

Memo

Date: February 24, 2026

To: Alameda County Behavioral Health Department (ACBHD) Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Providers

From: Gina Battaglia, Quality Assurance (QA) Supervising Program Specialist *Gina Battaglia*
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Subject: Upcoming Change in ACBHD Credentialing Process

The purpose of this memo is to notify SMHS and SUD providers regarding an upcoming change in the ACBHD credentialing process.

Background

In line with [DHCS MHSUDS 18-019](#) and [BHIN 24-001](#) requirements, Mental Health Plans (MHPs) must ensure that each network provider is qualified in accordance with current legal, professional, and technical standards and is appropriately licensed, registered, waived and/or certified by State and Federal law. Additionally, the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) plan (inclusive of the DMC-ODS county, consortium of counties through a regional model, or Tribal or Indian managed care entity), shall provide or arrange for all DMC-ODS services and all providers shall be Drug Medi-Cal certified. Based on these standards, providers must complete the credentialing process prior to delivering or billing services under the MHP.

Since July 1, 2020, ACBHD has partnered with The Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH), a nationally recognized healthcare practitioner Credential Verification Organization, to perform primary source verification (PSV) services as part of initial credentialing and re-credentialing for its provider network once providers complete a provider profile in the CAQH portal.

Within [Provider Memo 2025-17](#), ACBHD has provided guidance regarding the Medi-Cal billable provider types required for credentialing by ACBHD.

Upcoming Change in ACBHD Credentialing Process

To be consistent with DHCS requirements, effective July 1, 2026, providers will need to complete a provider profile in the CAQH portal **and** be successfully credentialed by ACBHD **prior to** being granted access to ACBHD systems (SmartCare and Clinician's Gateway) **and prior to** service provision.

Per ACBHD-contracted organizations' FY 26-27 contract language, organizations shall maintain a pre-hire practice to ensure that staff with a provider type/designation subject to credentialing complete a valid provider profile in the CAQH portal **prior to** gaining access to ACBHD systems and **prior to** service provision.

With this change, new staff should be asked to complete their provider profile in CAQH **prior to** the start of their employment, if at all possible. When ACBHD system requests are submitted to

ACBHD, the QA team will verify that the staff has completed a provider profile in CAQH. If they have not, the staff will need to do so in order for the credentialing process to begin. ACBHD system access will **not** be granted until credentialing has been completed.

Action Required

ACBHD understands the impact of this change and recommends that organizations begin planning with their staff *immediately*. While more information will be forthcoming, ACBHD recommends the following:

- Development of internal workflows to ensure timely staff completion of CAQH provider profiles.
- Provider outreach to the CAQH Help Desk (see below for contact information) for technical assistance and support regarding profiles, especially for identifying item(s) missing/needed to move the profile to the 'complete' status, if needed.

CAQH Help Desk

- Use the Chat feature in the [CAQH portal](#)
- Live chat support is available through the portal Monday – Friday, 8:30 AM – 6:30 PM (EST)
- Automated chat support is available 24/7
- Please have your CAQH Provider ID available
- Call toll-free at 888-599-1771
- Phone support is available Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM (EST)

Please communicate this information to others within your organization, as appropriate.

Support

For questions, please contact QATA@acgov.org.