

Teen Recovery Centers (TRCs) as SchoolLink Providers

[Teen Recovery Centers \(TRC\)](#) are County-funded outpatient clinics that provide on-campus and community-based substance use screening, assessment, early intervention (EI), and treatment services for adolescents aged 12 through 17, and up to age 21 if enrolled in high school. The frequency and duration of services are based on individualized assessment of the severity of substance use and the intensity of services needed. TRC services may be provided during school hours or after school.

TRCs are part of the SchoolLink network of behavioral health providers in San Diego County. Like all SchoolLink partners, TRCs are licensed Medi-Cal providers. However, they have added responsibilities because they are also certified as **Drug Medi-Cal (DMC)** providers by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

What Makes TRCs Unique as SchoolLink Providers:

- **DMC Certification Tied to Site Address:** In addition to being Medi-Cal certified, TRCs must obtain DMC certification from DHCS for each physical address where services are delivered, including school campuses. While DHCS does not inspect the specific room where TRC services will be delivered, providers are responsible for ensuring the treatment space meets DMC requirements for privacy, confidentiality, and clinical appropriateness.
- **Fixed Service Location:** Once a school site is certified at a specific address, services must remain at that location. TRC providers are advised to identify the school address in the DMC application rather than specifying a building or room number. Moving services to a different room, building, or campus may require a revised DMC application, which can be time-consuming and costly.
- **School Commitment Required:** Hosting a TRC on campus involves a high level of commitment. Because DMC certification is resource-intensive, schools must agree—through the Annual SchoolLink Meeting—to maintain the certified site and support ongoing services each year.

These added requirements reflect the regulatory structure for providing substance use disorder (SUD) treatment under Drug Medi-Cal. They also underscore the importance of collaboration between TRC providers and school partners to ensure compliance and uninterrupted access to services.

Early Intervention Services

[Early Intervention services](#) (EI) focus on substance use prevention education and skill-building for students at risk for developing substance use-related problems. EI is provided one-on-one or in a group setting using standardized curricula.

Treatment Services

TRCs provide outpatient substance use disorder (SUD) treatment groups and individual sessions to students who meet SUD criteria and who are assessed as needing an outpatient level of care. Group services are a clinical best practice for adolescent SUD treatment, so having a sufficient volume of referrals to the TRC contributes to positive outcomes for participating students. Drug testing is provided for students enrolled in TRC services. Family services may be provided off-campus as appropriate.



Medication for Addiction Treatment (MAT)

For some adolescents who have been using opioid drugs, such as heroin or fentanyl, screening, assessment, and referral for Medication for Addiction Treatment (MAT) may be recommended. MAT services are delivered by medically trained personnel in [Narcotic Treatment Programs](#) (NTP), primary care or other medical clinics, and in some outpatient and residential SUD treatment programs. If the TRC assesses a student as potentially benefiting from MAT, a referral for MAT services will be offered to the student and family.

Location of TRC Services

TRCs are regionally located across San Diego County. Each TRC has a main community-based clinic and at least 2 DMC-certified school sites. Each school that has on-campus TRC services is served by one TRC provider rather than multiple providers. School sites are selected based on mutually identified (by TRC and school/school district administration, and County-approved) need for substance use early intervention and treatment services and on the anticipated volume of eligible adolescents, as estimated through Medi-Cal and free or reduced-price lunch eligibility data (see Module 16). DMC-certification is attached to a specific address, such as the physical address of a school or community-based clinic. Once a school site is certified, movement of the TRC's designated space between classrooms/buildings may impact DMC certification.

While schools with DMC-certified TRC school sites may choose to allow students from other schools to receive TRC services on their campus, TRCs are not permitted to provide services on campuses that are not DMC-certified. Schools that do not have a DMC-certified TRC site may refer students to the regionally based TRC main clinic for services (see [Youth Services Directory](#)). Additionally, during school breaks, students enrolled in on-campus TRC services typically continue receiving services at the TRC main clinic site if the campus is closed.

Referral Process

For DMC-certified TRC school sites, the referral process for TRC services is established through the Annual SchoolLink Plan (see Module 4) between the TRC provider and the school/school district administrator. TRC services are available to Medi-Cal eligible, Medi-Cal enrolled, and uninsured adolescents with substance use issues.

TRC services are **voluntary** healthcare services to address substance use and substance-related behavior that increase the youth's risk for dangerous consequences. While **TRC services are not intended to be used as a form of discipline** (see [AB 2711](#)), the need for intervention related to substance use is sometimes identified through an adolescent's violation of school rules.

Length of TRC Services

The length of time that a student will receive EI or treatment services is individualized according to the student's assessed needs. EI services can be as short as 1 or 2 sessions with the student and their family but typically involve weekly group sessions for 6-8 weeks. Treatment services are provided between 1 to 3 times per week for an average of 8 to 10 weeks.

Confidentiality

As described in Module 10: Confidentiality, it is important to remember that there is information in both school and behavioral health records that must be kept confidential, and school staff and behavioral health service providers must follow their own confidentiality policies and procedures, which should be discussed at the Annual SchoolLink Meeting.

Services provided to treatment substance use conditions are held to a unique set of confidentiality rules under federal law. These rules are outlined in the [Code of Federal Regulations, Title 42, Part 2, Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records](#) which prohibit the disclosure of records related to substance use treatment unless certain circumstances exist, including the consent of the service recipient, or in the case of a minor who has not been determined to meet Minor Consent criteria, consent of the parent or legal guardian. Because of these regulations, TRC personnel will obtain a written authorization for release of information before disclosing information related to substance use treatment services. There are exceptions to these rules that allow for disclosure in certain situations, such as medical emergencies, mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect, and other exceptions as outlined in the regulations.

TRC Do's & Don'ts

TRCs are specialized substance use and co-occurring (substance use and mental health) SchoolLink service providers.

TRC providers do...	TRC providers don't...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold Annual SchoolLink Meetings• Receive referrals through the SchoolLink process• Provide monthly updates about the referred students through the SchoolLink Communications Log• Meet with school administrators monthly or at another agreed-upon frequency• Obtain student/parental consent to reveal confidential information about participation in substance use services• Provide substance use services for adolescents with co-occurring mental health conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have more than one TRC provider organization at the same school• Provide psychiatric services• Serve adolescents in need of mental health services only, although TRCs serve adolescents with co-occurring substance use and mental health conditions• Authorize a specific number of sessions for early intervention or treatment (duration of treatment is based on ongoing assessment)

Key Terms

Behavioral health services: A continuum of prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery support services for mental health and substance use.

County-funded: Services funded through the County of San Diego's Health & Human Services Agency's Behavioral Health Services Division.

Provider: Unless otherwise specified, a County-funded behavioral health provider.

Administrative Information

For administrative information or to provide feedback about the [SchoolLink training program](#), please email BHSContaktUs.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov with subject line: SchoolLink