



**Memorandum**

**Date:** March 25, 2026

**To:** Alameda County Behavioral Health Department (ACBHD) Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) ACCESS Staff and Providers

**From:** Charles Edwards, ACCESS Division Director  
Karen Capece, Quality Management Program Director

**Subject:** **ACCESS Referral Letters – Urgent Service Notation**

Signed by:  
*Charles Edwards*  
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*[Signature]*  
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The purpose of this memorandum is to inform SMHS ACCESS staff and providers that effective **March 30, 2026**, ACCESS referral letters will provide notation indicating urgent service requests. As a reminder, urgent service timely access standards are **48 hours (no prior authorization required)** and **96 hours (prior authorization required)**.

**Background**

The Mental Health Plan (MHP)/SMHS and Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS)/SUD services are subject to federal network adequacy certification requirements and standards, which include timely access to services.

[Memo: Determining Urgent Services-SMHS and SUD](#) (issued August 2025), provides guidance on determining service urgency.

**ACCESS Referral Letter – Urgent Service Notation**

Below is an example of an urgent service request and how it will be reflected on the ACCESS referral letter.

1 (800) 491-9099      Fax: (510) 346-1083

**URGENT CARE**

The client indicates that they are running out of antipsychotics, mood stabilizers, and/or benzodiazepines within the next 7 days.

**Next Steps**

Please communicate this information within your organization and to your program staff.



If you have questions about the referral and/or are unable to provide service within 48 hours, please contact ACCESS (800-491-9099) immediately. If you have questions about this memo, please contact [QATA@acgov.org](mailto:QATA@acgov.org).