M. BH-CONNECT

In 2025, the County of San Diego opted in to the Behavioral Health Community-Based Organized Networks of Equitable Care and Treatment (BHCONNECT), a statewide initiative developed by DHCS as part of California's Behavioral Health Transformation. BHCONNECT aims to strengthen and expand the behavioral health continuum of care for MediCal members with significant mental health and substance use needs by improving access, coordination, and -community-based supports.

The County began phased implementation in 2025, which includes Federal Financial Participation for Specialty Mental Health Services in Institutions for Mental Diseases, Enhanced Community Health Worker Services, and expanded or clarified MediCal coverage for several Evidence Based Practices (EBPs) including:

- Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)
- Forensic ACT (FACT)
- Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) for First Episode Psychosis
- Clubhouse Services
- Enhanced Community Health Worker (CHW) Services*
- Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment*
- Children's EBPs such as Multisystemic Therapy (MST), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), and High-Fidelity Wraparound (HFW)
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*Available in SMHS and DMC-ODS delivery systems

Fidelity Assessments & Medi-Cal Fidelity Designation for BH-CONNECT EBPs

When implemented in alignment with evidence-based models, BH-CONNECT EBPs consistently produce positive outcomes for individuals with significant behavioral health needs. Maintaining fidelity through scheduled assessments is a core requirement for each contracted EBP to ensure services are delivered as intended and to identify areas for improvement. To support this effort, DHCS has engaged Centers of Excellence (COEs) to provide counties and behavioral health providers with no-cost training, technical assistance, and fidelity monitoring or accreditation support. COEs will conduct fidelity assessments at regular intervals for each EBP. BHS contractors are required to work within their contract scope of work and involve their COR in all conversations with the designated COE and EBP conversations.

Additional information is available on the DHCS COE website.

Claiming and Medi-Cal Payment for BH-CONNECT EBPs

Providers must adhere to DHCS guidance, including fidelity, documentation, and reporting standards, and maintain coordination with Medi-Cal claiming standards and other funding sources. BHIN 25-009 outlines guidance regarding coverage of EBPs available under Medi-Cal as part of BH-CONNECT including requirements for:

- Medi-Cal Fidelity Designation
- Claiming Requirements
- Bundled Rates
- Full and Partial Rates
- EBP Payment Requirements

- Prior Authorization
- Other Billing Limitations

For more information about BH-CONNECT, please visit:
https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/CalAIM/Pages/BH-CONNECT.aspx