

Communication from the Office of the ACBH Director -

DATE: April 16, 2021

TO: Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (ACBH) Stakeholders

FROM: Karyn L. Tribble, PsyD, LCSW, Director 

SUBJECT: External Quality Review of Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health FY20-21 Findings

As many are aware, every year ACBH participates in an external quality system review that provides our department with recommendations and information on innovative or best-practices to improve county behavioral health department operations. Specifically, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires this annual, independent external evaluation of State Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) by an External Quality Review Organization (EQRO). Last November 3-November 5, 2020, *Behavioral Health Concepts, Inc.*, the state of California's External Quality Review Organization (CalEQRO), conducted one such review of our department. This review of Alameda County's Specialty Mental Health Services resulted in important feedback delivered to our system.

The goal and function of the EQRO is to analyze and evaluate aggregate information on **quality, timeliness, and access to health care services**. Review protocols include validation of performance measures, performance improvement projects (PIP), information system capabilities, network adequacy, beneficiary satisfaction surveys, and evaluation of performance and quality management key components.

We are pleased to inform you that ACBH *significantly improved its ratings* across all performance and quality management key components, with an overall rating of **96% for FY20/21, compared to 83% in FY19/20**.

	Performance & Quality Management Key Component	FY19/20 %	FY20/21 Score	Max Score	FY20/21 %
1.	Access to Care	96%	48	48	100%
2.	Timeliness of Services	67%	63	72	88%
3.	Quality of Care	57%	69	70	99%
4.	Beneficiary Progress/Outcomes	73%	37	38	97%
5.	Structure and Operations	80%	83	84	99%
	OVERALL TOTAL →	83%	300	312	96%

There are seven (7) recommendations for this coming year regarding; (i) **Timeliness** - investigate timeliness of children's urgent appointments; offer psychiatric appointments within standard; (ii) **Quality** - include parents/caregivers in assessment & treatment planning process; (iii) **Foster Care** - investigate reasons for low rate of timely post hospital discharge appointments; investigate high hospital readmissions; and (iv)



Information Systems - public website with performance dashboards; monitor project management staff for implementation of billing/managed care systems. There were no recommendations for PIPs, Access to Care, Beneficiary Outcomes, or Structure & Operations.

All of this information essentially means that we have seen great progress, and also highlights that ongoing quality, organizational, and service delivery improvements are integral to providing support to our clients and the community. In March of 2021, we recently completed our Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) EQRO visit for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Services. We are awaiting the final EQRO report, but understand that we have also demonstrated significant quality improvements in the SUD system of care as well. Once received, we intend to share those results with our various stakeholders in the coming months. Until that time, we are preparing for our next EQRO visits in October 2021 and February 2022, for our Mental Health and Substance Use systems, respectively.

Our Quality Management Team's focus and leadership have been critical, and together with our Information Systems, and our Systems of Care, we are yet again prepared to move our system forward towards its goals. Please join me in recognizing the tireless efforts of each and every one of our valued stakeholders, staff, and leaders; and most importantly the continual feedback provided by our clients and family members. Your individual contributions have made and continue to make a difference.