

Medical Interface Manual

For IPAs and medical groups and their contracted providers.

July 2026

This page intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction.....	1
Section 2: Medical Care Solutions Interface Procedures	1
A. Referral Procedures	1
B. Triage Guidelines	2
C. Covered Behavioral Health Services	4
D. Common Interface Scenarios and Examples	7
E. Co-Management Procedures.....	12
F. Resolution of Disagreements	12
Section 3: Blue Shield Behavioral Health Interface with Primary Care Physicians.....	12
A. PCP Referrals.....	12
Section 4: Behavioral Health/Medical Clinical Interface.....	13
A. Behavioral Health Disorders with Concurrent or Co-Morbid Medical Sequelae	13
B. Circumstances That Might Warrant a Referral to a Psychiatrist, Addictionologist or Behavioral Health Clinician by a PCP	13
Section 5: Frequently Asked Questions	14
Section 6: Laboratory Tests to Rule Out Physical Disorders and Monitor the Use of Psychotropic Medications	17
Section 7: Contact Numbers for Providers	18
Section 8: Contact Numbers for Members	18

This page intentionally left blank.

Section 1: Introduction

Since significant overlap can occur between medical problems, mental health and substance use disorders, Blue Shield of California (Blue Shield), wants to facilitate treatment of members that is coordinated between the behavioral health provider and the physician. The purpose of this manual is to provide IPAs and medical groups with an overview of Blue Shield protocols developed to promote the integration of medical and behavioral health treatment. The term Behavioral Health refers to mental health and substance use disorder throughout this manual.

This manual is intended as a guideline for the physician and office staff to coordinate the provision of behavioral and medical services to Blue Shield's members and to clearly identify the responsible party for mental health and substance use disorder services including mixed services.

Blue Shield values and promotes effective and proactive operational interactions with medical colleagues as a vital component of quality patient care. We look forward to partnering with you to improve the clinical outcomes of members.

Section 2: Medical Care Solutions Interface Procedures

Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services intake and care management staff will coordinate appropriate communication with all medical providers. Intake and care management will make referrals to Blue Shield's Medical Care Solutions Department when it is determined that the primary diagnosis is medical in nature, rather than Behavioral Health. Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services intake and care management will receive referrals when the primary diagnosis is determined to be Behavioral Health in nature.

If the primary diagnosis is medical in nature, Blue Shield's Medical Care Solutions staff will notify the IPA or medical group regarding their responsibility to manage the members' medical care based on the contractual delegation of services.

A. Referral Procedures

Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services will respond to requests for Behavioral Health services from the member, Blue Shield departments, the primary care physician (PCP), or other licensed health professional, consistent with the California Department of Managed Healthcare (DMHC) established standards for managed behavioral health organizations.

If a Blue Shield licensed clinician determines on initial contact that the diagnosis is medical in nature, the Blue Shield licensed clinician or intake coordinator will refer the member back to either Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions, or the member's PCP, IPA, or medical group.

A. Referral Procedures *(cont'd.)*

If the member's PCP determines that the member is in need of Behavioral Health evaluation/treatment and would like to make a referral for such treatment, the PCP or his/her representative should call Blue Shield at (877) 263-9952 to be connected to a licensed mental health clinician who will facilitate the request. Members can self-refer to Blue Shield through toll-free telephone access at (877) 263-9952 and do not need a referral from the IPA or PCP.

Requests for emergent evaluations can be made by direct referral to an emergency room or direct referral for mental health emergency treatment, or by dialing 911.

Requests for Behavioral Health consultations while a member is admitted to a facility can be made through either of the above toll-free numbers. Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services will review and, if required, issue an authorization according to protocols established in this manual.

B. Triage Guidelines

The triage guidelines are designed to clarify the lines of Behavioral Health care management and IPA/medical group care management for members with complex clinical conditions. The IPA/medical group and Blue Shield are responsible for coordinating care for these complex members to ensure timely access to care and coverage of care rendered.

