

### B. COMPLIANCE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) shall adhere to all laws, rules, and regulations, especially those related to fraud, waste, abuse, and confidentiality.

#### COMPLIANCE

##### County Programs

As part of this commitment, all County Mental Health Services workforce members<sup>1</sup> shall be familiar with and adhere to Agency Compliance Office (ACO) policies and procedures. In addition, County Mental Health Programs shall have processes that ensure adherence to the HHS Code of Conduct and Statement of Incompatible Activities. All ACO policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct, may be found on the ACO website, [www.cosdcompliance.org](http://www.cosdcompliance.org).

##### Contracted Programs

It is recommended that Contracted Programs have an internal compliance program commensurate with the size and scope of their agency. Further, contractors with more than \$250,000 (annual) in agreements with the County must have a Compliance Program that meets the Federal Sentencing Guidelines,<sup>2</sup> including the seven elements of an effective compliance program, which are:

1. Development of a Code of Conduct and Compliance Standards.
2. Assignment of a Compliance Officer, who oversees and monitors implementation of the compliance program.
3. Design of a Communication Plan, including a Compliance Hotline, which allows workforce members to raise complaints and concerns about compliance issues without fear of retribution.
4. Creation and implementation of Training and Education for workforce members regarding compliance requirements, reporting, and procedures.
5. Development and monitoring of Auditing Systems to detect and prevent compliance issues
6. Creation of Discipline Processes to enforce the program.
7. Development of Response and Prevention mechanisms to respond to, investigate, and implement corrective action regarding compliance issues.

##### Compliance Standards

All County and Contracted Programs, regardless of size and scope, shall have processes in place to ensure at the least the following standards:

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<sup>1</sup> Workforce members include employees, volunteers, trainees, and other persons whose work are under the control of the Program, and/or pertain to the applicable County contract, regardless of whether the individual is paid for their work.

<sup>2</sup> Federal Sentencing Guidelines section 8B2.1 and 42 CFR 438.608(b)(1) – (b)(7)

- Staff shall have proper credentials, experience, and expertise to provide client services.
- Staff shall document client encounters in accordance with funding source requirements and HHSA policies and procedures.
- Staff shall bill client services accurately, timely, and in compliance with all applicable regulations and HHSA policies and procedures.
- Staff shall promptly elevate concerns regarding possible deficiencies or errors in the quality of care, client services, or client billing.
- Staff shall act promptly to correct problems if errors in claims or billings are discovered.

### MHP's Compliance Hotline

Concerns about ethical, legal, and billing issues, whether pertaining to a County or Contracted Program, may be raised directly to the ACO at 619-338-2807 or [Compliance.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Compliance.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov), as well as Compliance Hotline at 866-549-0004.

### Mandated Reporting

All County and Contracted workforce members shall comply with the Child Abuse Reporting Law (California Penal Code section 11164) and Adult Abuse Reporting Law (California Welfare and Institutions Code section 15630). For further information regarding legal and ethical reporting mandates, contact your agency's attorney, the State licensing board, or your professional association.

### Documentation Requirements

All County and Contracted Programs are required to prepare and maintain appropriate medical records on all clients receiving services in compliance with Title 9, Chapter 11 and 42 CFR guidelines. Programs are expected to meet all documentation requirements and standards established by the Mental Health Plan (MHP) in the preparation of these records. The MHP has the responsibility to prepare and maintain the Uniform Clinical Record Manual (UCRM), which outlines the MHP's requirements and standards in this area. Both the UCRM and the SDCBHS Management Information System User Manual, which contains the requirements for the most commonly used services, are available at [www.optumsandiego.com](http://www.optumsandiego.com).

Many of the requirements present in the MHP's UCRM are derived from the SDCBHS contract with the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to provide specialty mental health services (State Agreement). Other documentation requirements have been established by the MHP's Uniform Medical Record Committee, which is an ad hoc committee chaired by QM.

In order to ensure that programs are knowledgeable of documentation requirements, QM provides the following:

- Annual Quality Management Forum for all System of Care (SOC) providers presented by the QM, PIT, and MIS units. Information is presented on system wide compliance with

State, Federal and County MHP requirements. Areas for continuous quality improvement are identified and implemented for the System of Care.

