

# Memorandum

To: Gold Coast Health Plan Providers

From: Vicki Wrighster  
Senior Director, Provider Network Operations

Re: New DHCS-Approved Youth Trauma Screening Tools

Date: April 1, 2026

The state Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has approved specific youth trauma screening tools to help providers determine whether members under the age of 21 meet access criteria for Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS). Members may meet access criteria through a variety of pathways.

**Effective April 1, 2026**, if a provider determines that a youth trauma screening is needed as part of assessing eligibility for SMHS, only the DHCS-approved youth trauma screening tools listed below should be used.

If trauma is identified during a clinical assessment of a member under 21 years of age, providers may use their clinical judgement to decide whether:

1. Additional assessment is needed, and/or
2. The member meets criteria for SMHS.

Below are the youth trauma screening tools that providers should use in assessments:

## DHCS-Approved Youth Trauma Screening Tools

1. Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) Questionnaire<sup>i</sup>
2. Standard Child and Adolescent Needs and Strength (CANS) Trauma Module (also referred to as the National Child Traumatic Stress Network CANS – Trauma Comprehensive)<sup>ii</sup>
3. California Integrated Practice-Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (IP-CANS) tool<sup>iii</sup>
4. Child and Adolescent Trauma Screen (CATS)<sup>iv</sup>
5. Child Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Symptom Scale for DSM 5 – six-item screening version (CPSS-5-Screen)<sup>v</sup>
6. Child Trauma Screening (CTS)<sup>vi</sup>
7. Life Events Checklist for DSM – V Standard Version (LEC – 5)<sup>vii</sup>
8. Pediatric ACEs and Related Life-Events Screener (PEARLS), including parent-caregiver report and self-report versions<sup>viii</sup>
9. UCLA Child / Adolescent PTSD Reaction Index for DSM-5 Brief Form (UCLA PTSD RI-5 BF)<sup>ix</sup>

## Resources

- [APL 26-002](#)
- [Attachment A](#)

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<sup>i</sup>The ACEs questionnaire is available at: <https://www.acesaware.org/learn-about-screening/screening-tools/screening-tools-additional-languages/>

<sup>ii</sup> The CANS trauma module is available at: [https://praedfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/REFERENCE-GUIDE\\_Standard-Comprehensive-CANS-3.0\\_CWBH\\_Final\\_Hyperlink\\_2021.01.13.pdf](https://praedfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/REFERENCE-GUIDE_Standard-Comprehensive-CANS-3.0_CWBH_Final_Hyperlink_2021.01.13.pdf).

<sup>iii</sup> The CA IP-CANS rating sheet is available at: [https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ISU/CANS/CA\\_CANS\\_IP%20Rating%20Sheet\\_1.0\\_CW\\_ENGLISH.pdf](https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ISU/CANS/CA_CANS_IP%20Rating%20Sheet_1.0_CW_ENGLISH.pdf) ;  
The CA-IP CANS guide is available at: <https://cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ISU/CANS/ca-ipcans-guide-hyperlinked.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> The CATS is available at: <https://depts.washington.edu/uwhatc/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Child-and-Adolescent-Trauma-Screen-CATS-Youth-Self-Report-7-17-years.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> The CPSS-5-screen is described at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15374416.2017.1350962>

<sup>vi</sup> The CTS is available at: <https://www.chdi.org/our-work/trauma-informed-initiatives/ct-trauma-screen-cts/>

<sup>vii</sup> The LEC-5 is available at: [https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/documents/LEC5\\_Standard\\_Self-report.PDF](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/documents/LEC5_Standard_Self-report.PDF)

<sup>viii</sup> The PEARLS is available at: <https://www.acesaware.org/learn-about-screening/screening-tools/>

<sup>ix</sup> The UCLA PTSD RI-5 BF is described at: <https://escholarship.org/content/qt0xf2998r/qt0xf2998r.pdf?t=rrnq7v>

If you have any questions, please email [providerrelations@goldchp.org](mailto:providerrelations@goldchp.org)

Thank you,  
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