The following guidelines determine the assignment of care management and financial responsibility in the majority of mixed service cases.

1. Place of service - medical / surgical v. Behavioral Health unit / facility

Based on the place of service (medical/surgical setting vs behavioral health unit/facility), Blue Shield assumes responsibility for coverage of Behavioral Health professional services. Below are common scenarios of responsible party coverage:

- Facility charges and care management related to medical treatment in a medical/surgical setting (ambulatory or inpatient) for gender affirming care, eating disorder, substance use disorder, or medical stabilization as a result of a mental health condition are the responsibility of Blue Shield or the IPA/medical group, regardless of mental health diagnosis depending on the contract between Blue Shield and the IPA/medical group.

Note: See Section C: Covered Behavioral Health Services below for Behavioral Health Consultation delineation of responsibility.

- Facility charges related to treatment in a Behavioral Health unit or facility for the treatment of modifiable Behavioral Health conditions is the responsibility of Blue Shield.

B. Triage Guidelines *(cont'd.)*

2. Type of professional (attending, consultant) primary care / medical – surgical v. Behavioral Health

Blue Shield assumes responsibility for coverage of professional services rendered by in-network Behavioral Health providers or out-of-network providers when access to care or continuity of care applies. Below are common scenarios of coverage responsibility:

- If a Behavioral Health consultation is required in a medical/surgical setting, Blue Shield will assume the care management and financial responsibility of the consultative service, including special procedures, and tests associated with the Blue Shield consultative service.
- If the Behavioral Health consultant identifies a condition may have an organic component that would require formal diagnostic tests (e.g., EEG, MRI, CAT SCAN, EKG, Genetic Testing, etc.), these tests would continue to be the responsibility of Blue Shield or the IPA/medical group based on the contract **and requires** the express authorization of Blue Shield or the member's IPA/medical group as required under the member's *Evidence of Coverage*.

3. Primary clinical condition / focus of Outpatient Behavioral Health treatment

Payment for outpatient Behavioral Health services are subject to eligibility at the time of service, benefit limitations, medical policies, and prior authorization, if applicable. Below is a common scenario of coverage responsibility:

- As an example, if a member has a traumatic head injury with cognitive changes resulting in a mental health disturbance, Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services, where appropriate, requires notification and prior authorization. Blue Shield will assume responsibility for mental health services provided by a Blue Shield Behavioral Health network provider.

C. Covered Behavioral Health Services

The following chart provides a useful reference to covered Behavioral Health services. The specific clinical situation must be evaluated within the context of place of service, the attending provider's area of specialty, and the primary diagnosis, pursuant to Section B above. Payment for services are subject to eligibility at the time of service, benefit limitations, and prior authorization, if applicable.

Description of Services	Services Included
Emergency Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral Health consultations. Blue Shield covers emergency screening exams as required by Health & Safety Code § 1371.4. All other emergency room professional, technical, and facility charges are the responsibility of Blue Shield or the IPA/medical group based on the contract.
Outpatient Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral health professional services. Diagnostic assessment and outpatient treatment, including but not limited to individual and group therapy, psychiatric consultations, and medication management. Psychological and Neuropsychological testing regardless of the diagnosis Behavioral Health consultations to evaluate a member prior to a surgical procedure provided the member is referred to an in-network provider for consultation. Intensive outpatient treatment programs (IOP). Specialized psychological treatment programs or service. Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) including anesthesiology. Office-Based Opioid Treatment (OBOT) – Opioid detoxification and/or maintenance therapy, takes place in a provider's office. Methadone Maintenance – Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) for heroin or other opiate addictions – Daily doses of methadone to block the euphoric and sedating effects of opiates, reduce the cravings, and relieve the symptoms associated with withdrawal. Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) and Theta Burst TMS – A non-invasive method of delivering electromagnetic stimulation to the brain for the treatment of severe depression. Telehealth/telemedicine for behavioral health. Behavioral Health counseling and other behavioral services related to gender affirming care. With respect to members enrolled in HMO or POS benefit plans, diagnostic tests ordered/administered by a Blue Shield Behavioral Health provider without the express authorization of the member's IPA/medical group (Blue Shield may require Blue Shield providers to be financially responsible for such costs as long as the member is held harmless).

