

Referral Process for Tier 3 Students School-based Mental Health Services

Tier 3 of the Multi Service System Support (MTSS) Model

- The MTSS model is used by school districts to provide school-based mental health services. Tiers 1 and 2 provide universal and selective services. Tier 3 is for those students who need more intensive services and can result in referral to Behavioral Health Services (BHS)

BHS Access Team

- To access outpatient mental health services, all service requests need to be processed through the Mental Health Access Team
 - ✓ 2,500-3,000 calls are received monthly; approximately 1/3 result in service requests
- Service requests can be made three ways:
 - ✓ Telephone calls (916-875-1055)
 - Calls are answered by clerical staff. Non-emergency calls resulting in a service request are assigned to a clinician who returns the call within 3 days
 - Urgent need calls are transferred to a clinician immediately
 - ✓ A paper pdf form can be submitted (fax or USPS mail)
 - ✓ An on-line form can be submitted (mentalhealthservicerequest.saccounty.gov)
- The Access Team makes two calls and sends a letter to a valid address for the client from the service request. If they receive no response, they close out the Service Request after 14 days
- Completed Service Requests result in parents/child being referred to a community-based provider of children's services who calls the parent to make an initial appointment
 - ✓ Child must be Medi-Cal eligible
 - According to the Sacramento Bee, 1/1/22, half of school age children are Medi-Cal eligible
 - ✓ Other children are referred to private insurance

Potential Disconnects

- Disconnect 1: If school personnel make the referral, parents may not realize the referral has been made or may not be open to the referral when the Access Team calls them
- Disconnect 2: If the school instructs the parent that their child needs mental health services, the parent may not follow through and contact the Access Team
- Disconnect 3: If the Access Team determines the child is eligible for mental health services, the parent/child has to follow through and attend the appointment when the provider reaches out to them for the first contact

Potential Solution: Eliminate One Disconnect

- Have BHS do a Performance Improvement Project to test a “No wrong door” policy so that, if a parent contacts a provider directly instead of the Access Team, the parent can directly make an appointment that way

CSOC Committee Action—Develop a Supplemental Report on the issue of mental health services referral disconnects

- Meet with Melissa Jacobs and Dawn Williams to determine what data is needed and available to study this issue
 - ✓ 602 referrals from schools in FY 2020-21 (2% of all referrals); 347 from July to December FY 2021-22
- Meet with a sample of school district personnel to discuss their referral process, potential disconnects, and their recommendations
 - ✓ Specifically include some of the mental health clinicians from the “Centers of Wellness” program to see if there are any differences at those schools
- Meet with community-based providers to discuss their perspective on disconnects and their recommendations—make sure we look at role of youth/family advocates in outreach to families
- Reach out to YAC and FAC
- Conduct a parent forum to get their perspective on how to improve the referral process