

Share Patient Information to Help Improve Outcomes



You can help improve the results of treatment for patients when you share medical records with their behavioral health specialists.



The exchange of details is crucial to:

- Avoid medication interactions from other medical conditions.
- Address both medical and behavioral health symptoms and illnesses.
- Monitor vital signs, including body mass index (BMI) and blood pressure.
- Make sure medical histories are complete and accurate, including lab tests with results.



When physicians should share details with behavioral health specialists

- When you refer a patient to a behavioral health specialist.
- When a patient has a medical condition that could impact their behavioral health treatment.
- When you report a concurrent behavioral health condition for a new or current patient for:
 - A substance use disorder, and/or a major mental illness, or
 - When there is a change in one of these conditions.



Exchange of medical records guidelines

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) permits the exchange of general medical record information (excluding psychotherapy notes) for treatment between physicians and specialists, without patient consent.

Both providers and behavioral health specialists must obtain prior authorization from the patient prior to the exchange of psychotherapy notes or records about substance use (which includes alcohol and other drug use) treatment.

- Psychotherapy notes means notes documenting or analyzing the contents of conversation during a private counseling session or a group, joint, or family counseling session. The notes must be separate from the rest of the individual's medical record.
- Federal regulations under 42 CFR Part 2 restrict any use of the confidential information to criminally investigate or prosecute any alcohol or drug abuse patients.

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Patient cases to refer to a behavioral health specialist

- Has a polysubstance use disorder.
- Has comorbid psychiatric and substance use disorders.
- Has a psychiatric condition that cannot be well managed in the primary care setting.
- Has had a brief intervention but requires further treatment.
- Needs pharmacological treatments for addiction or mental health conditions that are beyond the scope of your practice.

Refer patients for behavioral health services

You may need to refer a patient for behavioral health services. MHN administers behavioral health services to California Health & Wellness Plan members. MHN recommends partnering with the member to call Customer Service. This allows the member to participate in the process and select a provider of their choice.

Keep a copy of the patient's authorization in their medical records

You must obtain the patient's authorization prior to disclosing or requesting protected health information (PHI) from another provider.

Online resources

Go to www.cahealthwellness.com/providers/quality-improvement.html for online help to find provider tip sheets and more.

Questions?

Contact the Quality Improvement Department by email at HEDIS_help@cahealthwellness.com.



Questions about behavioral health services?

Contact MHN Customer Service at the number found on the back of the member's ID card, then select member services.

The signed Authorization for Disclosure of Protected Health Information form is required for MHN to discuss member-specific eligibility, benefits or history of care. You or your staff may contact MHN if, during a medical evaluation, there is indication that a psychiatric or substance abuse problem is present.