



## KERN HEALTH SYSTEMS

April 3, 2025

### **DMHC APL 24-023 Maternal Mental Health Providers**

Dear Provider,

The Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) has recently published All-Plan Letter (APL) 24-023. This letter outlines newly enacted statutory requirements for health care service plans (plans) regulated by DMHC, which specifically impacts plans that cover mental health services. This policy applies to all plans, including Medi-Cal plans, to the extent that the Department of Health Care Services secures any necessary federal approvals.

As part of these updated requirements, effective January 1, 2025, Kern Health Systems (KHS) must ensure that their contracted obstetric providers must include the following:

- At least one maternal mental health screening during pregnancy.
- At least one additional maternal mental health screening within the first six weeks of the postpartum period.
- Additional postpartum screenings, as determined medically necessary and clinically appropriate by the treating provider.

To support the accurate assessment of maternal mental health, we recommend utilizing screening tools such as the PHQ-9 or the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. These tools are recognized by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force as clinically sound and effective for evaluating maternal mental health. The tools can be found at:

- <https://www.apa.org/depression-guideline/patient-health-questionnaire.pdf>
- <https://med.stanford.edu/content/dam/sm/neonatology/documents/edinburghscale.pdf>

These changes are designed to support the mental health and well-being of pregnant and postpartum individuals and ensure that mental health care is integrated into maternal care. We encourage you to review the updated guidelines and integrate them into your practice as necessary to comply with these new requirements.

For additional information regarding APL 24-023, please visit the DMHC website at the link below:

- <https://dmhc.ca.gov/LicensingReporting/HealthPlanLicensing/AllPlanLetters.aspx>

[Provider Bulletins](#) are available on the [KHS website](#). Please visit the site regularly to stay informed about the latest updates and announcements.

If you have any additional questions, please contact your Provider Relations Representative at 1-800-391-2000, silent prompt option #5.

Sincerely,

Michelle Curioso  
Director of Population Health Management  
Kern Health Systems