



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
www.mass.gov/masshealth

Important Notice about MassHealth Behavioral-Health Services for Children and Youths under the Age of 21

Over the past two years, important changes in behavioral-health services have taken place for MassHealth-enrolled children and youths under the age of 21. These changes have included improvements in screening and assessment for behavioral-health conditions and the development of new behavioral-health services. Behavioral-health services can help identify and treat mental health and substance abuse issues that may be affecting your child. MassHealth is giving you this information to:

- let you know about the behavioral-health services that your child can get today; and
- tell you about new behavioral-health services that your child may get soon.

Behavioral-Health Services That Your Child Can Get Today

Behavioral-Health Screenings

MassHealth pays for children and youths who are under the age of 21 to see their primary-care doctor or nurse for “well-child” visits at least once every year and more often if the child is under the age of two. At these visits, your child’s primary-care doctor or nurse will check your child’s health, development, need for immunizations, dental health, and behavioral health.

MassHealth requires primary-care doctors or nurses to offer to use a behavioral-health screening tool at these visits to check your child’s behavioral health. The screening tool is a short list of questions, or a checklist, that the parent, caregiver, or child (depending on the child’s age) fills out and then talks about with the primary-care doctor or nurse. The screening tool helps to spot concerns early so problems can be found and helped earlier. If there are concerns about your child’s behavioral health, your child’s primary-care doctor or nurse will work with you to decide if a referral to a behavioral-health provider for further assessment and treatment is needed.

If you decide that your child needs to see a behavioral-health provider, your child’s primary-care doctor or nurse can help you get needed services. For additional assistance, call your child’s MassHealth managed-care plan’s customer service number. You will find the phone number at the end of this notice.

Behavioral-Health Assessments with the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Tool

MassHealth pays for children and youths under the age of 21 (except those with MassHealth Limited) to see behavioral-health providers. Behavioral-health providers can be doctors, nurses, social workers, and counselors. If your child sees a behavioral-health provider, MassHealth requires the provider to use the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool. This tool helps providers learn about your child and family and records information gathered from the first visit or visits. In these early visits, the behavioral-health provider talks with you and your child to learn more about your child’s strengths and needs. This is called an “assessment.” The CANS tool will help the provider to work with you to choose the best services for your child.

MassHealth Behavioral-Health Services Currently Available

Your child can have office visits with a behavioral-health provider if he or she needs them. If your child needs more than office visits, MassHealth covers additional behavioral-health services that your child may need. See your MassHealth managed-care plan's *Covered Services List* for more information. You can also talk to your child's primary-care doctor or nurse or your child's behavioral-health provider or call your child's MassHealth managed-care plan's customer service number for more information. You will find your child's MassHealth managed-care plan's phone number at the end of this notice.

New Behavioral-Health Services for MassHealth Members Under the Age of 21

Between June 30 and December 1, 2009, MassHealth will begin covering the following new or improved behavioral-health services for children and youths who are under the age of 21 and are enrolled in MassHealth Standard and CommonHealth. Two services, Mobile Crisis Intervention and In-Home Therapy, are available to all MassHealth coverage types except Limited. Below are descriptions of the services and when they will start.

Intensive Care Coordination (ICC) — June 30, 2009

ICC is a care-coordination service for children and youths with serious emotional disturbance. ICC will use a model called *Wraparound Care Planning*. In Wraparound Care Planning, families and youths work together with professionals, talk about their strengths and needs, and actively guide their own care. In ICC, a team leader, called a Care Coordinator, helps families bring together a team of people to create a child's treatment plan. This Care Planning Team often includes therapists, teachers, social workers, and representatives of any involved child-serving state agency. It also includes "natural supports," such as family members, friends, and people from the family's neighborhood or community that the family invites to be part of the team. Together, the team comes up with ways to support the family's goals for the child (or youth's goals, in the case of an older child), creating an Individual Care Plan. This plan, which also focuses on the family's strengths and respects their cultural preferences, lists all the behavioral-health, social, therapeutic, or other services needed by the child and family, including informal and community resources. It will guide the youth's care and integrate services from all involved providers and agencies.

The Care Planning Team will usually meet monthly and sometimes more often for children and youths with more complex needs. At these meetings, the family, youth, and other team members can talk about progress, work to solve problems, and make any needed changes to the Individual Care Plan.

