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Vital Updates

Maternal Mental Health Screening Requirements

The Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) has issued All-Plan Letter (APL) 24-023, introducing new requirements for maternal mental health screenings.

Effective January 1, 2025, all health care plans will be required to ensure that their contracted obstetric providers (like you!) follow updated guidelines to screen for mental health issues during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Starting January 1, 2025, all obstetric providers will need to:

1. **Screen for maternal mental health during pregnancy.**
2. **Screen again within the first six weeks after delivery.**
3. **Additional screenings if your clinical judgment determines they are necessary.**

We appreciate your amazing work with our members and these new requirements are one more way to support the mental health and well-being of pregnant and postpartum

individuals. The goal of these new requirements is simple: to integrate mental health care into maternal care. Mental health is just as important as physical health, especially during the pregnancy and postpartum periods. Early screenings can help identify issues before they become bigger problems, giving patients the support they need right when they need it.

We recommend using the **PHQ-9** or the **Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale** to conduct these screenings. Both tools are:



Endorsed by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG).



Recognized by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF).



Clinically effective in helping you assess maternal mental health.

These new screenings will be required for all plans regulated by DMHC, including Medi-Cal plans. Keep an eye out for any additional screenings that might be needed, based on your clinical judgment. With the right tools and a little extra care, you will be able to make a huge difference in your patients' mental health outcomes.

If you have any questions about the new requirements or how to implement them in your practice, please reach out. We want to provide the best support to our providers as you take these important steps towards improving maternal mental health care in Kern County.

Follow Us on Social Media!



Starting January 1, 2024, Kern Family Health Care is taking a bold step toward transforming the way we care for our patients, with the launch of *Transitional Care Services (TCS)*. This innovative program, in full compliance with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) guidelines, is designed to ensure that every patient experiences a seamless, safe transition to the most appropriate level of care, reducing risks and improving clinical outcomes.

We've built a dedicated TCS team of skilled nurses and certified medical assistants who are passionate about guiding patients through every step of their care journey. This expert team will work hand-in-hand with healthcare providers across various settings, ensuring a detailed and seamless transition process.

How Transitional Care Services supports patients and providers:



Smooth, Safe Transitions

Our goal is to transition patients to the least restrictive level of care that fits their needs and preferences, ensuring *no gaps in care* and *no interruptions* in their treatment.



Comprehensive Support and Coordination

Our TCS team will provide smooth, stress-free transitions and coordinate care to ease the burden on your practice, and make sure to support the patient at every step.



Ongoing Care Connections

Transitioning continues even after discharge. We connect patients to services that ensure long-term success in their new care environment.

Together we can ensure timely, efficient transitions for our shared patients. If you have any questions or need more details, please contact our **PHM Team** at **1-661-426-7760** or **711 TTY/TDD**, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

New May Vendors

DME & PHARMACY

- FirstCare Solutions Inc. (DBA: FirstCare Pharmacy)

DOULA

- Loula Perinatal Health Services of California LLC.

GENERAL SURGERY

- Whitney Guerrero MD INC.

LABORATORY

- Shoreline Diagnostics LLC.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

- Hand Rehab Pros Antelope Valley

TRANSPORTATION

- Affordable Medical Transport Inc. (DBA AMT)
- Empress Medical Transportation
- HCM Med Transport

welcome