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|  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>County of Sacramento</b><br/> <b>Department of Health Services</b><br/> <b>Division of Behavioral Health Services</b><br/> <b>Policy and Procedure</b></p> | Policy Issuer<br>(Unit/Program) | <b>SUPT</b>                       |
|  | Policy Number                   | <b>SUPT-03-03</b>                 |
|  | Effective Date                  | <b>07-01-19</b>                   |
|  | Revision Date                   | <b>08-12-21</b>                   |
| Title: <b>Timeliness to Services</b>   |                                 | Functional Area: <b>Treatment</b> |
| Approved By: <b>Signed version available upon request</b>  |                                 |                                   |
| <b>Lori Miller, LCSW</b><br>Division Manager, Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Services  |                                 |                                   |

**BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:**

The County will ensure that all beneficiaries have timely access to the services and levels of care specified in the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) implementation plan. The County standards for timeliness of service are in alignment with those of the County Mental Health Plan (MHP); however, official standards will be revised to remain in compliance with any future defined timeliness standards for DMC-ODS services. Timeliness standards will be examined and evaluated as part of the Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Services Quality Improvement work plan.

**DEFINITIONS:**

N/A

**PURPOSE:**

To provide Drug Medi-Cal beneficiaries with timely access to substance use disorder treatment services throughout the Sacramento County DMC-ODS network.

**DETAILS:**

All contracted providers will be required to have hours of operation during which services are provided to Drug Medi-Cal beneficiaries that are no less than the hours of operation during which the provider offers services to non-Medi-Cal patients. In general, initial assessments will be scheduled as soon as possible, with a 10-day standard for intake appointment after initial request for outpatient services. Narcotic Treatment Programs (NTP) and Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP) require a 3-day standard for an intake appointment after initial request for services. Beneficiaries will be scheduled for follow up appointments in accordance to their individual treatment plan.

When an individual calls the toll-free number, or calls/presents at an existing treatment program, a screening will be conducted to obtain relevant information to identify initial treatment needs to link clients to the most appropriate level of care. If the individual needs interpretation assistance, it will be provided through an appropriate bilingual staff, an identified interpreter or a specialized language assistance line.

The County and all contracted providers will meet the following standards of timely access to care:

**First Face-to-Face Appointment:** County System of Care staff, either through the main office or at one of the various community-based locations, will assist beneficiaries in establishing the recommended level of care. In general, initial assessments will be scheduled as soon as possible, with a 10-day standard for intake appointment after initial request for outpatient services. NTP and OTP requests for service will require a 3-day standard for Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) services. Beneficiaries will be scheduled to follow up appointments in accordance to their individual treatment plan.

**Urgent Conditions:** The County is committed to ensure that services for urgent situations are provided immediately within 24 hours.

**Emergencies:** Upon identification of emergency conditions, Access Line clinicians, contract providers, and any other provider will contact the appropriate emergency medical services for intervention and when appropriate initiate intake at a detox or other urgent care facility.

**After-Hours Care:** Should beneficiaries require intervention outside of normal business hours, they will have access to a 24/7 toll-free phone number with the availability of on-call staff. When an individual calls the toll-free number, or calls/presents at an existing treatment program, a screening will be conducted to obtain relevant information to identify initial treatment needs to link clients to the most appropriate level of care. If the individual needs interpretation assistance, it will be provided through an appropriate bilingual staff, an identified interpreter or a specialized language assistance line. The County will require contract providers to establish procedures for addressing afterhours care needs as appropriate for the level of care.

If timeliness standards are not met, a Notice of Adverse Benefit Determination (NOABD) letter will be issued. This will include detailed information regarding the delay in timeliness and will offer information to the beneficiary as to their rights and steps for appeal. These notices will comply with the guidelines defined by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Information Notice 18-010.

**REFERENCE(S)/ATTACHMENTS:**

DHCS Information Notice 18-010  
Sacramento County DMC-ODS Implementation Plan

**RELATED POLICIES:**

SUPT P&P 03-13 DMC-ODS After-Hours Response

**DISTRIBUTION:**

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|                | SUPT County Counselors            |                | SUPT Adult Treatment Providers |
|                | SUPT Collaborative Courts         |                | SUPT Youth Treatment Providers |
|                | SUPT System of Care               |                | ADS Advisory Board             |
|                | SUPT Administrative Support Staff |                | SUPT SUD Subcontractors        |
|                | SUPT Options for Recovery         |                | BHS Mental Health Services     |
|                | SUPT Proposition 36               |                | BHS Quality Management         |

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Lori Miller, LCSW

[MillerLori@saccounty.net](mailto:MillerLori@saccounty.net)