Description of Services	Services Included
Behavioral Health Treatments (BHT) including, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHT – Professional services and treatment programs, including applied behavior analysis and evidence-based intervention programs, which develop or restore, to the maximum extent practicable, the functioning of an individual with pervasive developmental disorder or autism. • BHT is covered when prescribed by a physician or licensed psychologist and treatment is provided under a treatment plan approved by Blue Shield. BHT delivered in the home or other non-institutional setting must be obtained from Blue Shield participating providers. For PPO plans, always check the members’ EOC to see if they have out-of-network benefits.
Partial Hospital Days or Day Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility services. • Behavioral Health professional services. • All partial hospital treatment or day treatment medically necessary to prevent full-time hospitalization or to provide transition services to allow early discharge from full-time hospitalization. • Routine diagnostic procedures and services related to the admission diagnosis. After completion of a comprehensive Behavioral Health evaluation and neurological evaluation, if the Behavioral Health provider or neurologist determines the neuropsychological testing is required, the provider will request authorization and coordinate the request, Blue Shield will cover neuropsychological testing when the purpose of testing is to clarify whether there is a psychiatric diagnosis (even when medical conditions are present).
Residential Treatment Services	<p>The Inpatient Residential Program is a program provided in a licensed facility that provides structured 24-hour residential services designed to promote treatment and maintain recovery and not intended to be long term care.</p> <p><u>Mental Health Treatment Services</u></p> <p>The Residential Mental Health Treatment Program is provided in a licensed facility which operates in accordance with applicable California state law and provides 24 hour residential care, pursuant to written, specific, and detailed treatment programs for full time participating clients under the direction of an administrator and physician for chronic mental health conditions.</p> <p><u>Substance Use Disorder Services</u></p> <p>The Residential Care Substance Use Disorder Condition Program is a program provided in a licensed facility that provides structured 24-hour residential services designed to promote treatment and maintain recovery from the recurrent use of alcohol, drugs, and/or related substances, both legal and illegal, including but not limited to: subacute detoxification (if facility is appropriately licensed), dependence, intoxication effects, biological changes, and behavioral changes.</p> <p>Please consult the members’ benefit plan for detailed benefit coverage information.</p>

Description of Services	Services Included
Inpatient Mental Health/ Substance Use Disorder (Rehab)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility services. • Behavioral Health professional services. • Histories and physicals required for Blue Shield Behavioral Health admissions. • Inpatient treatment programs and services. • Routine diagnostic procedures and services related to the admission diagnosis. • Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) including anesthesiology medication (all routes).
Inpatient Medical/Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioral Health consultations for members in medical/surgical beds. • With respect to members enrolled in HMO or POS benefit plans, diagnostic tests ordered/administered by the Blue Shield Behavioral Health provider without the express authorization of the member's IPA/medical group (Blue Shield may require Blue Shield providers to be financially responsible for such costs as long as the member is held harmless).

D. Common Interface Scenarios and Examples

The following chart describes common clinical situations where medical and Behavioral Health services overlap. Please note that the areas described below also assign care management and financial responsibility consistent with the standard agreement between Blue Shield and an IPA/medical group.