- Quarterly in-service documentation training for all new clinical staff, or any clinical staff that may need a documentation review;
- On-site in-service trainings tailored to program's specific documentation training needs when requested by the program or identified by QM.

### **Claiming and Reimbursement of Mental Health Services**

When providing reimbursable mental health services, providers are required to utilize all available payor sources appropriate for reimbursement of services. Many clients have one or more insurance sources (e.g., Medicare, indemnity, PPO, HMOs, Medi-Cal) and it is the responsibility of each program to appropriately bill and collect reimbursement from primary and secondary insurance sources. For all clients receiving mental health services, programs are required to be aware of all available payor sources, be able to verify eligibility and covered benefits, obtain an Assignment of Benefits (AOB), track and process Explanation of Benefits (EOBs) and primary insurance denials, in order to seek reimbursement from secondary payor sources. All billing and submission of claims for reimbursement must be in accordance with all applicable County, State and Federal regulations.

For detailed guidelines and procedures regarding insurance billing, claims processing, assignment of benefits, determining eligibility, and accounts collection and adjustment, please refer to the Financial Eligibility and Billing Procedures - Organizational Providers Manual.

### **Coding and Billing Requirements**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) include requirements regarding transactions and code sets to be used in recording services and claiming revenue. UCRM forms reflect the required codes, and County QM staff provide training on the use of the Service Record forms. Additional requirements come from the State Agreement; these requirements determine the nature of chart reviews during a Medi-Cal audit and the items for which financial recoupment of payment for services will be made by State or County reviewers. Following are current requirements and resources related to coding and billing:

- Services must be coded in compliance with the Management Information System (CCBH) User Manual, Organization Provider Operations Handbook (OPOH) and the Financial Eligibility and Billing Manual.
- Diagnoses must be coded using the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10). In general, a diagnosis is made using the fuller descriptions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, and "cross-walked" to the correct service code for CCBH by the clinician. The service code should result in the highest level of specificity in recording the diagnosis.
- Services are recorded in CCBH through progress note entry or if done on paper on the Service Record form, which includes the Service Code and the staff number. The Service

Record form is used to enter services to the MIS and will reflect the range of services actually in the Program's budget.

- Documentation standards associated with coding and billing requirements can be found in the OPOH, Section G, UCRM, Financial Eligibility and Billing Manual, and Service Code Definitions Appendix located on the Optum website, [www.optumsandiego.com](http://www.optumsandiego.com).

### False Claims Act

The Federal False Claims Act<sup>3</sup> (FCA) helps the government combat fraud in federal programs, purchases, and contracts. The California False Claims Act<sup>4</sup> (CFCA) applies to fraud involving state, city, county or other local government funds. All workforce members shall report any suspected inappropriate activity related to these Acts, which include acts, omissions or procedures that may violate the law or HHS procedures. Some examples include:

- Billing for services not rendered or not medically necessary
- Billing separately for services that should be a single service
- Falsifying records or duplicate billing

The CFCA encourages voluntary disclosure of fraudulent activities by rewarding individuals who report fraud and allowing courts to waive penalties for organizations that voluntarily disclose false claims. Programs and legal entities may not have any rule that prevents workforce members from reporting, nor may Programs or legal entities retaliate against a workforce member because of his or her involvement in a false claims action.

Any indication that any one of these activities is occurring should be reported immediately to the ACO at 619-338-2807, [Compliance.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Compliance.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov), or to the HHS Compliance hotline at (866) 549-0004.

If any County or Contracted program needs training on the False Claims Act, reach out to the ACO at 619-338-2808 or email [Compliance.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Compliance.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov).

### Program Integrity- Service Verification

San Diego County Behavioral Health Services (SDCBHS) established Program Integrity (PI) procedures to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse in the delivery, claiming and reimbursement of behavioral health services. County and Contracted Programs shall develop a process of verifying that paid claims were provided to beneficiaries and that services were medically necessary. County and Contracted Programs are expected to conduct regular PI activities and maintain records for audit purposes. Questions regarding PI can be directed to QI Matters email at [QIMatters.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:QIMatters.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov).

<sup>3</sup> 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733.

<sup>4</sup> Cal. Gov't Code §§ 12650-12655.

