

## **Beneficiary Access Line Narrative**

The purpose of the toll-free Beneficiary Access Line (BAL) is to connect eligible beneficiaries with substance abuse disorder (SUD) treatment needs with services included in the Los Angeles County SUD benefit package. The BAL is the main entry into the SUD Continuum of Care within the County's SUD service delivery system. The BAL provides assessments and referrals to individuals seeking treatment services for their SUDs. The BAL staff will determine the provisional level of care needed by adult beneficiaries and schedule appointments for beneficiaries with the appropriate SUD treatment provider. BAL staff will engage youth callers and their caretakers.

BAL staff will use a standardized brief triage assessment tool based on the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Criteria to determine a provisional level of care placement for adult callers. Youth callers will be screened and referred to an outpatient treatment provider for assessment as appropriate.

Referrals are based on eligibility and health coverage (e.g., Medi-Cal, My Health LA, no/under coverage) in concert with the cultural, linguistic, visual and/or hearing impairment, geographic and other needs and preferences of the caller. BAL staff are also able to provide referrals to other social services as needed to individuals who do not meet SUD treatment requirements.

BAL calls are answered by highly trained, professional staff who are culturally competent and capable of managing calls in all threshold languages via a translation service and for individuals with hearing impairments.

### **Initial Contact**

#### Hours of Operation

- BAL will have a 24/7 toll-free telephone line to receive calls and voicemail messages from individuals seeking SUD treatment services. The toll-free telephone line must be answered by a live person Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Calls received after business hours (e.g., after 6:00 p.m., weekends and holidays), will be returned by BAL staff on the first following business day. BAL staff will make three attempts to contact the caller. These attempts will occur, at minimum on three different occasions and at various times throughout the day.
- BAL staff will provide services in both English and Spanish. During business hours, the BAL will provide translation services for all other threshold languages (i.e., Arabic, Armenian, Cantonese, Farsi, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Tagalog, Thai and Vietnamese), and make available services for individuals with hearing impairments.

#### Emergency Referrals

- During and after business hours, BAL staff will direct callers with emergency or urgent needs to contact 911 or to seek emergency services at the nearest hospital emergency department or Mental Health Urgent Care Center.

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### Description of the County SUD Benefit Package

- BAL staff will describe the SUD benefit package (Attachment 1) to callers seeking SUD treatment services.
- BAL staff will ask the caller if he/she is interested in receiving SUD treatment services.
- If the call indicates that he/she is not interested in receiving SUD treatment services, then the BAL staff will refer the caller to the appropriate services.
- If the caller is interested in receiving SUD treatment services, then the BAL staff will determine treatment eligibility.

### **Initial Placement Determination**

#### Assessment of Medi-Cal Eligibility

- BAL staff will determine if the caller is eligible for the SUD benefits package by checking the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS). BAL staff will also assess whether callers are eligible for other Los Angeles County health care programs, including My Health LA (MHLA). Callers not eligible for Medi-Cal or other Los Angeles County health care programs will be referred to the appropriate services (e.g., prevention services, private health plan, primary care or mental health services).

#### Brief Triage Assessment and Youth Screener

- Once BAL staff have determined that the adult caller is eligible for Medi-Cal or a County health care program, a certified substance abuse counselor will conduct a BTA based on ASAM Criteria to determine a provisional Level of Care (LOC). If the BTA determines that the caller does not meet the criteria for provisional LOC, then the caller will be provided with referrals for other services as needed (i.e., employment, housing, education, shelter, food bank).
- For youth, the BAL will screen the caller using the appropriate screener (youth or parent) and determine Medi-Cal eligibility. If the screener determines the youth does not need a full assessment they will be referred to resource materials on SAPC website.

#### Referrals to Provider of Appropriate LOC

- If the adult caller meets the criteria for a provisional LOC placement, BAL staff should schedule the ASAM assessment/admission appointment while the caller is on the line.
- BAL staff will refer youth needing a full assessment to a qualified outpatient treatment provider for further assessment and SUD treatment services.
- If scheduling an appointment is not possible when the caller is on the line, BAL staff will have up to three business days from the BTA to schedule the caller with an appointment for a face-to-face assessment/admission with a SUD treatment provider. The BAL will take into account geographic accessibility (i.e., within one hour of travel time by personal or public transportation from the caller's preferred location), and other caller preferences such as service hour availability, wait time, gender, sexual orientation and cultural and linguistic considerations, when scheduling the appointment.

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- BAL staff will contact the appropriate LOC provider via telephone to check appointment availability and schedule the appointment for the full assessment. When available, BAL staff will utilize an electronic appointment system that will include the availability of real-time appointments for withdrawal management and residential bed vacancies.
- Unless the caller has a specific provider or other preferences (e.g., cultural/linguistic specific services) that would require a longer waiting period, the full assessment/admission appointment with a qualified SUD provider will be conducted within 15-business days from the date of the BTA<sup>1</sup>.

### SUD Appointment Reminder

- BAL staff will contact callers that have given permission to remind them of their upcoming appointments in order to ensure that callers are successfully linked to SUD treatment services and if the caller needs any additional assistance in accessing SUD treatment services. BAL staff will make three attempts to contact the caller. These attempts will occur, at minimum on three different days and at various times throughout the day.
- Within one day after the scheduled appointment, BAL staff will also contact the network provider to determine if the caller appeared for his/her/ intake/assessment. If the patient did not show for his/her appointment, then the BAL will also make a final attempt to contact the patient to reschedule the appointment.

### Transitions of Care

- BAL staff will assist beneficiaries in accessing SUD treatment services and in transitioning from one level of SUD service to another and across mental health, physical health and social service systems.
- BAL staff will assist SUD treatment providers in locating and scheduling appointments for beneficiaries requiring a change in level of care that also requires a transition to a different treatment provider.

### Data Collection

- BAL staff will be responsible for collecting the following information in a monthly report for continuous quality improvement purposes:
  - ✓ number of calls received;
  - ✓ day and time calls received;
  - ✓ rate of call abandonment;
  - ✓ rate of unanswered calls;
  - ✓ day and time call returned
  - ✓ number of brief triage assessments conducted;
  - ✓ number of referrals to treatment by LOC;
  - ✓ number of days from initial call/contact to assessment/admission appointment;

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<sup>1</sup> Beginning July 2017, face-to-face assessment/admission appointments will be scheduled within 5 business days for outpatient treatment and 10 business days for residential treatment. By July 2018, all face-to-face assessment/admission appointments will be scheduled within 5 business days of the brief triage assessment.

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- ✓ number of individuals who attended assessment/admission appointment;
- ✓ wait time to treatment enrollment;
- ✓ caller demographics (age, gender, ethnicity/race, primary language if non-English speaking, ZIP code of residence); and
- ✓ insurance status by health plan (e.g., L.A. Care, Health Net) and funding source (e.g., Drug Medi-Cal).

### **Staff Training**

- BAL staff who conduct the BTA must receive training in Motivational Interviewing, ASAM Criteria, and Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS). The BAL staff will receive on-going training in order to ensure fidelity to evidence-based practice models and other standards.