Clinical Situation	Place of Service	Provider Type	Primary Diagnosis	Responsibility
Primary medical presentation in ER with secondary Behavioral Health considerations	Emergency room	Non-Behavioral Health physician	Medical/surgical or Behavioral Health	Blue Shield/IPA/ medical group
Primary Behavioral Health presentation in ER with no indication for emergent medical evaluation	Emergency room	Behavioral Health clinician	Behavioral Health	Blue Shield is responsible for Behavioral Health consultations. Other services are the responsibility of Blue Shield or the IPA/ medical group based on the contract.
Behavioral Health Telehealth/ telemedicine for homebound member with hip replacement, complains of anxiety, restlessness after stopping pain meds	Home utilizing telehealth/ telemedicine	Blue Shield Behavioral health clinician utilizing telehealth/ telemedicine	Medical/surgical or Behavioral Health	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services
Member diagnosed with gender dysphoria and is seeking services for depression	Office-Based	Behavioral Health clinician	Behavioral Health	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services
Individual dependent on opioids	Office-Based Opioid Treatment	Licensed Physician with DEA waiver to prescribe buprenorphine	Substance Use Disorder with or without Mental Health comorbidity	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services when provided by an in-network Behavioral Health provider or with Blue Shield prior authorization. IPA/medical group when provided by an out-of-network Behavioral Health provider or non-Behavioral Health Licensed Physician unless access to care applies.

Clinical Situation	Place of Service	Provider Type	Primary Diagnosis	Responsibility
Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) which is medically necessary and for FDA approved indications.	Physician's office	Licensed Physician with university-based training in TMS	Major Depressive Disorder, Severe	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services when provided by a Blue Shield in-network Behavioral Health provider or with Blue Shield prior authorization. IPA/medical group when provided by a Blue Shield out-of-network Behavioral Health provider or non-Behavioral Health Licensed Physician unless access to care applies, in which instance Blue Shield is responsible.
Acute medical detoxification	Blue Shield approved detox bed or unit in a general acute care facility	Medical/ surgical or psychiatrist/ addiction specialist	Medical diagnosis, such as: Acute alcohol withdrawal, acute benzodiazepine withdrawal, delirium tremens, seizures due to substance withdrawal	Blue Shield/IPA/ medical group based on the contract. Exception: Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services approved Behavioral Health services (inpatient consultation, and special procedures, and tests associated with the Blue Shield authorized consultative service) unless access to care applies.
Substance Use Disorders	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services approved Behavioral Health admission in a rehab facility, inpatient psych facility, residential treatment center (RTC), partial hospitalization program (PHP), or intensive outpatient program (IOP)	Behavioral Health clinician	Substance Use Disorder	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services

Clinical Situation	Place of Service	Provider Type	Primary Diagnosis	Responsibility
Chronic pain	Medical/surgical or structured pain program, facility, or clinic	Medical/surgical	Medical/surgical	Blue Shield or IPA/medical group based on the contract
Chronic pain (inpatient consultation, psychotherapy, biofeedback, psychiatric tests, etc.)	Blue Shield Behavioral Health approved mental health services in a Medical/surgical or structured pain program, facility, or clinic	Blue Shield Behavioral Health psychiatrist/psychologist/Behavioral Health specialist	Medical/surgical or Behavioral Health	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services (Pain management consultation and recommendations for alternative pain management modalities are the responsibility of the IPA/medical group)
Psychogenic pain (inpatient consultation, psychotherapy, biofeedback, psychiatric tests, etc.)	Blue Shield Behavioral Health approved mental health services in a Medical/surgical or structured pain program, facility, clinic, or Behavioral Health specialist office	Blue Shield Behavioral Health psychiatrist/psychologist/Behavioral Health specialist	Mental Health	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services Tests to confirm psychogenic etiology are Blue Shield/IPA/medical group responsibility based on the contract.
Mental health or emotional disturbance when a head injury with cognitive changes are present (consultation, psychotherapy, biofeedback, neuropsychological testing, etc.)	Medical facility, clinic, or Behavioral Health specialist office	Blue Shield Behavioral Health psychiatrist/psychologist/Behavioral Health specialist	Mental health and medical	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services
Medical management of delirium, dementia, or amnesia due to medical etiology	Medical/surgical facility or clinic	Medical/surgical	Medical/surgical	Blue Shield/IPA/medical group based on the contract.
Behavioral Health management of an acute Behavioral Health disorder with delirium, dementia, or amnesia (inpatient consultation, psychotherapy, biofeedback, neuropsychological testing, etc.)	Blue Shield Behavioral Health approved mental health services in a Medical facility, clinic, or mental health specialist office	Blue Shield Behavioral Health psychiatrist/psychologist/Behavioral Health specialist	Behavioral Health	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services or Blue Shield/IPA/medical group if medical etiology