PI activities will be monitored by QM at a minimum annually during site and medical record review. QM tracks and monitors results of medical record reviews and may require a program to develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to address specific documentation concerns.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Client and community trust is fundamental to the provision of quality mental health services and abiding by confidentiality rules is a basic tenet of that trust. Thus County and Contracted workforce members shall follow all applicable state and federal laws regarding the privacy and security of information.<sup>5</sup>

#### MHP Responsibilities

In order to ensure compliance with applicable privacy laws as well as the State Agreement, the MHP has the following requirements for County and Contracted Programs. Programs are responsible for ensuring compliance with the latest requirements within the State Agreement. As of 2017, the requirements include that all workforce members shall:

- Be trained on privacy and security of client data and shall sign a certification indicating the workforce member's name and date on which the training was completed. The certifications shall be kept at least six years. Training must be provided within a reasonable period of time upon hire and at least annually thereafter. If any County or Contracted program needs assistance with privacy and security training, reach out to the ACO at 619-338-2808 or [privacyofficer.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:privacyofficer.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov).
- Sign a confidentiality statement prior to provision of client information. The statement must adhere to State Agreement requirements, currently including, at a minimum, General Use, Security and Privacy Safeguards, Unacceptable Use, and Enforcement Policies sections and retention for six years.
- Only access client records as necessary to perform their jobs.
- Will otherwise act in accordance with good judgment, clinical and ethical standards and applicable privacy laws to ensure that all written and verbal communication regarding each client's treatment and clinical history is kept confidential.
- All Contracted Programs have additional privacy and security requirements that can found in their County contract: Article 14 and the State Agreement requirements.

#### Notice of Privacy Practices

County and Contracted Programs must provide a HIPAA-compliant Notice of Privacy Practices (NPP) to all clients, as well as those with authority<sup>6</sup> to make treatment decisions on behalf of the

<sup>5</sup> Applicable privacy laws include, but are not limited to, 45 CFR 164 (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act or HIPAA), CA Civil Code 56 (California Confidentiality of Medical Information Act), 5 U.S.C. § 552a (the 1974 California Information Privacy Act), U.S.C 38 §7332 (Veterans Benefits), CA W&I Code 10850.1 (Multi- Disciplinary Teams).

<sup>6</sup> For County programs, a definition of Authority may be found at ACO Policy and Procedure HHSA L-27.

client. A notation is made on the Behavioral Health Assessment form when the NPP has been offered. Providers should ensure clients (and those with authority) understand the NPP and address any client questions about client privacy rights and the Program's privacy requirements.

County Programs shall use the HHS A NPP and adhere to all related policies and procedures (HHS A L-06), including the NPP Acknowledgement form (HHS A 23-06), all of which are available on the ACO website at [www.cosdcompliance.org](http://www.cosdcompliance.org). Contracted Programs may, but are not required, to use the HHS A NPP. If a Contracted Program chooses to use the HHS A NPP, it must replace the HHS A logo and contact information with its own and should also review the contents of the HHS A NPP to ensure it meets all applicable privacy requirements. Contracted Programs shall also have an NPP policy or procedure to ensure NPP requirements are followed by workforce members.

### Uses and Disclosures of Records

When a third party requests client information, the Program should ensure compliance with applicable privacy laws. When accepting an authorization form from an outside source, programs shall reasonably ensure the authorization is valid and verify the identity of the requestor before providing client information. County Programs shall follow the relevant ACO policies and procedures (HHS A L-25 and HHS A L-09). County Programs shall also use the HHS A-approved authorization form (HHS A 23-09) when soliciting client records from a third party.

Contracted Programs may, but are not required, to use the HHS A Authorization form. If a Contracted Program chooses to use the HHS A form, it must replace the HHS A logo and contact information with its own and should also review the contents of the HHS A form to ensure it meets all applicable privacy requirements. Contracted programs may also use their own form so long as it complies with all applicable rules and regulations. Contracted Programs shall also have an authorization policy and a Uses and Disclosures policy to ensure these requirements are followed by workforce members.

If the third party request solicits information from multiple legal entities, the Program that received the request should promptly inform the requestor of the contact information for the other entities so the requestor can make those subsequent requests.

### Client Requests for Records

When a client (or the individual with authority of the record) requests access to or a copy of their record, all Programs shall abide by applicable privacy laws and reasonably ensure the identity of the requestor before turning over client information. Remember that client requests for records are not the same as a request for records from a third party; different rules apply. County Programs shall follow the relevant ACO policies and procedures related to record requests (HHS A L-01).

