

JULY 2026

PURPOSE: To keep Stanislaus County staff, contractors, and the community informed about updates to local, state, and federal programs, policies, and procedures, QS Information Notices will be distributed monthly and posted on the Stanislaus County website.



GENERAL UPDATES

BHRS ASOC Manager Announcement

BHRS is excited to welcome Jose Tijerina, LCSW as the new Manager III for the Adult System of Care (ASOC), effective June 1, 2026. With nearly 20 years of county service across child, youth, adult, and older adult systems, Mr. Tijerina brings extensive experience in crisis intervention, school-based behavioral health, older adult services, and outreach to unhoused individuals. His strong background in integrated care and collaboration will support the ongoing growth and effectiveness of ASOC. For additional details, see the 5/29/26 announcement from Gonzalo Cuevas.

BHRS CAMS Manager Announcement

BHRS is excited to welcome Valerie Vecente, LMFT, as the new Manager III for Crisis, Access and Medication Services (CAMS), effective June 1, 2026. Ms. Vecente has extensive experience in clinical leadership, program development, and data-informed service delivery. She will oversee psychiatric medication clinics, crisis services, and access programs, supporting the department's mission to provide high-quality, and accessible behavioral health services. For additional details, please see the 6/2/26 announcement from Sara Jacobo.

BHRS Chief of the Supportive Services Division Announcement

BHRS is pleased to welcome Tess L. Drake as the new Chief of the Supportive Services Division. Ms. Drake has extensive experience in behavioral health administration, fiscal and operational management, and regulatory compliance. In her new role, she will guide efforts to enhance supportive services, optimize resources, and advance BHRS's mission to provide high-quality, compassionate care. Please join us in welcoming Tess to the BHRS Leadership Team! For additional details, please see the 6/11/26 announcement from Behavioral Health Director Ruben Imperial.

BHRS Fiscal Manager Announcement

BHRS is excited to welcome Vanessa Anderson as the new Fiscal Manager IV, effective June 15, 2026. In this role, she will lead the Fiscal Services Division, overseeing financial analysis, audits, accounting, the business office, cost plan systems, and fiscal policy development. Please join us in welcoming Vanessa to BHRS. For additional details, please see the 6/15/26 announcement from Sara Jacobo.

JULY 2026

Updated BHRS Policies Now Available on the Intranet

Several BHRS policies have been updated and are now posted on the BHRS Intranet. Staff are encouraged to review the revisions to stay current on all requirements and standards. For additional details, please refer to the 6/23/26 email from Juanita Solis.

Updated policies include:

- [30.2.116 - Forms for Limited English-Speaking Members](#)
- [30.2.138 - Translation of Written Materials](#)
- [80.5.101 - BHSA Issue Resolution Process](#)
- [90.1.106 - Language Assistance Services to Limited English-Speaking Members and Family Members](#)
- [90.1.113 - Services to Members with Visual Impairments](#)
- [90.1.126 - Cultural Competence Program](#)
- [90.6.133 - Relapse Plan for Licensed Residential and AOD Certified Outpatient Substance Use Disorder Treatment Facilities](#)
- [90.10.100 - Mental Health Services Act \(MHSA\) Annual Update](#)
- [90.10.101 - Mental Health Services Act Prevention and Early Intervention Cost Allocation Plan](#)
- [90.7.103 - Mobile Crisis Dispatch](#)
- [90.7.104 - Access, Crisis, and Support Line](#)
- [90.1.107 - Presumptive Transfer \(AB1299/AB1051\) - Access to Mental Health Services](#)
- [30.2.136 - Privacy Policy](#)
- [50.1.122 - Concurrent Review for Psychiatric Inpatient Hospitals and Psychiatric Health Facility Services](#)
- [50.1.116 - Authorization for Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health and DMC-ODS Residential SUD Treatment Services](#)

QUALITY SERVICES (QS) & RISK MANAGEMENT (RM) UPDATES

Medi-Cal Informing Materials – July

This month, we are highlighting the Change of Provider Forms available on the Stanislaus County BHRS website, intranet, and extranet. These forms are offered in both English and Spanish to ensure accessibility for all members. Medi-Cal members have the right to request a change of provider at any time, and BHRS will respond to each Change of Provider Request within 10 working days. For more information, scan the QR code.



English Version



Spanish Version



STANISLAUS COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & RECOVERY SERVICES: QUALITY SERVICES

QS INFORMATION NOTICE

JULY 2026

New Electronic Grievance/Appeal/Expedited Appeal Form Now Live in symplr

BHRS has launched the new electronic Grievance/Appeal/Expedited Appeal form in symplr. As part of this update, all Medi-Cal grievance and appeal paper forms and lobby posters have been revised, and a QR code to the digital form has been added. Updated materials are available on the intranet, extranet, and BHRS public website.

Staff are asked to immediately remove outdated forms and posters and replace them with the updated versions. Programs must continue to ensure paper forms are available in lobbies and provided to members who prefer them (English – blue, Spanish – yellow). When a paper form is received by a program, staff must enter the information into the symplr digital form and attach the scanned paper form. Paper submissions via email or mail are no longer accepted by programs; only members continue to have the option to send in the paper forms via mail.

Please note that grievances may be filed by a provider or an authorized representative on the member's behalf. Appeals and expedited appeals may be filed by an authorized representative on the member's behalf. Authorized representatives must have the member's written consent to file grievances, appeals, or expedited appeals on the member's behalf. For additional information, please refer to the 6/23/26 email from Risk Management. If you have questions about this process, please contact Risk Management at RiskManagement@stanbhrs.org or 209-525-6043.