Clinical Situation	Place of Service	Provider Type	Primary Diagnosis	Responsibility
Anorexia/bulimia (inpatient/outpatient consultation, psychotherapy, psychiatric tests, etc.)	Blue Shield Behavioral Health approved mental health services in a Medical/ surgical, facility, clinic, or mental health specialist office	Blue Shield Behavioral Health psychiatrist/ psychologist/ mental health specialist	Mental Health	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services
Anorexia/bulimia – with medical complications	Medical/surgical facility or clinic	Nutritional counselor or Medical/ surgical	Medical/ surgical or Mental Health	Blue Shield/IPA/medical group based on the contract
Routine pre-ECT evaluation for medical stability	Lab (CXR, ECG, blood chemistry, CBC), Anesthesia clinic (consultation)	Blue Shield Behavioral Health psychiatrist	Mental Health	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services
Speech Therapy Occupational Therapy	Facility, rehabilitation clinic	Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist	Autism spectrum disorder	Blue Shield/IPA/ medical group based on the contract
Differential diagnosis of ADHD (Neurological evaluation)	Facility or clinic/office	Pediatric neurologist	ADHD	Blue Shield/IPA/ medical group based on the contract
Member's physical condition requires emergency transportation to an ER or medical/ surgical facility	Emergency transportation	N/A	Medical/ surgical or Behavioral Health	Blue Shield/IPA/ medical group based on the contract
Blue Shield Behavioral Health approved transportation for direct admissions to a Behavioral Health unit or facility from a medical/surgical facility	Transportation	N/A	Behavioral Health	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services
Member's condition requires emergency transportation directly to mental health unit from community	Emergency transportation	N/A	Mental health	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services

Clinical Situation	Place of Service	Provider Type	Primary Diagnosis	Responsibility
Required Mental Health consultation prior to surgical procedure when not coordinated directly with Blue Shield Behavioral Health and services provided by a provider not contracted with Blue Shield unless access to care applies	Office based	Psychiatrist/ Psychologist/ Behavioral Health specialist	Medical	Blue Shield/IPA/ medical group based on the contract
Required Mental Health consultation prior to surgical procedure when coordinated directly with Blue Shield Behavioral Health and services provided by provider contracted with Blue Shield	Office based	Psychiatrist/ Psychologist/ Behavioral Health specialist	Medical	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services
Developmental Testing	Office based	Psychologist or master's level BCBA	Mental health	Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services
Developmental Testing	Facility, clinic, or office based	Pediatric Neurologist/ Psychologist	Medical	Blue Shield/IPA/ medical group based on the contract

E. Co-Management Procedures

All medical consultations at any level of care will be coordinated through Blue Shield or the member's IPA/medical group. When contacted, Blue Shield or the IPA/medical group will authorize and identify appropriate medical consultants when medically necessary. The mental health provider shall seek authorization from Blue Shield or the IPA/medical group for medical diagnostic evaluations prior to their ordering. If the medical consultant does not have medical staff privileges at the Behavioral Health facility, Blue Shield or the IPA/medical group must make appropriate arrangements for a medical consult at their expense.

F. Resolution of Disagreements

If the Blue Shield Behavioral Health care manager and complex case manager and their medical counterparts cannot agree on any aspect of the procedures described above, the matter should be referred immediately for resolution, by phone contact between the appropriate Blue Shield Medical Director and the appropriate Medical Director of the IPA/medical group, as appropriate.

