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MEMORANDUM

To: Primary Care Providers

From: Kathleen McCarthy, Provider Services Director

Date: 06/03/2014

Subject: Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) benefit expansion to all Alliance programs

Beginning January 1, 2014, Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) became a covered benefit for Medi-Cal members. Effective June 1, 2014 the Central California Alliance for Health (the Alliance) will expand SBIRT services to members in Alliance Care IHSS, Alliance Care AIM and Healthy Kids (aged 18 and over).

Background

The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends that clinicians screen adults 18 years or older for alcohol misuse, and provide persons engaged in risky or hazardous drinking with brief behavioral counseling interventions to reduce alcohol misuse, and/or provide a referral to mental health or alcohol use disorder services, as medically necessary.

Benefits

- **Screening**
The alcohol screening question on the Staying Healthy Assessment (SHA) should be used by PCPs as a pre-screen tool. If a member answers affirmatively to the pre-screen question, the physician must conduct an expanded, validated alcohol screening questionnaire. The Alliance recommends using the Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT) or another validated alcohol screening questionnaire. Providers may bill code **H0049** for the alcohol screening.
- **Brief Intervention**
If the member provides answers that indicate hazardous alcohol use, the physician must offer brief intervention(s). Brief interventions typically include one to three, 15 minute sessions. These interventions may be completed in-person, by telephone, or by telehealth modalities. These interventions may be combined into one or two visits, or as three separate visits. You may bill code **H0050** for each intervention.
- **Referral to Treatment**
If the member meets the criteria for an alcohol use disorder as defined by the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), and does not respond to brief interventions, the physician should refer the member to County Alcohol and Other Drug Program.

Eligibility to Provide SBIRT Services to Medi-Cal members

Licensed providers and non-licensed providers may offer SBIRT services provided the following:

- Licensed providers that do not supervise staff in the delivery of SBIRT services are encouraged, but not required, to take training in order to offer the services.

- Supervising licensed providers must take four hours of SBIRT training within 12 months after initiating SBIRT services.
- Non-licensed health care providers must provide SBIRT services under the supervision of a licensed health care provider if the following requirements have been met.
 - Trained non-licensed providers must complete a minimum of 60 documented hours of professional experience. This experience should include a minimum of 4 hours of training directly related to SBIRT services (i.e. motivational interviewing). In addition, non-licensed providers must complete a minimum of 30 documented hours of face-to-face client contact. All hours must be completed prior to offering SBIRT services.

Eligibility to Provide SBIRT Services to Non-Medi-Cal members

Providers are strongly encouraged, but not required, to obtain training.

Available Trainings

- The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) offers SBIRT webinars tailored to both primary care providers and non-healthcare professionals.
 - http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/Pages/SBIRT_Webinars.aspx
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
 - <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/clinical-guides-and-manuals/niaaa-clinicians-guide-online-training>
- SBIRT Core Training Program
 - <http://www.sbirtraining.com/SBIRT-Core>
- For additional training options, please visit DHCS' SBIRT homepage
 - <http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/Pages/SBIRT.aspx>

If you have any questions please contact your Provider Services Representative or call (800) 700-3874 ext. 5504.