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## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Mental Health**

*\*This page will be updated as more information is made available*

Updated March 23, 2020

This is for people with mental health disabilities who are affected by COVID-19.

### **Access to Psychiatric Medications**

Some health plans allow you to order medications by mail. Contact your health plan to get information about ordering medications through the mail. You can find your managed care plan here: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/individuals/Pages/MMCDHealthPlanDir.aspx>

If you receive “Fee for Service” Medi-Cal, look up local pharmacies. See which pharmacies accept Medi-Cal and deliver by mail.

You can also find medication delivery services online.

You may need to pick-up medications in person. If so, look for pharmacies that have drive through or curbside pick-up options. You may need to ask a family member, friend, or neighbor to assist. Look up and follow local public health guidelines.

### **Getting Psychiatric Medications Early**

Medi-Cal allows pharmacies to provide up to 100-day supply of most medications.

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Documents/COVID-19/Managed-Care-COVID-19-Memo-031620.pdf>

Certain medications may be filled before the date the medication runs out. Medications can be filled as long as 75 percent of time between the last and new prescription fill date has passed.

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Documents/COVID-19/Managed-Care-COVID-19-Memo-031620.pdf>

People with Medicare only can also get refills early. You can also ask the pharmacy for the maximum supply available under your plan.

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/hpms-memo-covid-information-plans.pdf>

Pharmacies must supply medications in an emergency. Pharmacies may provide emergency medications for patients impacted by COVID-19. For more information:

[http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/newsroom/newsroom\\_30366.asp](http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/newsroom/newsroom_30366.asp)

### **Access to Telehealth and Telepsych**

You may be able to talk to a doctor or therapist on the phone or through online video-conference. This allows you to receive care if you are concerned about in-person appointments due to COVID-19. Telephone or online appointments should be covered by insurance, just like in-person appointments.

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/provgovpart/Pages/TelehealthFAQ.aspx> Ask your provider if Telehealth or Telepsych appointments are available.

### **Complaints and Appeals**

If you are a resident at a state psychiatric hospital, you have the right to file a complaint with the state hospital. You can request help in protecting yourself from COVID-19, such as asking for personal hygiene items, social distancing from other patients, and video or telephone visits. If you feel the facility is not helping to protect you, you can request discharge to a community setting.

A patients' rights advocate can help you. To get help from a patient's rights advocate, call the California Office of Patients' Rights (COPR) at 1-916-504-5810.

If you are unhappy with care from a county provider, you can file a "grievance." You can fill out a grievance form at your provider's office or

facility. You can also call. Providers must respond to your grievance within 60 days.

If you disagree with a county decision about your benefits, you can file an “appeal.” For example, you can file an appeal if a county terminates your services or refuses to pay for a service. You will receive a “Notice of Action” with the county’s decision. You must file your appeal within 60 days. You may also request an expedited appeal.

A county patients’ rights advocate can help you with the process. There is a directory of all the advocates for each county here:

<https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/system/files?file=file-attachments/2019PRADirectoryAccessible.pdf>

More information about county grievances and appeals is available here:

<https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/county-mental-health-plan-mhp-grievances-appeals-and-fair-hearings>

## **Mental Health Resources**

The outbreak of COVID-19 can cause stress and anxiety. People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with treatment. Call your doctor if you become aware of new or worsening symptoms.

Additional resources include:

Peer-Run Warm Line: 1-855-845-7415. This is a non-emergency resource for anyone in California seeking emotional support.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255.

Provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress.

CDC: Information on Managing Anxiety & Stress

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

SAMHSA: Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation

<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4894.pdf>

## **Who to Call if You Have Questions**

If you have a question about your legal rights, call DRC’s intake line at (800) 776-5746.

If you are a resident at a state psychiatric hospital, you can call the California Office of Patients' Rights (COPR) at 1-916-504-5810.

For questions about Medi-Cal, contact the Medi-Cal Member and Provider Helpline at (800) 541-5555.

Common Medi-Cal Pharmacy Benefits questions are answered here:  
<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/provgovpart/pharmacy/Pages/PharmFAQ.aspx>