Section 3: Blue Shield Behavioral Health Interface with Primary Care Physicians

A. PCP Referrals

Blue Shield will develop several processes that allow its staff to monitor and facilitate the coordination of care between the member's primary care physician (PCP) and the Behavioral Health provider, with written member consent, such as:

- Blue Shield Behavioral Health will provide PCP contact information to facility providers upon member admission.
- Blue Shield Behavioral Health will actively coordinate the co-administration of medical/Behavioral Health services through contact with the IPA/medical group case manager.
- Blue Shield's Behavioral Health Committee will routinely monitor all programs and initiatives via a set of associated core metrics.

Section 4: Behavioral Health/Medical Clinical Interface

The information in this section includes a list of the most common clinical situations that lie at the interface between the Behavioral Health disciplines and other disciplines in medicine. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to assist in the identification of members who are likely to benefit from care provided by a PCP or medical specialist and a psychiatrist or addictionologist.

A. Behavioral Health Disorders with Concurrent or Co-Morbid Medical Sequelae

- Anorexia nervosa, bulimia, other eating disorders
- Dementia
- Other neurological degenerative diseases
- Psychological sequelae accompanying chronic pain
- Substance use detoxification
- Psychological sequelae of terminal illnesses
- Other cerebral white matter disorders
- ADHD
- Sexual dysfunction (desire, arousal, orgasmic, sexual pain, etc.)
- Intermittent explosive disorder
- Conversion, or hypochondriacal disorders
- Autism spectrum disorders

B. Circumstances That Might Warrant a Referral to a Psychiatrist, Addictionologist or Behavioral Health Clinician by a PCP

- Diagnostic consultation
- Evaluation for psychotherapy
- Evaluation for substance use disorder treatment
- Evaluation for psychotropic medication management
- Need for ongoing psychotropic medication maintenance review
- Severe, recurrent, persistent, or psychotic psychological symptoms
- Presence of complex medical/mental health problems
- Poor compliance with recommended medical treatment plan
- Partial response to initial treatment(s) of depression, anxiety, agitation, or sleep problems
- Evaluation for ECT

B. Circumstances That Might Warrant a Referral to a Psychiatrist, Addictionologist or Behavioral Health Clinician by a PCP (cont'd.)

- Need for Behavioral Health hospitalization
- Need for involuntary commitment
- Symptom recurrence after a positive acute-phase response
- Undiagnosable, ill-defined physical complaints
- Differential diagnosis for a child Behavioral Health disorder

Section 5: Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. In situations where a member sees a PCP for an office visit and is diagnosed and managed for a Behavioral Health disorder, is the office visit reviewed under the medical or behavioral health benefit?**

There should be no obstacles discouraging members from seeking assistance from their PCP. PCPs can diagnose and manage general Behavioral Health disorders. Blue Shield/IPA will manage all services provided by the non-Behavioral Health providers. Blue Shield will assume management of services upon transfer of care to a Blue Shield Behavioral Health provider. Blue Shield Behavioral Health has Behavioral/Developmental Pediatricians in the network. These physicians will bill and be reimbursed by the for the Behavioral Health disorders that they treat.

- 2. How are emergency room visits for physical symptoms of an anxiety attack (heart palpitations, nausea, etc.) reviewed?**

In these situations, the member typically presents at the emergency room with the intent of ruling out the presence of a potentially life-threatening medical disorder. Therefore, Blue Shield/IPA, based on contract, is responsible for these cases. If the emergency room physician requests a mental health consultation, Blue Shield Behavioral Health is responsible for the consultation service.

- 3. Are laboratory tests, to determine blood levels of psychotropic medications, covered by Blue Shield or the IPA/medical group?**

Outpatient laboratory tests (excluding genetic/DNA testing for antidepressant medication) ordered in the interest of the psychiatrist's management of the mental health member, such as psychotropic medication (e.g., lithium and depakote) levels without express authorization of the members' IPA/medical group are the financial responsibility of Blue Shield as part of Behavioral Health.