SMARTCARE UPDATES

SmartCare Update – Released June 1, 2026

SmartCare has issued a new system update effective June 1, 2026. As part of this release, the following document names have been updated:

- “California CANS” is now “California IP-CANS”
- “CalAIM Assessment” is now “Mental Health Assessment”

For more information, please refer to the SmartCare email sent on 6/1/26, or contact the SmartCare team at smartcare@stanbhrs.org.

SmartCare Update: Procedure Code Name Changes - Released June 12, 2026

As of June 12, 2026, SmartCare has updated the display names of several procedure codes to better align with the DMC-ODS Service Table. This update reflects name changes only; no coding or service requirements have changed.

	Current Display Name	New Display Name
H0001	SUD Screening	SUD Assessment
G2011, G3096, G3097	ASAM or other structured SUD assessment	SUD Structured Assessment (not tobacco)
H0049	Alcohol or Drug Screening	SUD Screening

For more information, please see the SmartCare email sent on 6/12/26 or contact the SmartCare team at smartcare@stanbhrs.org.

JULY 2026

SmartCare Update: New Diagnosis Linking Requirements – Released June 24, 2026

As part of the May 26 SmartCare MSP Release, a key change was implemented to ensure diagnoses accurately reflect each client's current episode of care and to prevent billing issues. Diagnosis documents must now be linked to the specific client program enrollment (Client Program ID), rather than only to the program. This means a diagnosis from a previous enrollment will no longer meet documentation requirements for a new one.

What this means for staff:

- A new diagnosis document is required for every new program enrollment, even when the diagnosis remains the same.
- This supports appropriate clinical reassessment and ensures billing is tied to the correct episode of care.
- "Missing Billing Diagnosis" errors must be resolved by having an LPHA complete a new diagnosis document linked to the current enrollment.

Additional notes:

- Clinicians may still pull forward information from prior enrollments when clinically appropriate, but a new document must be created and linked to the active enrollment.
- If a client is only being screened and does not qualify for services, staff may document the appropriate Z code without creating a new diagnosis document.

Please refer to the SmartCare team's email sent on 6/24/26. If you need assistance or clarification, contact the SmartCare team at smartcare@stanbhhs.org.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INFORMATION NOTICE (BHIN) UPDATES

BHIN 26-022 - New NTP Counseling Unit Threshold & Manual Review Requirements

DHCS has issued new policy guidance establishing an outlier threshold of nine (9) or more counseling units per day for services delivered in Narcotic Treatment Programs (NTPs). When this threshold is reached across individual, group, or (for DMC-ODS) family counseling, counties must conduct a manual medical necessity review and apply the GD modifier before claims will be considered for payment. Claims at or above the threshold without this modifier will be automatically denied. The GD modifier is part of the Medi-Cal approved billing modifier list and is often used for unusually high service units. This change responds to findings from a 2022 federal audit and aims to ensure appropriate utilization, strengthen documentation, and safeguard Medi-Cal funding. The policy becomes effective 90 days after publication (September 20, 2026). For full details, please review BHIN 26-022.

JULY 2026

BHIN 26-021 – Regional Average Rates for Non-Contract Psychiatric Inpatient Hospitals (FY 25–26)

DHCS has released the updated regional average per-diem rates for psychiatric inpatient hospitals that do not have negotiated contracts with county Mental Health Plans. These rates are required under Title 9, Section 1820.115, and apply to all Fee-for-Service/Medi-Cal hospitals without MHP contracts. The FY 25–26 rates are effective July 1, 2025. For full details, please review BHIN 26-021.

BHIN 26-023 - 2026 Behavioral Health Network Adequacy Certification Requirements

BHIN 26-023 provides updated, comprehensive requirements for Behavioral Health Plans (BHPs), Integrated Behavioral Health Plans (IBHPs), and Drug Medi-Cal–Integrated Behavioral Health Delivery Systems (DMC-IBHDS) to demonstrate compliance with state and federal network adequacy standards. It outlines the documentation counties must submit, the timelines, standards for provider capacity, time/distance, timely access, language access, and procedures for monitoring, corrective action, and potential sanctions. For full details, please review BHIN 26-023.

COMPLIANCE, PRIVACY, & ETHICS UPDATES

HIPAA Security Rule Update: Actions You Can Take Today

As cybersecurity threats continue to increase across the healthcare industry, proposed updates to the HIPAA Security Rule emphasize stronger safeguards for electronic protected health information (ePHI). Expected areas of focus include multi-factor authentication (MFA), encryption, security risk assessments, incident response planning, and workforce training.

What You Can Do:

- ✓ Use multi-factor authentication whenever available.
- ✓ Verify email recipients before sending protected information, ensure there is no PHI in the subject line, and verify the email is encrypted if sending outside of your designated network.
- ✓ Lock your computer when stepping away from your workstation.
- ✓ Use only approved systems and file-sharing platforms to access or transmit sensitive information.
- ✓ Be alert for phishing emails, suspicious links, and unexpected requests for information.
- ✓ Report suspected privacy or security incidents immediately according to department procedures.

Every employee plays a critical role in protecting the privacy and security of the members we serve. Taking these simple steps helps reduce risk, strengthen compliance, and safeguard sensitive information from unauthorized access or disclosure.

If you have any questions related to QS Information Notices, contact Quality Services by:

- Email: QSEmail@stanbhhs.org, PHONE: (209) 525-6043, or FAX: (209) 558-4324