

Quick Guide: Behavioral Health FAQs for Schools



Supporting Student Mental Health and Access to Services through CenCal Health.

What is CenCal Health?

CenCal Health is a nonprofit, community-based health plan that administers Medi-Cal (California's Medicaid program) benefits for residents in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. Everyone who qualifies for Medi-Cal in these counties is automatically enrolled with CenCal Health as their managed care plan.

What behavioral health services are available to youth through CenCal Health?

For services outside of school, CenCal Health covers services for members with mild to moderate mental health needs (non-specialty mental health), including:

- Outpatient therapy (counseling)
- Psychiatric medication evaluations and management
- Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) services for members with autism or related conditions (requires referral, but no diagnosis)
- Psychological/Neuropsychological testing, when medically necessary

For students with severe mental health needs (specialty mental health) or those requiring substance use treatment, the County Behavioral Health Department is the appropriate point of contact. Examples of severe mental health needs include significant functional impairment at school, home, or in the community; risk of hospitalization; psychosis or other thought disorders; severe depression or suicidal ideation which has resulted in hospitalization; and complex trauma that impacts daily functioning.

Where should you start if a youth needs mental health support?

If the youth has Medi-Cal through CenCal Health:

- Call the CenCal Behavioral Health Department: **1-877-814-1861**
 - The Behavioral Health Department call center staff will screen the member to determine the appropriate level of care.
 - If the member meets CenCal Health's level of care, the staff will assist in finding a therapist and/or psychiatrist.
 - If the member meets the county level of care, they will complete a warm transfer to the appropriate county.
- Visit the CenCal Health Provider Directory to find therapists and psychiatrists: <https://provdir.cencalhealth.org>
- If help is needed finding an appointment, school staff can assist the family in submitting a **Behavioral Health Care Coordination Form** through CenCal Health.

If the student does not currently have Medi-Cal or coverage is unclear, see the enrollment section below.

How can families enroll in Medi-Cal / CenCal Health?

Steps to Apply for Medi-Cal:

1. **By mail:**

Download the application from the California Department of Health Care Services:

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov>

Send your completed and signed application to your local County Department of Social Services office.

How can families enroll in Medi-Cal / CenCal Health? (Cont.)

2. Online through Covered California:

<https://www.CoveredCA.com>

Your local County Department of Social Services will process the application and notify you.

3. Online through MyBenefits CalWIN:

<https://www.mybenefitscalwin.org>

Your local County Department of Social Services office will process the application and notify you.

4. In person:

Apply at the nearest County Department of Social Services office.

Staff can help you complete the application.

What can schools do?

- Refer families to a local clinic for help with applications.
- Share flyers or brochures with information about how to apply.
- Connect with CenCal Health's Behavioral Health team for outreach materials.

How do I reach CenCal Health and County Behavioral Health?

➤ CenCal Health Behavioral Health Department:

1-877-814-1861

bhcounty@cencalhealth.org

➤ Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness:

1-888-868-1649

<https://www.countyofsb.org/274/Behavioral-Wellness>

➤ San Luis Obispo County Behavioral Health:

1-800-838-1381

<https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/health-agency/behavioral-health>