Laboratory tests ordered by a psychiatrist while the member is hospitalized in a psychiatric facility will be covered under the mental health benefit and managed by Blue Shield Behavioral Health, unless the tests have been authorized by Blue Shield or the member's IPA/medical group.

Section 5: Frequently Asked Questions *(cont'd.)*

- 4. How should a dual diagnosis case (i.e., hypertension/depression, heart disease/depression, etc.) be handled?**

Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions, Blue Shield Behavioral Health, and the IPA/medical group will manage the care in their respective areas of specialization. Please refer to the Co-Management Procedures previously outlined in Section E.

- 5. Many times, when individuals are hospitalized for a serious medical illness, the hospital will order a psychiatric consult to help the member deal with the disease process. How should this be handled?**

To obtain a consultation from a psychiatrist while the member is confined in a medical/surgical bed, the PCP or his/her representative should call the Blue Shield at (800) 541-6652.

- 6. Who will handle office visits for ADHD?**

Blue Shield Behavioral Health reviews and manages authorized visits to mental health clinicians for the treatment of this disorder.

- 7. How will anesthesia for electroconvulsive treatment be handled?**

Anesthesia is routinely administered with electroconvulsive treatment. Because it is a procedure that is customarily provided with a psychiatric intervention it is covered under the mental health benefit administered by Blue Shield.

- 8. How will examinations, x-rays, and lab procedures to rule out physical disorders with a mental health diagnosis be handled?**

Blue Shield/IPA's administer coverage for authorized medical diagnostic tests ordered with the goal of ruling out physical disorders. Blue Shield Behavioral Health will recommend a medical consultant that is both part of the Blue Shield/IPA and has or can obtain temporary staff privileges at the Blue Shield authorized facility or the Blue Shield/IPA will select a consultant who does have or can obtain medical privileges at the Blue Shield authorized facility and then be responsible for all medical tests ordered by this consultant. Blue Shield Behavioral Health refers Behavioral Health providers to the appropriate authorizing entity when they become aware of orders for medical diagnostic tests. An exception to the Blue Shield/IPA responsibility for medical diagnostic tests is when tests are ordered in the interest of a Behavioral Health procedure such as ECT. Failure to coordinate medical services with the appropriate Blue Shield/IPA will result in Blue Shield Behavioral Health being financially responsible for said services.

Section 5: Frequently Asked Questions *(cont'd.)*

9. What if a member is suffering from neurological disorders and is being treated at a Behavioral Health unit?

Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services manages the care of members who are being treated by a psychiatrist. Blue Shield/IPAs provide management of the neurological and other medical/surgical disorders. In those instances, the mental health benefit would cover the services provided by the psychiatrist and in the Behavioral Health unit. The medical/surgical benefit would cover services managed by Blue Shield/IPAs. The attending psychiatrist is directed to Blue Shield/IPA to arrange for medical/neurological consultation, when medically necessary.

10. How will members be managed when they are admitted for anorexia and/or bulimia but may require additional days for serious medical complications?

Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services administers the mental health benefit for these members. If their medical condition requires services at a medical/surgical facility, then Blue Shield /IPA will manage these services. Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services provides management only for the mental health consultative services.

11. How will neuropsychological testing be handled?

Blue Shield/IPA is responsible for examination and management of members with medical diagnoses (e.g., head injury) in the absence of mental health concerns.

Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services is responsible in those circumstances in which neuropsychological testing is to help determine if a mental disorder is due to a neurological or neuroendocrine medical condition or treatment (versus psychiatric disease alone) when the diagnosis cannot be made through standard psychiatric or medical/neurological examination. For individuals with psychiatric diagnoses for whom neuropsychological testing will facilitate treatment planning, or assist in the determination of a differential diagnosis, a comprehensive Behavioral Health evaluation should be completed by an in-network Blue Shield Behavioral Health provider prior to a request for neuropsychological testing. If upon completion of the comprehensive Behavioral Health and neurological evaluations, either the in-network provider or neurology provider determines that neuropsychological testing is required, the provider will request authorization from Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services.