Contracted Programs may, but are not required, to use the HHS A Client Record Request Form (HHS A 23-01). If a Contracted Program chooses to use the HHS A form, it must replace the HHS A logo and contact information with its own and should also review the contents of the HHS A form to ensure it meets all applicable privacy requirements. Contracted programs may also use their own

form so long as it complies with all applicable rules and regulations. Contracted Programs shall also have a Client Request for Records policy to ensure these requirements are followed by workforce members.

If the client request pertains to multiple legal entities, the Program that received the request should promptly inform the requestor of the contact information for those other entities so the requestor can make those subsequent requests.

### **Client Requests for Amendment and Client Requests for Accounting of Disclosure**

When a Program receives a request to amend CCBH records and believes amendments need to be made, or when a Program receives a request for an accounting of disclosures of CCBH records, the program should contact the SDCBHS MIS team and the ACO at 619-338-2808 or [privacyofficer.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:privacyofficer.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov), to provide Program assistance as needed.

### **Handling/Transporting Medical Record Documents**

To maintain the confidentiality and security of client records, all Programs will securely store and transport medical records, including laptops, phones, and tablets which may contain client identifying information in accordance with applicable laws and the State Agreement, including, but not limited to, the below:

- Client records must be maintained at a site that complies with Article 14 requirements, including the current State Agreement. This means no client information may be left at a site unless that site has a contract with the County that includes Article 14. If a program is unsure, they should check with their Contracting Officer's Representative (COR).
- County workforce members may, as needed, transport client records and/or keep client records overnight at a personal residence if they have completed the ACO approved data safeguarding form (HHSA 23-26) and follow the applicable ACO Policy and Procedures (HHSA L-26). Contracted workforce members should develop their own policies and procedures that comply with Article 14 and State Agreement requirements. Programs should only remove client information from program offices for approved business purposes, with prior management approval, and information shall be stored in an appropriate manner.
- Programs shall sign in and out records, as needed.
- When saving client contact information on an encrypted device, such as a phone or laptop, include the minimum client identifying information necessary. Remember that even identifying an individual as receiving mental health services is protected information. Client information should not be stored on a non-encrypted device (such as a flip phone).
- No workforce member may ever leave client information unattended in a car, even if the records are in a locked box, and/or inside a locked trunk, and/or it's only for a few minutes.
- When transporting client information out of the Program office or clinic, include only the minimum client identifying information needed. For example, a progress note written in the field might include client initials and/or CCBH number instead of client name. Documents

like this should not be signed until the staff returns to the office and has included the client's full name. Meanwhile, documents that require client signature or approval must be filled out entirely before gathering the client signature; thus more identifying information may be needed.

### Privacy Incidents

A privacy incident<sup>7</sup> is an incident that involves the following:

- Unsecured protected information in any form (including paper and electronic); or
- Any suspected incident, intrusion, or unauthorized access, use, or disclosures of protected information; or
- Any potential loss or theft of protected information.

Common Privacy Incidents may include, but are not limited to:

- Sending emails with client information to the wrong person
- Sending unencrypted email with client information outside of your legal entity
- Giving Client A's paperwork to Client B (even if you immediately get it back)
- Lost or stolen charts, paperwork, laptops, or phones
- Unlawful or unauthorized access to client information (peeking issues)

If any Program believes a privacy incident has occurred, they must complete the applicable HHSA privacy incident reporting. For Contracted Programs, this is outlined in Article 14 of your County contract. For County programs, follow ACO policies and procedure (L-24). All programs shall immediately notify the ACO Privacy Officer and COR via email, complete the ACO approved Privacy Incident Report (HHSA 23-24), and send it within 1 business day to the ACO Privacy Officer and COR via email. All of these documents can be found at [www.cosdcompliance.org](http://www.cosdcompliance.org). Programs shall also follow the process for Serious Incident Reporting. Contracted Programs must additionally ensure compliance with HIPAA breach requirements, such as risk analysis and federal reporting and inform the ACO of any applicable requirements.

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<sup>7</sup> For formal definition, County Programs may see ACO Policy L-30. Contracted Programs may review their Article 14.