



## **THERAPEUTIC BEHAVIORAL SERVICES FOR MEDI-CAL ELIGIBLE CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

### **What are Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS)?**

TBS is a new Medi-Cal mental health service. It provides short-term one-to-one assistance to children or youth under age 21 who have behaviors that are too hard for their families or foster placement to handle—such as tantrums, assaultive behavior or destruction of property.

TBS can be provided to children at home, in a group home, in the community, during evening and weekends, and at other times and places as needed.

The county mental health plan develops a behavior intervention plan and assigns a trained behavior aide (also known as a “shadow mentor” or “coach”) to a child/youth for as many hours per day as needed. The county may also authorize another mental health organization to develop the plan and assign the behavior aide.

### **Who is eligible for TBS?**

Children and youth who are experiencing a stressful transition or life crisis are eligible. They must also meet the following state criteria:

***Child/youth must meet three requirements:***

1. Full-scope Medi-Cal beneficiary under age 21
2. Receiving other specialty mental health services
3. Highly likely that, without additional support:
  - Child/youth may need higher level of residential care or acute care.
  - Child/youth may not successfully transition to lower level of care.

***Child/youth must also meet A, B, C or D requirement:***

- A. Placed in a group home of rate classification level (RCL) 12 or above and/or a treatment facility for mental health needs (but not receiving acute psychiatric care), or
- B. Being considered for placement in a group home facility of RCL 12 or above, or
- C. At least one emergency psychiatric hospitalization related to current presenting disability within the past 24 months, or
- D. Previously received TBS and need it again.

## **When is TBS Needed?**

Most children/youth being considered for TBS get other Medi-Cal mental health services from a psychiatrist, therapist, residential treatment or day treatment program or a county mental health clinic. Other interventions usually have been tried and failed before considering TBS. If a child is not receiving mental health services through Medi-Cal, request an assessment from the county mental health plan. The assessment will tell what services the child needs, including TBS.

## **What are examples of TBS interventions?**

The TBS staff person “provides behavior modeling, structure and support, and immediate, frequent, one-to-one behavior interventions which assist the child/youth in engaging in appropriate activities, minimizing impulsivity, and increase social and community competencies by building or reinstating those daily living skills that will assist the child to live successfully in the community. The TBS provider also serves as a positive role model ...”<sup>1</sup> Examples are:

### **Behavior/Impulse Control Interventions:**

- Reminding child to take a time out when he become distressed
- Helping child develop self-calming skills
- Offering praise and supporting self-recognition when child controls himself

### **Communication Skills Interventions:**

- Helping child identify feelings she wants to communicate with parent
- Role-play communication skills for child and for child and parent

### **Enhanced Community Functioning:**

- Take child on trip to shopping mall, model social interactions with others
- Take child on youth group trip, discuss conflict resolution issues afterwards
- Increase child’s motivation to use good personal hygiene though praise and recognition, discussion of aspects of dress, hygiene

## **How do you apply for TBS?**

If you think there is a child/youth who will benefit from TBS:

1. Talk with the child’s mental health provider (such as a psychiatrist, case manager, therapist), or
2. Call the County Mental Health Plan access & crisis line, or
3. Write to the Director of the County Mental Health Plan.

---

<sup>1</sup> DMH Letter 99-03, page 8.

Look in your local yellow pages for the phone number and address of the County Mental Health Plan, or call the state Mental Health Ombudsman at **1-800-896-4042** for more information.

### **What other mental health services does Medi-Cal provide for children?**

Some of the services you can get from your county mental health department are:

- Individual therapy
- Group therapy
- Family therapy
- Crisis counseling
- Case management
- Special day programs
- Medication for your mental health
- EPSDT mental health services to treat alcohol and drug problems you may have that affect your mental health.

You can also ask for counseling and therapy as often as once per week or more if you think you need it. You may be able to get these services in your home or in the community.

### **What if the child/youth is denied TBS or any other mental health service? What if a request is ignored?**

Ask for a written denial notice and ask that the county consult with the state Department of Mental Health about whether the denial is correct. If you think the child does need the service, file a written grievance with the county mental health grievance coordinator and/or appeal the denial by calling the Medi-Cal Fair Hearing Office at 1-800-743-8525. You can file a grievance or appeal even if you did not get a written denial notice or if your request was ignored. If you need help with an appeal call Disability Rights California at: **1-800-776-5746**.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Prepared by:  
Disability Rights California  
1-800-776-5746 (TTY/TDD)**

\*\*\*\*\*

## MEDI-CAL MENTAL HEALTH PLANS (MHPs) BY COUNTY—Toll-Free Numbers

Note: For Yuba County: See Sutter -Yuba Bi-County . For Sierra County: See Placer County

Alameda County 1-800-491-9099	Kern County 1-800-991-5272	Nevada County 1-888-801-1437	Santa Clara County 1-800-704-0900
Alpine County 1-800-486-2163	Kings County 1-800-655-2553	Orange County 1-800-723-8641	Santa Cruz County 1-800-952-2335
Amador County 1-888-310-6555	Lake County 1-800-900-2075	Placer County Also serves Sierra County 1-888-886-5401	Shasta County 1-888-385-5201
Butte County 1-800-334-6622	Lassen County 1-888-289-5004	Plumas County 1-800-757-7898	Siskiyou County 1-800-842-8979
Calaveras County 1-800-499-3030	Los Angeles County 1-800-854-7771	Riverside County 1-800-706-7500	Solano County 1-800-547-0495
Colusa County Business hrs 1-888-793-6580 After hours 1-800-700-3577	Madera County 1-888-275-9779	Sacramento County 1-888-881-4881	Sonoma County 1-800-870-8786
Contra Costa County 1-888-678-7277	Marin County 1-888-818-1115	San Benito County 1-888-636-4020	Stanislaus County 1-888-376-6246
Del Norte County 1-888-446-4408	Mariposa County. 1-800-549-6741	San Bernardino County 1-888-743-1478	Sutter-Yuba Bi-County 1-888-923-3800
El Dorado County 1-800-929-1955	Mendocino County 1-800-575-4357	San Diego County 1-800-479-3339	Tehama County 1-800-240-3208
Fresno County 1-800-654-3937	Merced County 1-888-334-0163	San Francisco County 1-888-246-3333	Trinity County 1-888-624-5820
Glenn County Business hrs 1-800-500-6582 After hours 1-888-624-5820	Modoc County 1-800-700-3577	San Joaquin County 1-888-468-9370	Tulare County 1-800-320-1616
Humboldt County 1-888-849-5728	Mono County Business hrs 1-800-687-1101 After hours 1-800-700-3577	San Luis Obispo County 1-800-838-1381	Tuolumne County 1-800-630-1130
Imperial County 1-800-817-5292	Monterey County 1-888-258-6029	San Mateo County 1-800- 686-0101	Ventura County 1-800-671-0887
Inyo County 1-800-841-5011	Napa County 1-800-648-8650	Santa Barbara County 1-888-868-1649	Yolo County 1-888-965-6647

Department of Mental Health Ombudsman:  
Department of Mental Health Website:

Tel: (800) 896-4042 / TTY: (800) 896-2512  
<http://www.dmh.cahwnet.gov>