



**INTERIM INSTRUCTION NOTICE #22-003**

**December 29, 2022**

**SUBJECT: Treatment Prior to Assessment Period**

**DISTRIBUTION: All Department  
of Behavioral Health  
and Contract Agency Staff**

**OBSOLETE: Upon completion of  
related MH and SUD  
manuals**

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**Effective Date** July 1, 2022

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**From** Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Quality Management (QM)

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**Introduction** The purpose of this Interim Instruction Notice (IIN) is to inform San Bernardino County (County) DBH staff and contract agency staff of changes regarding treatment services that may be provided prior to diagnosis determination, or prior to Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) access criteria determination. This IIN applies to both SMHS and Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS)/Substance Use Disorder and Recovery Services (SUDRS) and became effective July 1, 2022.

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**Clinically Appropriate Services DMC-ODS/ SUDRS** Clinically appropriate DMC-ODS/SUDRS services include prevention, screening, assessment, and treatment services (e.g., individual, group, recovery services, etc.) and are covered and reimbursable under Medi-Cal, even when services are provided prior to diagnosis determination during the assessment process.

While a person may access covered services prior to being diagnosed, a provisional diagnostic impression, and corresponding International Classification of Diseases-10 (ICD-10) code, must be assigned to submit a service claim for reimbursement.

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## Interim Instruction Notice 22-003, Continued

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### Clinically Appropriate Services DMC- ODS/SUDRS, continued

Listed below are ICD-10 codes a Licensed Practitioner of the Healing Arts (LPHA) or Licensed Mental Health Professional (LMHP) may use prior to diagnosis determination, if there is a suspected disorder based on LPHA or LMHP assessment:

- F-Code – including “Other Specified” or “Unspecified” are available for use, or
- Z03.89 - “Encounter for observation for other suspected diseases and conditions ruled out” may also be used.

**Note:** As appropriate, a LPHA or LMHP and/or non-LPHA may use Priority Z55-Z65 - “Persons with potential health hazards related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances.”

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### Clinically Appropriate Services SMHS

Clinically appropriate services include prevention, screening, assessment, and treatment services (e.g., therapy, rehabilitation, collateral, case management, medication support, etc.) and are covered and reimbursable under Medi-Cal, even when services are provided prior to diagnosis determination during the assessment process, or prior to SMHS access criteria determination.

While a mental health diagnosis is not a prerequisite for accessing covered services, and a person may access required services prior to being diagnosed, a provisional diagnostic impression and corresponding ICD-10 code must be assigned to submit a service claim for reimbursement.

Listed below are ICD-10 codes a Licensed Professional of the Healing Arts (LPHA) may use prior to diagnosis determination, if there is a suspected disorder based on LPHA assessment:

- “Other Specified” or “Unspecified” are available for use;
  - Z03.89 - “Encounter for observation for other suspected diseases and conditions ruled out” may also be used,
  - As appropriate, a LPHA and non-LPHA may use Z55-Z65 - “Persons with potential health hazards related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances.”
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## Interim Instruction Notice 22-003, Continued

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**Drug Medi-Cal  
Organized  
Delivery  
System**

DMC-ODS/SUDRS covered and clinically appropriate services, except residential services, are Medi-Cal reimbursable for up to thirty (30) days following the first visit with a LPHA or registered/certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor.

These services are reimbursable for up to sixty (60) days if the person in care is under the age of 21, or experiencing homelessness, and therefore required additional time to complete an assessment.

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**Questions**

For questions regarding this Interim Instruction Notice, please contact DBH Quality Management at (909) 386-8227 or via email at [QualityManagementDivision@dbh.sbcounty.gov](mailto:QualityManagementDivision@dbh.sbcounty.gov).

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