



Mental Health Coverage During Pregnancy

Background on Medi-Cal Coverage for Pregnancy – Restricted and Full-Scope

Medi-Cal covers over 46% of the births in California (2006) and well over 50% in Los Angeles. Some women may be on “full-scope” Medi-Cal, which includes a full range of medically necessary services, including mental health care. Women with full-scope should not have coverage barriers for mental health services either during or after pregnancy (although there may be problems finding a provider).

Other pregnant women may be on Medi-Cal with “restricted” coverage for pregnancy-related services only. These women may not be eligible for full-scope services either because of immigration status or because their income or assets are too high (you must be fairly poor to be on Medi-Cal as an adult unless you are pregnant). Women with restricted Medi-Cal lose their pregnancy-related services at the end of the month in which the 60th day postpartum occurs, unless their income and assets are low enough to qualify for continuing coverage.

Mental Health Coverage in Medi-Cal

Mental health services may be billed to Medi-Cal as a pregnancy-related condition in restricted or full-scope Medi-Cal throughout pregnancy and the postpartum period.

If the woman continues to have Medi-Cal eligibility after the postpartum period ends, her mental health coverage continues without regard to pregnancy.

If a woman loses her Medi-Cal eligibility at the end of the postpartum period, clinics may use Early Access to Primary Care Program funds for the woman’s mental health care, or the woman may be referred to the county mental health care system (see below). Many community clinics and other providers are “Public Private Partnerships” (PPPs) but PPP funding does not include mental health.

Mental Health Coverage in Medi-Cal’s Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program (CPSP)

CPSP is a Medi-Cal program for pregnant women in either restricted or full-scope Medi-Cal. CPSP integrates nutrition, psychosocial, and health education assessments, interventions, and perinatal education with basic obstetrical care to decrease the incidence of low birth weight in infants and improve pregnancy outcomes. CPSP can be billed for psychosocial services after the psychosocial assessment has been done (see pages 5-6 of the Medi-Cal Provider Manual below). Services are reimbursable to CPSP providers only, but if a CPSP provider contracts with a non-provider for services they can “split billing” (p. 3). Billing codes and amount of time allowed for CPSP psychosocial/mental health services may be found at the following link:

<http://files.medical.ca.gov/pubsdoco/DocFrame.asp?wURL=publications%2Fmasters%2Dmtp%2Fpart2%2Fpregcomlis%5Fm00o03%2Edoc>

For any additional services that are above and beyond what CPSP routinely covers, the provider must write a Treatment Authorization Request (TAR) documenting why the services are necessary (pages 2 and 12 of following link): http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/publications/masters-mtp/part2/pregcom_m00o03.doc

As noted above, women who receive Medi-Cal services on their last day of pregnancy continue to be eligible for postpartum and pregnancy-related services until the end of the month in which their 60th day postpartum occurs, regardless of changes in income or other eligibility criteria (See *California Code of Regulations*, Title 22, Section 50260). Women in a Medi-Cal program, or “aid code”, which is not specific to pregnancy-related care whose cases are reviewed by the county during the postpartum period and who are determined to lack on-going Medi-Cal eligibility after the pregnancy has ended should nevertheless have their eligibility continued through to the end of the postpartum period under Medi-Cal’s “aid code 76”. (See, for example, pp. 3-4, http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/publications/masters-mtp/part2/pregpost_i00m00o03o07.doc).

Mental Health Coverage in the Access for Infants and Mothers (AIM) Program AIM is full coverage, except for dental care, for pregnant women with a little higher income than free Medi-Cal. AIM covers women 201-300% of poverty and lasts for exactly 60 days after the pregnancy ends (unlike Medi-Cal’s coverage, which is until the end of the month 60 days postpartum). AIM’s mental health coverage includes:

- Outpatient and inpatient services
- Maximum of 30 days inpatient and 20 days outpatient per benefit year
- No visit limits for diagnosis and treatment of severe mental illness
- Certain appropriate substitutions of residential treatment, day care, or outpatient treatment may be substituted for inpatient hospitalization

Some health plans may choose to provide additional visits or group therapy options.

Mental Health Coverage in the Healthy Families Program

Healthy Families covers legal permanent resident and citizen children from birth to 19. Mental health coverage includes:

- Diagnosis and treatment of mental illness.
- Outpatient and inpatient services are provided without limit for serious mental illness (although if diagnosed as having a Serious Emotional Disturbance will be seen through the County Mental Health Department).
- All non-serious mental illnesses are limited to 20 outpatient (\$5 copay) and 30 inpatient hospital services (no charge).

Mental Health Services for the Uninsured - the LA County Department of Mental Health

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) directly operates more than 50 program sites throughout the County, and contracts with over 1,100 other providers, including non-governmental agencies and individual practitioners. **To locate a mental health provider, via a provider listing or interactive SPA map, through the LACDMH, visit: http://dmh.lacounty.gov/provider_contractor.asp. To start the process with LAC DMH or for more information, call 1-800-854-7771.**

Mental health services may be covered by the state’s Expanded Access to Primary Care program (EAPC). Use the link below to locate a clinic in your area; call to see if the clinic has the EAPC program before referring a client. www.ccalac.org/PublicSite/FindAClinic/gwFindAClinic.asp Mental health resources may also be found and are mapped by SPA at the Healthy Cities website: www.healthycity.org.