12. How will psychiatric consultation, as part of a pre-surgical requirement, be handled for individuals with a primary medical diagnosis?

For members who have a primary medical diagnosis or condition, psychiatric consultations as part of a routine pre-surgical work up (e.g., gastrointestinal bypass, organ transplant, etc.) will be arranged for and authorized by Blue Shield Behavioral Health Services, provided that the services are rendered by an in-network Blue Shield provider. This requires coordination between the PCP/Specialist and Blue Shield.

Section 6: Laboratory Tests to Rule Out Physical Disorders and Monitor the Use of Psychotropic Medications

Behavioral Health providers are directed to coordinate care with Blue Shield/IPA to identify preferred facilities for performing these laboratory tests. It is the standard of care for Behavioral Health medication management to include ordering laboratory tests to monitor the medication levels and or specific organ functions. All laboratory tests to rule out the presence of a medical disorder shall be coordinated with Blue Shield/IPA. Failure to do so will result in Blue Shield being financially responsible for said tests unless said tests were ordered by a medical consultant for clarification of a medical diagnosis. In this situation, the member who is at the inpatient level of care must utilize the inpatient laboratory contracts and would be a financial responsibility of Blue Shield/IPA.

The following is a list of the common laboratory tests that are associated with various psychotropic medications. This is not an exhaustive list.

First Generation Antipsychotics	Mood Stabilizing Agents
Liver function tests	Lithium
CBC w/differential	Blood levels
Thyroid function tests	Electrolytes
EKG (pimozide only)	Thyroid panel
Blood levels	Creatinine clearance/BUN
Second Generation Antipsychotics	Fasting blood sugar (at initiation only)
LFTs	CBC (at initiation only)
Cholesterol	ECG (at initiation only)
Glucose	Urinalysis (at initiation only)
Prolactin levels	Tegretol
Clozapine	CBC w/differential
WBC – weekly	Platelets
Absolute neutrophil count	LFTs
EEG (w/pos. seizure history)	Blood level
Antidepressants	Lamotrigine
Tricyclics	CBC w/differential
EKG	LFTs
Blood levels	Platelets
SSRIs	Antianxiety Agents
LFTs – baseline only	LFTs
Creatinine/BUN – baseline only	Stimulants
TFTs – baseline only	CBC – baseline
SNRIs	LFTs – baseline
Cholesterol	TFTs – baseline
Wellbutrin	Stimulants
EEG – prior to initiation with history of seizure	LFTs – baseline and follow-up
MAO Inhibitors	Miscellaneous Baseline Screen
LFTs (at initiation)	Urine/blood-drug level/toxicity
Serum bilirubin	EEG
Transaminase activity	SMAC
Platelet MAO inhibition	Drug screens
Miscellaneous	Pregnancy test – prior to starting meds

CBC w/differential/Platelets for Depakote	Neurological exam
EKG for Mellaril and Geodon and Celexa, also if QT prolonging meds are used together.	Thyroid function tests
Labs, EKG and Xrays in preparation for outpatient ECT	
MAT – naltrexone – LFT’s and acamprosate (metimes BUN/Cr)	
Risperidone – prolactin level	

Section 7: Contact Numbers for Providers

Provider Contact Information	
Blue Shield of California	
Mental Health Customer Service Number	Toll-free Number (800) 541-6652

Section 8: Contact Numbers for Members

Member Contact Information	
Blue Shield of California	
Mental Health Customer Service Number on Members’ ID Card	Toll-free Number (877) 263-9952

This page intentionally left blank.

Implementation date: July 2000; *Revision effective dates:* 3/02, 7/03, 4/04, 12/05, 7/08, 7/09, 10/11, 1/14, 1/15, 1/16, 1/18, 1/19, 1/20, 1/21, 5/21, 1/22, 1/24, 1/25, 1/26, 7/26