

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT

The County (Substance Abuse Prevention and Control or SAPC), its treatment provider network, and other healthcare professionals comply with regulations that protect the confidentiality of your records and, where applicable, your identity. All providers that contract with the County (SAPC) are required to establish policies and procedures regarding confidentiality and comply with Title 42, Chapter I, Subchapter A, Part 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2 (42 CFR Part 2), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) standards, and California State law regarding confidentiality for information regarding your medical records, including those related to alcohol and drug use.

You have the right to keep your medical records confidential. If you are seeking or receiving services for drug or alcohol-related issues, you have extra protections to ensure that you can safely and privately seek treatment and recovery services without fear of stigma or prosecution. Your physician, treatment provider or the County (SAPC) cannot reveal that you have sought or are receiving treatment related to substance use to unauthorized persons, including your family, employers, or even the police without a valid court order. Any information that can identify you directly or indirectly as having a current or past drug or alcohol problem, or as a participant in a treatment program is protected.

It is important, however, to balance these laws and regulations against the need to provide you with informed, coordinated, and integrated care. Your provider may ask you to sign appropriate patient releases and/or consent forms, which may include the right to share clinical information with relevant providers across the systems of care. This includes other treatment network providers, your health plan (e.g., Anthem Blue Cross, Health Net, Kaiser Permanente, L.A. Care, Molina Health Care) or assigned doctor(s), and other County agencies as needed. The reason for this is to help everyone provide better care for you, and help you meet your health and recovery goals.

Before your treatment provider gives your health information to someone else, you must give your approval in writing, usually by signing a form. There are times when your treatment provider may share information that can identify you as a patient, including incases of medical emergency, in reporting crimes that occur on program premises or against staff, or to qualified service organizations.

It is important that you understand the limit and scope of your right to confidentiality. Make sure you ask questions as needed to ensure you give informed consent before signing any consent forms.