



SOLANO COUNTY QUALITY ASSURANCE

QA INFORMATION NOTICE 23-04

APRIL 1, 2023

PURPOSE: To inform our Solano County staff, contractors and general community of changes in programs, policies, or procedures at the local, State and Federal levels. QA Information Notices (INs) are sent out monthly and posted on our [website](#).

GENERAL UPDATES

23-04 (A) COVID-19 UPDATES (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR)

Solano County will continue to align with guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). [DHCS BHIN 22-03](#) provides further information for Behavioral Health facilities and staff on requirements for vaccination, masking, and guidance on isolation and quarantine.

Masking Guidance: In line with California Department of Public Health guidance, ([Guidance for Face Covering](#) & [Guidance for Vaccines, Testing and Treatment](#)), beginning **April 3**, wearing masks is not currently required for clients or for staff. Masks are recommended if experiencing respiratory symptoms or if recently exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Clients and staff are supported in wearing masks if they choose to do so, and please continue to make masks available for use. Healthcare facilities in the community may continue to require masking, so please check with their current practices. These guidelines could change as community levels of COVID-19 change and if guidance from the State changes.

Vaccine Requirements for Health Care Workers: Beginning **April 3**, with federal rules continuing to ensure that most health care workers remain vaccinated for COVID-19, the state will no longer require [vaccination for health care workers](#) including those in adult care, direct care, correctional facilities, and detention centers. This change takes effect on Monday, April 3 to allow local health departments and facilities to develop and implement plans customized to their needs and local conditions to continue to protect Californians through the end of the winter virus season.

23-04 (B) CalAIM – CALIFORNIA ADVANCING & INNOVATING MEDI-CAL (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR)

Thank you for all your hard work implementing CalAIM requirements. Payment Reform activities such as CPT code and contract rate development are underway. Information on how this will affect both County and Contractor programs will be communicated through Contract Managers and upcoming training in Q4 of FY 2022-23.

23-04 (C) BEACON NAME CHANGE – CARELON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR):

Beacon Health Options is now Carelon Behavioral Health as of March 1, 2023. This name change will not impact the care of their Partnership members. The decision to join the Carelon Brand allows Beacon to offer more mental health experts to their members to better meet their health care needs. For step down referrals to Carelon, fax completed referral documents to 855-371-2279 or email to MediCal_PHP@carelon.com

23-04 (D) TRANSPORTATION FOR MEDI-CAL CLIENTS (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR):

This section provides a reminder about the transportation services available to Behavioral Health Plan beneficiaries (clients) thru Managed Care Plans (MCPs) throughout the state. In Solano County, our MCP is Partnership Health Care.

1. Transportation to medical, dental or behavioral health appointments for all Medi-Cal services (including, but not limited to, specialty MH services and substance use disorder services).
2. Transportation for transfer from general acute care hospitals or emergency departments to psychiatric facilities, including psychiatric hospitals, skilled nursing facilities and mental health rehabilitation centers.

3. Transportation after discharge from an admission (inpatient or residential care), whether or not the facility is an Institution for Mental Diseases (IMD)), or emergency department visit, whether or not the emergency department visit was in or out of the beneficiary's county of residence.

There are two types of transportation that are part of the covered benefit:

- **Non-medical transportation (NMT):** for beneficiaries who do not need medical assistance during transit.
- **Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT):** for when the beneficiary's medical and physical condition is such that transport by ordinary means of public or private conveyance is medically contraindicated

Effective April 1, 2023 both NMT and NEMT transportation will no longer be contracted out and will be provided directly by Partnership. For more information about accessing these services for your clients, please review the [flyer from Partnership](#).

For more information about this benefit for your clients, please review [DHCS BHIN 22-031](#)

23-04 (E) DATA EXCHANGE AND INTEROPERABILITY (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR):

In May of 2020, the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) finalized the Interoperability and Patient Access final rule. This rule attempts to establish beneficiaries as the owners of the health information with the right to direct its transmission to third party applications (apps). This means it is important that documentation captures clinical treatment needs and progress in care accurately and succinctly.

California is working to ensure Counties implement and maintain a secure, standards-based API (Application Programming Interface) and a publicly accessible, standards-based Provider Directory API that can connect to mobile applications and be available through a public-facing digital endpoint on the Behavioral Health Plan's website. This means that a beneficiary could access an application on their smart phone to connect to their Behavioral Health Plan EHR to access portions of their health records through the App. Solano is working on establishing the interface now to meet Federal and State requirements, but currently we are not aware of any 3rd party Apps set up to interface with our API. We do anticipate over the long-term that this will become a more common practice. Additionally, Solano BHP contracted agencies are currently not required to develop FHIR API interfaces, as this is only a requirement for the health plan. You may read more about this in [BHIN 22-068](#).

- **Avatar MyHealthPointe:** In response to above, Solano County has started implementing Avatar's MyHealthPointe Patient Portal. This will allow our beneficiaries to set-up an account and have access to a patient portal, including access to labs, appointments, appointment reminders, etc. Solano's Behavioral Health QA and IT teams are currently testing the system and will be involving management, office staff and providers during the implementation. Initially, only County Providers will have access to this portal, but future access may be given to contracted providers whose clinical staff utilize Avatar as their main documentation record. The plan is to go live before July 2023.
- **Contractors Interoperability responsibilities:** At this point, only the Behavioral Health Plan's official EHR is required to provide access via API. Solano will provide more guidance when updates are provided by the State.

23-04 (F) BBS UPDATES (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR):

For Registered Clinicians: Effective January 1, 2023, two important changes were made that all registered staff need to be aware of regarding new annual continuing education requirements for registration renewal as well as changes to the California law and ethics re-exam process. Please see [the BBS website](#) for full details to ensure that all registered staff are aware and in compliance with the new requirements.

For Out-of-State Medical Personnel: Effective February 28, 2023, health care providers licensed out-of-state who received the Emergency Medical Services Authority's (EMSA) authorization to practice in the state without

a license issued by the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) will no longer be permitted to practice pursuant to that authorization after that date. Please see [this BBS posting](#) for more details.

AVATAR UPDATES

23-04 (G) UPDATES TO THE INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS NOTE CalAIM22 (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR PROGRAMS USING AVATAR PROGRESS NOTES):

Minor changes have been made to the *Individual Progress Note CalAIM22* form in Avatar to improve how the content displays on progress note reports. Please note that some functionality has been removed (e.g. selecting a box to open an additional text field) and edits have been made to terminology. These updates will be made in Avatar LIVE soon after this QA IN is published.

23-04 (H) REPORT 246C CARE PLAN CalAIM22 (COUNTY & CONTRACTOR)

Report 246C Care Plan CalAIM22 has been developed to display Care Plans. This report can assist with finding and reviewing Care Plans that are embedded within progress notes. This report will be made in Avatar LIVE soon after this QA IN is published.

We look forward to continuing to partner on implementing this and future State and Federally mandated initiatives that help to inform and protect the rights of those we serve.

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