

## How to Use the Sobering Center Benefit for Medi-Cal Members

### The benefit can reduce the burden on busy emergency departments.

Emergency department (ED) physicians and other providers are in a key position to refer individuals to sobering centers. The sobering center benefit is part of the CalAIM Community Supports (CS) program.

#### What are sobering centers?

Sobering centers are alternative destinations for individuals who are found to be publicly intoxicated due to alcohol and/or other drugs, and who would otherwise be transported to the emergency department or jail. These individuals are mainly people experiencing homelessness or those with unstable living situations. Sobering centers offer a safe, supportive environment to become sober.

#### Sobering care is not “treatment”

- A sobering center is not considered a treatment program.
- The center’s goal is to reduce harms related to and recover from the effects of acute intoxication.
- Sobering is distinct from detoxification (“detox”), rehabilitation and sober living.
  - Detoxification – Social or medical, with the goal of removing substance(s) from body over number of days.
  - Treatment/rehabilitation – Typically aimed at long-term abstinence and recovery.
  - Sober Living post-rehabilitation residences – Facility where all residents are practicing sobriety.

#### Sobering centers can reduce emergency department visits

Sobering centers offer potential cost savings as an alternative to hospital ED visits

#### Discover Helpful Tools to Support Your Office

Go to [cahealthwellness.com/providers](https://cahealthwellness.com/providers) to quickly access information to help you in your everyday interactions with California Health & Wellness Plan. The site includes:

- The Provider manual
- Provider Pulse newsletters
- Health Equity, Cultural and Linguistics Resources
- Provider News
- Education, Training and Other Materials
- And more!

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#### THIS UPDATE APPLIES TO:

- Physicians
- Independent Practice Associations
- Hospitals
- Ancillary Providers
- Community Supports (CS) Providers
- Enhanced Care Management (ECM) Providers

#### Online Access

[www.CAHealthWellness.com](https://www.CAHealthWellness.com)

- Secure Access
- Provider Billing manuals
- Provider forms
- Quick reference guides FAQs
- Secure messaging
- Prior Auth Code Checker Tool
- Clinical guidelines
- California Health & Wellness news
- Member eligibility
- PCP verification
- PCP panel lists
- Submit, inquire, or correct claims
- Submit authorizations or check authorization status

#### Call Us at 877-658-0305

Monday to Friday  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (PT)

#### Fax Numbers

**Prior Authorizations:** 866-724-5057

**Concurrent Review:** 855-556-7910

**Admissions:** 855-556-7907

**Appeals:** 855-460-1009

**Case Management:** 855-556-7909

#### Pharmacy

**Medi-Cal Rx** – Self-administered drugs and supplies obtained under the pharmacy benefit

- Prior auth fax: 800-869-4325
- Help Desk: 800-977-2273

**AcariaHealth** – Specialty Pharmacy

- Prior auth fax: 855-217-0926
- Phone: 855-535-1815

**CHWP Pharmacy Dept** – Provider-administered drugs requiring prior auth

- Prior auth fax: 877-259-6961
- Phone: 877-658-0305

**Medication Prior Authorization Form is available at**

[www.CAHealthWellness.com](https://www.CAHealthWellness.com).

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for alcohol intoxication. ED visits have been on the increase and number about 2.7 million annually at an estimated cost of \$9 billion.<sup>1</sup>

### **Sobering centers can help the law enforcement community**

Sobering centers can save time for law enforcement officers who need to be in the field. Dropping someone off at a sobering center can take only minutes compared to several hours that can be needed to process a person's jailing.<sup>1</sup>

### **Sobering center services**

A sobering center can:

- Coordinate with county behavioral health agencies and conduct warm hand-offs for behavioral health services.
- Provide screening and linkage to ongoing supportive services.
- Partner with law enforcement, emergency personnel and outreach teams.
- Identify members with emergent physical health conditions and arrange transport to appropriate medical care.
- Use best practices for members who are experiencing homelessness and have complex conditions.

### **How to refer members to a sobering center and other services**

Below are two resources to connect Medi-Cal members to sobering centers and other supportive services such as financial assistance, food pantries, medical care and other no-cost or reduced-cost help.

- **Findhelp** – Search for the Community Supports program and/or no-cost or low-cost direct services to support members with social determinants of health needs. The platform makes it easy to use to refer members to CS providers and close the loop on referrals. Follow the steps below to begin a search.
  - 1 Go to <https://communitysupportsecm.findhelp.com>.
  - 2 Enter a ZIP Code and click *Search*.
  - 3 Choose a topic from the top, then select a subtopic. Services vary based on the ZIP Code.
  - 4 Select the CS provider or service that matches what the member needs.
- **Provider directory** – If you identify a member who qualifies for CS, use the provider directory.
  - 1 Go to the CalAIM resource page at [www.cahealthwellness.com/providers/resources/calaim-resources.html](http://www.cahealthwellness.com/providers/resources/calaim-resources.html). Click *Forms & tools*, then select *Provider Directory*.
  - 2 Find a CS provider who matches the support services the member needs.
  - 3 Contact the CS provider based on the directory information and give the member's information.

### **How to authorize sobering center service**

The sobering center service is covered for a duration of less than 24 hours. Authorize one unit with no continuous extensions. Members must meet the following criteria to qualify for sobering center service:

<b>Eligibility</b>	<b>Restrictions</b>
Individuals aged 18 and older who are intoxicated and:  Conscious.  Cooperative.  Able to walk.  Nonviolent.  Free from any medical distress.	Member is participating in a duplicative state funded sobering program.

<p>Has no apparent underlying symptoms.</p> <p>Members who would be transported to the emergency department or a jail.</p> <p>Members who present to an emergency department and are appropriate for a Sobering Center.</p>	
<p><b>Program overview</b></p>	<p><b>Service requirements</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide members (primarily those who are homeless or in unstable living situations) with a safe, supportive environment to become sober.</li> <li>• Provide services such as: medical triage, lab testing, a temporary bed, rehydration and food service, treatment for nausea, wound and dressing changes, shower and laundry facilities, substance use education and counseling, navigation and warm hand-offs for additional substance use services or other necessary health care services, and homeless care support services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct coordination with behavioral health agency, and warm hand-offs for additional behavioral health services.</li> <li>• Screening and linkage to supportive services such as mental health, substance use disorder treatment and housing options.</li> <li>• Partnership with law enforcement, emergency personnel, and outreach teams to identify and divert individuals to Sobering Centers.</li> <li>• Utilize best practices for members experiencing homelessness and who have complex health and/or behavioral health.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Total lifetime maximum:</b> N/A</p>	
<p><b>Code:</b> H0014 U6 Alcohol and/or drug services; ambulatory detoxification.</p>	
<p><b>State services to be avoided:</b> Examples of services to be avoided include but are not limited to inpatient and outpatient hospital services, emergency department services and emergency transportation services.</p>	
<p><b>Allowable Community Support providers:</b> Providers must have experience and expertise with providing these unique services.<sup>2</sup></p>	

**Additional information**

Providers are encouraged to access California Health & Wellness Plan’s provider portal online at [www.CAHealthWellness.com](http://www.CAHealthWellness.com) for real-time information, including eligibility verification, claims status, prior authorization status, plan summaries, and more.

If you have questions regarding the information contained in this update, contact CHWP at 877-658-0305.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.chcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SoberingCentersExplainedInnovativeSolutionAcuteIntoxication.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of possible providers: Sobering Centers or other appropriate and allowable substance use disorder facilities.