Children and youths get ICC services through a network of provider organizations called Community Service Agencies, or CSAs. There are 32 CSAs located throughout Massachusetts, 29 local CSAs and three specialty CSAs.

Family Support and Training (Family Partners) — June 30, 2009

Family Partners support and empower parents and caregivers to help their children achieve individual treatment goals. Family Partners have experience caring for children and youths with special needs. Many families enjoy working with their Family Partner because the person has "been there," can understand what their life is like, and can share their experiences. Family Partners help families to better understand and work with a child's doctors, teachers, therapists, and social workers so that their voices will be heard. Family Partners are not behavioral-health professionals, but work closely with parents to make sure children are getting the services that are needed.

Mobile Crisis Intervention — June 30, 2009

If a child has a behavioral-health crisis, a team of skilled Mobile Crisis Intervention professionals can be called 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help safely stabilize the child. Mobile Crisis Intervention teams are made up of behavioral-health providers and paraprofessionals who are trained in working with children with behavioral-health needs who are in crisis.

The Mobile Crisis Intervention team travels to any place where the child is located, including home, school, and childcare centers, to provide on-site, face-to-face help. The team can stay involved for up to 72 hours and also support the family by phone. The Mobile Crisis Intervention team develops a short-term plan to help the child remain in the home and avoid an out-of-home placement or hospitalization. Mobile Crisis Intervention can also help get additional services and supports if needed. If the crisis continues and the child cannot safely stay in the home, Mobile Crisis Intervention will suggest another setting, such as a crisis-stabilization unit or hospital, where the child's needs can be better met.

In-Home Behavioral Services — October 1, 2009

In-Home Behavioral Services offers valuable support to children and youths with challenging behaviors that get in the way of everyday life. Services are provided by a behavioral-health provider, such as a therapist, who is skilled in understanding and treating difficult behaviors in children and youths. The provider works closely with the child and family to create a specific behavior plan to improve the child's functioning. The provider may also work as a team with a skilled paraprofessional called a behavioral-management monitor. The monitor works with the child and family to implement the child's behavior plan. In-Home Behavioral Services can be provided any place the child is located, including home, school, childcare centers, and other community settings.

Therapeutic Mentoring Services — October 1, 2009

A therapeutic mentor works one-on-one with a child or youth to support and coach them to learn social skills, including better ways to communicate with other children and adults, how to deal with different opinions, and how to get along with others. The therapeutic mentor works with the child to achieve goals in a treatment plan written by an outpatient therapist, In-Home Therapy Services provider, or Intensive Care Coordination (ICC) team. The mentor is supervised by a behavioral-health clinician and can work with a child in his or her home, school, or other social and recreational setting.

In-Home Therapy Services — November 1, 2009

In-Home Therapy Services provides intensive therapy for a child and family in order to treat the child's behavioral-health needs and help the family support the child's well-being in the home. It is provided by a skilled behavioral-health provider who may work in a team with a paraprofessional. In-Home Therapy providers work to understand how the family functions together and how these relationships can be strengthened to benefit the child. Together with the child's family, they create and implement a treatment plan. Goals in a treatment plan might include helping the family identify and use community resources, learn to more effectively set limits and establish helpful routines for their child, problem-solve difficult situations, or change family behavior patterns that get in the way of their child's success.

For questions and more information, talk to your child's primary-care doctor or nurse or your child's behavioral-health provider or call your child's MassHealth managed-care plan's customer service number. You will find the phone number below.

MassHealth Managed Care Plans – Customer Service Telephone Numbers

- **Boston Medical Center (BMC) HealthNet Plan:** 1-888-566-0010 (English and other languages) or 1-888-566-0012 (Spanish) (TTY: 1-800-421-1220 for people with partial or total hearing loss)
- **Fallon Community Health Plan:** 1-800-868-5200 (TTY: 1-877-608-7677 for people with partial or total hearing loss)
- **Neighborhood Health Plan:** 1-800-462-5449 (TTY: 1-800-655-1761 for people with partial or total hearing loss)
- **Network Health:** 1-888-257-1985 (TTY: 1-888-391-5535 for people with partial or total hearing loss)