

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY  
Behavioral Health Services**

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

**Subject: Accessing Child Psychiatric Services**

**Policy Number: 2462**

**Date Effective: December 4, 2017**

**Pages: 2**

**Replaces: January 26, 2009**

**Responsible for Updating:  
Chief of Psychiatry**

**Approval:**   
Behavioral Health Director

 12-4-17  
Date

**POLICY:**

Referrals to access Child Psychiatric care will allow for consultation, evaluation and treatment from County and contract clinicians.

**PURPOSE:**

To establish a clear and consistent procedure for the appropriate referral process and access to Child Psychiatric Services.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**1. System of Care** - Child/adolescent who meets Medical Necessity for Specialty Mental Health/EPSTD criteria and may be at risk of out of home placement or a higher level of care, as defined in WIC Section 5600.3

**PROCEDURES:**

**1. Referral for Intake Appointment**

a. After it has been determined that a System of Care client needs a psychiatric evaluation, either:

The County Clinician will complete the Children's Behavioral Health form "Request for Psychiatric Evaluation/Intake", get supervisor approval and forward to Children's Reception for scheduling an appointment.

The Contractor Clinician will complete the Children's Behavioral Health form "Referral for Child Psychiatric Consultation" and forward it to the Children's Division's intake coordinator, who will review the form for completeness and then forward it to the Children's ACCESS Liaison.

- b. Parents or clients can direct their requests for a psychiatric evaluation to their child's Clinician.
- c. Contractors who directly coordinate their clients must make the referral for a psychiatric evaluation through the Children's Division's intake coordinator.

## **2. Care Coordinator Responsibilities**

The following procedures shall be followed by County and Contract Clinician's.

- a. **Mental Health Assessment**  
All Psychiatric referrals must have a completed, updated Psychosocial assessment, except in the situation of a youth being discharged from a psychiatric hospital or the CSP, and who is not open to County or Contractor services.
- b. **Parent/Guardian Participation**  
The Clinician will make sure that the parent/guardian will attend the intake appointment/s and all subsequent follow-up appointments with the Child Psychiatrist as appropriate.
- c. **Care Coordinator Attendance**  
The Clinician will attend the intake appointment and subsequent appointments, as needed.
- d. **Linguistic needs**  
The County or Contract Clinician is responsible for ensuring that appropriate language interpretation is provided at every psychiatric appointment as necessary.

## **3. System of Care Closure**

When the care of a youth client has been closed to System of Care, but the client still requires medications they will be referred to either Beacon, IBH or his/her primary care physician for follow-up, as most appropriate

---

**PRIOR VERSIONS: January 26, 2009**

**REFERENCES: N/A**

**FORMS/ATTACHMENTS: County requests - Request for Psychiatric Evaluation/Intake;  
Contractor requests - Referral for Child Psychiatric Consultation**