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May 7, 2025

SAPC INFORMATION NOTICE 25-05

TO: All Substance Use Disorder Providers

FROM: Gary Tsai, M.D., Bureau Director 
Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Bureau

SUBJECT: **CALIFORNIA ADVANCING AND INNOVATING MEDI-CAL JUSTICE-INVOLVED INITIATIVE – POST-RELEASE LINKAGE PROCESSES**

The County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health's Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Bureau (SAPC) is issuing an Information Notice (IN) to inform contracted substance use disorder (SUD) providers about the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal Justice-Involved Initiative (CalAIM JI) post-release linkage process.

Background

On January 26, 2023, through a federal Medicaid 1115 demonstration waiver approved by the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), California became the first State in the nation to receive federal approval to offer a targeted set of services to Medi-Cal-eligible youth and adults in California correctional facilities (CF) including State prisons, County jails, and youth correctional facilities, with services for CalAIM JI activating up to 90-days prior to release.

Under CalAIM JI, processes for pre-release physical and behavioral health services, along with reentry planning, must be established to support the successful transition of clients from incarceration to their communities. These CalAIM JI policy-based processes address the unique and considerable healthcare needs of justice-involved individuals, aim to improve health outcomes, improve the efficiency of care delivery, advance health equity, and reduce health disparities and recidivism across the State.

For more information about CalAIM JI, please review the *California Department of Health Care Services Policy and Operational Guide for Planning and Implementing the CalAIM Justice-Involved Initiative* (referred to as the *CalAIM JI Policy Guide* from this point forward: [here](#)).

CalAIM JI Mandates

CalAIM JI establishes the following two (2) mandates:

Mandate #1: Pre-Release/In-Custody Services Implementation

All CFs, including the Los Angeles County Jails and Probation Detention Facilities for Youth and Young Adults, must implement pre-release/in-custody services for SUD, mental health, and physical health services by September 30, 2026.

Mandate #2: Behavioral Health Linkages for Post-Release Services

As of October 1, 2024, the Department of Health Care Services required all California County behavioral health agencies to launch the behavioral health linkage process to accommodate the post-release requests from CFs. These linkages include referrals and appointments to SUD and/or mental health services to ensure continuity of behavioral health or other health services received while in custody. They may also include connections to other community-based services such as housing and employment. For more about CalAIM JI's general post-release linkage requirements, please see the *CalAIM JI Policy Guide* ([here](#)).

Post-Release SUD Linkage Processes for SAPC and SUD Treatment Providers

The priority CalAIM JI populations include Medi-Cal-enrolled or Medi-Cal-eligible in-custody population to be released to Los Angeles County who meet provisional level of care recommendations for SUD or Early Intervention services and request these respective services prior to release.

There are four (4) processes SAPC and its contracted SUD treatment providers are required to adopt to meet CalAIM JI standards and policies for post-release SUD linkage:

- 1) SUD treatment history request;
- 2) Post-release appointment setup;
- 3) Professional-to-professional handoffs; and
- 4) Post-enrollment requirements.

Process #1: Requesting Records of Client's SUD Treatment History

CFs are required to obtain a record of each client's SUD treatment history, if applicable, to assist with the development of a pre-release service plan. This informs determinations of medical necessity for pre-release SUD services and preparation of the client for post-release linkage (e.g., SUD treatment provider appointment). Obtaining these records requires the following:

1. Client informs the CF of the previous treatment program attended prior to incarceration; and
2. Client consents to the CF obtaining this information by signing a *Release of Information (ROI) Form* that includes the authorization to share SUD-related information in compliance with Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 42 Part 2, HIPAA, and all applicable rules and requirements.

CFs are then to submit the *ROI* to SAPC's Health Information Management (HIM) Unit at SAPC-HIM@ph.lacounty.gov via encrypted email. The HIM Unit will facilitate the coordination of fulfilling ROI requests with treatment providers. Providers are responsible for providing the HIM Unit with the requested records authorization for release when requested.

Process #2: Post-Release Appointment Setup

CFs will contact the designated Client Engagement and Navigation Services (CENS) provider(s) to facilitate post-release appointment setup (see Attachment I for the current list of CENS to process post-release SUD linkage requests). CFs will provide to CENS the patient's *ROI* and completed *Reentry SUD Treatment Pre-intake Form* (see Attachment II).

Please see the specific instructions below for CFs, CENS, and SUD treatment providers for further details on this process.

Instructions for CFs

- 1) Determine if an in-custody client is suitable for post-release SUD treatment or Early Intervention services.
- 2) If a client agrees to post-release SUD treatment or Early Intervention services linkage, obtain the client's signature on the *ROI*. The *ROI* needs to include authorization for sharing SUD-related information in compliance with 42 CFR Part 2, HIPAA, and all applicable rules and requirements.
- 3) During the consultation with the client, CFs must complete the attached *Reentry SUD Treatment Pre-intake Form*.

