

September 14, 2022

Update To Timely Access Standards For Behavioral Health Providers

Dear behavioral health providers,

This message is to notify you of updates to the timely access standards for appointment availability in select mental health services.

In addition to existing standards, Senate Bill 221 requires the following, effective immediately:

- Follow-up appointments for non-urgent mental health or substance use care are offered within 10 business days of the prior appointment and within 10 business days of any new request. This timeline may be extended if the referring or treating provider has determined and noted in the relevant record that a longer waiting time will not have a detrimental impact on the health of the enrollee.

Be advised that the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and the Health Plan of San Mateo (HPSM) both conduct routine timely access surveys of appointment availability. DHCS's phone survey occurs quarterly and may include requests for information including urgent and non-urgent appointment availability, languages spoken by clinicians and staff, and awareness of HPSM interpreter services.

As a reminder, HPSM's annual Provider Appointment Availability survey will occur September through December 2022. We may request information via email, fax, and phone, including urgent and non-urgent appointment availability and standard office procedures. Providers are required to participate if randomly sampled for either survey.

For questions, please contact our Provider Services department at PSInquiries@hpsm.org.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our community,
The Health Plan of San Mateo