



SOLANO COUNTY QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

QI INFORMATION NOTICE 21-07

DECEMBER 1, 2021

PURPOSE: To inform our Solano County staff, contractors and general community of changes in programs, policies, or procedures at the local, State and Federal levels. QI Information Notices (INs) are sent out monthly and posted on our [website](#).

GENERAL UPDATES

21-07(A) COVID-19 EXCEPTIONS UPDATES (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR)

As some COVID restrictions are lifted, many of the service and documentation exceptions allowed by DHCS will be changing. DHCS has clarified that all telehealth and telephone flexibilities available during the public health emergency will continue until December 31, 2022. More information is available at [COVID-19-Providers-and-Partners \(ca.gov\)](#)

21-07(B) BBS CE REQUIREMENT WAIVER EXPIRATION (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR)

The COVID-19 Executive Orders waiving the requirement for BBS licensees to complete 36 hours of continuing education in order to renew has now ended. This waiver was available to all licensees whose license expired between March 31, 2020 and October 31, 2021. Although the waiver allowed licensees to renew without completing required continuing education, licensees remain responsible for completing continuing education required for past renewal periods. All licensees who postponed all or any part of the continuing education requirement, **must complete all continuing education for past renewal periods by April 1, 2022**. Failure to do so will result in a citation and/or a fine if you are audited.

According to the BBS, continuing education courses taken for your past renewal cycle will not count toward your required continuing education for your current renewal cycle. For more information go to the [BBS Website](#).

21-07(C) CalAIM – CALIFORNIA ADVANCING & INNOVATING MEDI-CAL (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR):

DHCS issued a DRAFT Information Notice (IN) BH20-043 which outlines the criteria for access to Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) (except for psychiatric inpatient hospital and psychiatric health facility services) that would be effective January 1, 2022. A significant shift is that medical necessity can be established prior to a diagnosis being determined. Full details of the DRAFT IN can be accessed using this link: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Documents/DRAFT-BHIN-21-0XX-Criteria-for-Beneficiary-Access-to-SMHS.pdf>

Solano County QI will continue to monitor the finalization of this IN and implement any necessary changes in assessment forms, policies and procedures, audits, etc. when final. Once the IN is final, QI will also provide further guidance to staff regarding how to reflect these changes when completing assessments. To learn more about CalAIM, visit this [link](#).

21-07(D) NEW TELEHEALTH/TELEPHONE BILLING MODIFIERS & GUIDANCE (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR)

Effective November 1, 2021, use of telehealth and telephone modifiers is mandatory. [BHIN 21-047 Telehealth Guidance for Specialty Mental Health Services](#).

Solano MHP is working with our IT partners to create an additional Location Code for progress notes and service claims so that providers and programs have the option of selecting "Video - Telehealth" vs "Telephone - Telehealth" when providing a clinical service via telecommunications platform. Non-clinical services like Targeted Case Management, non-billable, etc. will continue to utilize the "Phone" location code.

For contractor agencies with ERH systems you will need to ensure that you also differentiate between phone, video telehealth and telephone telehealth location codes if you upload your services to Avatar.

BHIN 21-047 also states the following about documenting a video or telephone telehealth service: Providers are required to complete service documentation in the patient record in the same manner as an in-person visit. Verbal or written consent for telehealth or telephone services shall be documented in the patient record. The

fact that a service was performed by telehealth or telephone must be clearly documented in the chart and must be reflected in the claim

For additional questions on Telehealth services, see DHCS' webpage at the following link: [Telehealth FAQ \(ca.gov\)](#)

21-07(E) RFP FOR NEW COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR):

On October 5th, 2021, Solano County and partners held a [groundbreaking ceremony](#) for a new construction project that will create 32 beds for our community on the Beck campus from SB82 and state grants. There will be a 16-bed board and care housing unit for homeless individuals and a 16-bed intensive residential mental health treatment unit for those in jail diversion.

The facility will be operated by a vendor with experience providing residential services. A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been posted and applications are due by or before December 17, 2021, 5:00 PM, PST. Link to the procurement site is [here](#) – see open RFP Ref. #: 958-1014-22.

AVATAR UPDATES

21-07(F) SPECIAL POPULATION TRACKING FORM UPDATED INSTRUCTIONS (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR):

QI wants to remind the system to use the Special Population Tracking MH form in Avatar to help identify clients who are Child Welfare dependents, Juvenile Probation wards, and/or conserved. It is important to keep the information current by updating the form if anything changes, including if the client is no longer a member of the special population status and when you are closing the case to the system. The form has been added to several Avatar bundles for your convenience and it can also be accessed as a stand-alone form. Instructions are titled "Avatar Special Population Tracking MH".

- ◆ County staff can access these instructions in the [Avatar Manual on SharePoint](#) (Item #6)
- ❖ Contractor staff can access these instructions on the [Network of Care under EHR Training Materials](#)

We look forward to continuing to partner on implementing this and future State and Federally mandated initiatives that help to inform and protect the rights of those we serve.

Approved by Rob George, LCSW
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