- 4) Submit the following via encrypted email to the CENS:
 - a. *ROI*
 - b. *Reentry SUD Treatment Pre-intake Form*
- 5) CENS will confirm the client's appointment with a SAPC-contracted provider and subsequent enrollment with the SUD treatment or Early Intervention service provider.

Instructions for CENS

- 1) Verify that the request is accompanied by the client's *ROI* and *Reentry SUD Treatment Pre-intake Form*. If either or both documents were not included, follow up with the CF.
- 2) Review the *Reentry SUD Treatment Pre-intake Form* to determine the SUD level of care for placement.
- 3) Input the following information onto the *Service Connection Log* in ProviderConnect NX (PCNX):
 - a. Is the client currently in custody?
 - b. Did the client undergo a screening by Correctional Health?
 - c. Pre-release Care Manager Name
 - d. Pre-release Care Manager Phone
 - e. Pre-release Care Manager Email
 - f. Correctional Facility
 - g. Date of Release
- 4) Contact the SUD treatment provider to secure an admission appointment.
- 5) After the admission appointment is made, notify the CF via encrypted email.
- 6) Follow up with SUD treatment provider to verify the client's enrollment.
 - a. If the client was enrolled:
 - i. Notify CF via encrypted email.
 - b. If the client was not enrolled:
 - i. Make three (3) attempts to reschedule.
 - ii. If rescheduling fails or the client fails to enroll, notify CF via encrypted email.

Instructions for SUD Treatment Providers

When CENS contacts SUD treatment providers to verify enrollment, providers should respond via encrypted email.

Process #3: Professional-to-Professional Handoffs

Per *CalAIM JI Policy Guide*, Professional-to-Professional (P2P) handoffs is an “established process to provide in-person/telehealth warm handoffs between the CF and the County behavioral health agency (e.g., SAPC) and/or its subcontracted provider (e.g., CENS or SUD treatment provider), as necessary” for any “complex clients with high needs.” Specifically, these P2P handoffs indicate that these “complex clients with high needs” identified by correctional staff, the in-custody care manager, or in-custody clinical consultants need additional team coordination via in-care transition meetings with the CENS or SUD treatment provider as part of the post-release SUD linkage process.

P2P handoffs can be initiated by CFs and involve a CENS or SUD treatment provider counselor involvement. At least one of the following criteria need to be met if defined as a “complex client with high needs”:

- 1) Anyone who is identified by their treating provider/care manager as in need of the service.
- 2) Anyone with a co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder.
- 3) Anyone with a history of overdose or at high risk of overdose.
- 4) Anyone who will be released to unstable housing.
- 5) Anyone whose first language is not English.
- 6) Anyone who is a new patient to County-based behavioral health services.

P2P for CENS Counselors

- 1) The CENS counselor may participate in the P2P warm-handoff meeting if the CENS has not made an appointment with the SUD treatment provider.
- 2) Per the *CalAIM JI Policy Guide*, P2P handoffs will be billable via Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS). The billing and claiming process is under development. Once finalized, SAPC will provide further guidance.

P2P for SUD Treatment Provider Counselors

- 1) SUD treatment provider counselors may participate in P2P warm-handoff meetings if CENS has made an appointment with the SUD treatment provider.
- 2) CF will secure another signed ROI from the client to allow the SUD treatment counselor to participate in the P2P handoff.
- 3) Per the *CalAIM JI Policy Guide*, P2P handoffs will be billable via DMC-ODS. The billing and claiming process is under development. Once finalized, SAPC will provide further guidance.

Process #4: Post-Enrollment Requirements

Once a client is enrolled, SUD treatment providers are required to perform the following:

- 1) For Medi-Cal beneficiaries, deliver, document, enter data, and bill for DMC-ODS SUD treatment services following the terms of their respective DMC-ODS contract and the guidelines outlined in the current version of the *SAPC Provider Manual for Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services*.
- 2) Reengage the client for missed appointments.
- 3) Contact the Managed Care Plan (MCP) if the client needs transportation.
- 4) Contact CF for any follow-up, including if providers need to verify a client's MCP.

The most up-to-date information on CalAIM JI can be found on the SAPC website at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc/>.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please email SAPC_ASOC@ph.lacounty.gov.

GT:yl

Attachments

- Attachment I: CalAIM JI Post-release Linkage CENS Contact List
- Attachment II: Reentry SUD Treatment Pre-intake Form (PDF fillable)