet the criteria for medical necessity and further are defined as follows (per California Welfare & Institutions Code Section 5600.3):

Seriously emotionally disturbed children or adolescents means minors under the age of 18 years who have a mental disorder as identified in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, other than a primary substance use disorder or developmental disorder, which results in behavior inappropriate to the child's age according to expected developmental norms. Members of this target population shall meet one or more of the following criteria:

(A) As a result of the mental disorder the child has substantial impairment in at least two of the following areas: self-care, school functioning, family relationships, or ability to function in the community; and either of the following occur:

(i) The child is at risk of removal from home or has already been removed from the home.

(ii) The mental disorder and impairments have been present for more than six months or are likely to continue for more than one year without treatment.

(B) The child displays one of the following: psychotic features, risk of suicide or risk of violence due to a mental disorder.

(C) The child meets special education eligibility requirements under Chapter 26.5 (commencing with Section 7570) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code.