



# Behavioral Health Department

Alameda County Health

## GRIEVANCE AND APPEALS PROCESS



If you have a concern or problem or are not satisfied with your behavioral health services, the Behavioral Health Plan (BHP) wants to be sure your concerns are resolved simply and quickly. You or your representative may file a Grievance or Appeal with the Consumer Assistance office at 1(800) 779-0787. You may also ask your provider if they have a process for resolving grievances. **Please use the Grievance and Appeal Request Form to file a Grievance or to request an Appeal.** Please note that appeals may only be filed with Consumer Assistance and *not* with your provider. **You will not be subject to discrimination or any other penalty for filing a Grievance or Appeal.**

A **Grievance** is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about any matter regarding your behavioral health services that are not one of the problems covered by the Appeal and State Fair Hearing processes described below. Examples of grievances might be as follows: the quality of care of services provided, aspects of interpersonal relationships – such as rudeness of an employee, etc. **Steps to file a Grievance:**

- File a Grievance orally or in writing. Oral grievances do not have to be followed up in writing. You may authorize another person to act on your behalf.
- You may file a Grievance at any time.
- You will receive a written acknowledge of receipt of your Grievance postmarked within 5 days of receipt of the Grievance.
- The BHP has 90 calendar days after the receipt of your Grievance to review it and notify you or your representative in writing about the decision. You may ask for free copies of all information used to make this decision. This includes a copy of the actual benefit provision, guideline, protocol, or criteria on which we based our decision. If resolution of your grievance is not reached within 90 calendar days you will be provided prompt oral and/or written notification of your rights and specific information on your grievance.
- Timeframes may be extended by you up to 14 calendar days if you request an extension, or if the BHP feels that there is a need for additional information and that the delay is for your benefit in which case you will receive oral and written notice from the BHP.

### Where to File Your Grievance

#### With Alameda County Behavioral Health (ACBH):

By phone: 1-800-779-0787 Consumer Assistance

For assistance with hearing or speaking, call 711, California Relay

Service Via US Mail: 2000 Embarcadero Cove, Suite 400, Oakland, CA 94606

In Person: By visiting Consumer Assistance at Mental Health Association, 2855 Telegraph Ave., Suite 501, Berkeley, CA 94705



## Behavioral Health Department

Alameda County Health

**With your provider:** Your provider may resolve your grievance internally or direct you to ACBH above. You may obtain forms and assistance from your provider.

An **Appeal** is a review by the BHP of an Adverse Benefit Determination (ABD). An **Adverse Benefit Determination** is defined to mean any of the following actions taken by the BHP or a BHP-contracted provider regarding Medi-Cal behavioral health care services: 1) The denial or limited authorization of a requested service, including determinations based on the type or level of service, medical necessity, appropriateness, setting, or effectiveness of a covered benefit; 2) The reduction, suspension, or termination of a previously authorized service; 3) The denial, in whole or in part, of payment for a service; 4) The failure to provide services in a timely manner; 5) The failure to act within the required timeframes for standard resolution of grievances and appeals; or 6) The denial of a beneficiary's request to dispute financial liability. The decision made by the BHP about your behavioral health services may be described in a **Notice of Adverse Benefit Determination (NOABD)** letter sent or given personally to you.

### **Steps to file an Appeal:**

- Only Medi-Cal beneficiaries may file a Standard or Expedited Appeal with ACBH regarding a NOABD for a Medi-Cal behavioral health service.
- File an Appeal in person, on the phone or in writing within 60 days of the date of a NOABD. If you file the Appeal orally, you must follow it up with a signed written Appeal. If you did not receive a NOABD, there is no deadline for filing; so you may file at any time. You may authorize another person to act on your behalf.
- Upon request, your benefits will continue while the Appeal is pending IF you file the Appeal within 10 calendar days from the date the NOABD was mailed or given to you.
- You will receive a written acknowledge of receipt of your Appeal postmarked within 5 calendar days of receipt of the Appeal.
- The BHP has 30 days after the receipt of your Appeal to review it and notify you or your representative in writing about the decision. During this time you may provide verbal or written supporting documentation including presenting evidence and testimony and make legal and factual arguments.
- Timeframes may be extended by you up to 14 calendar days if you request an extension, or if the BHP feels that there is a need for additional information and that the delay is for your benefit in which case you will receive oral and written notice from the BHP.
- Appeals are not available to beneficiaries that are not happy with the outcome of a grievance.



## Behavioral Health Department

Alameda County Health

An **Expedited Appeal** can be requested if you think waiting 30 days could seriously jeopardize your mental health or substance use disorder condition and/or your ability to attain, maintain or regain maximum function. If the BHP agrees that your appeal meets the requirements for an Expedited Appeal, the BHP will resolve it within 72 hours after the Expedited Appeal is received. **Steps to file an Expedited Appeal:**

File an Expedited Appeal in person, on the phone or in writing within 60 days of the date of a Notice of Adverse Benefit Determination (NOABD). Verbal and in person requests for Expedited Appeals do not have to be put in writing. You may authorize another person to act on your behalf.

- Upon request, your benefits will continue while the Expedited Appeal is pending IF you file the Appeal within 10 calendar days from the date the NOABD was mailed or given to you.
- The BHP has 72 hours after the receipt of your Expedited Appeal to review it and notify you or your representative in a written Notice of Appeal Resolution (NAR), and may notify you verbally as well. During this time you may provide verbal or written supporting documentation including presenting evidence and testimony and make legal and factual arguments.
- Timeframes may be extended by you up to 14 calendar days if you request an extension, or if the BHP feels that there is a need for additional information and that the delay is for your benefit.
- If the BHP decides that your appeal does not qualify for an Expedited Appeal, they will notify you right away verbally and in writing within 2 calendar days. Your appeal will then follow the Standard Appeal process.

### Where to File Your Appeal

#### With Alameda County ACBH:

By phone: 1-800-779-0787 Consumer Assistance

For assistance with hearing or speaking, call 711, California Relay

Via US Mail: 2000 Embarcadero Cove, Suite 400, Oakland, CA 94606

In Person: Consumer Assistance at Mental Health Association  
2855 Telegraph Ave., Suite 501, Berkeley, CA 94705



## Behavioral Health Department

Alameda County Health

You have a right to a **State Fair Hearing**, an independent review conducted by the California Department of Social Services, if you have completed the BHP's Appeals process and the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction. A request for a State Fair Hearing is included with each Notice of Appeal Resolution (NAR); you must submit the request within 120 days of the postmark date or the day that the BHP personally gave you the NAR. You may request a State Fair Hearing whether or not you have received a NOABD. To keep your same services while waiting for a hearing, you must request the hearing within ten (10) days from the date the NAR was mailed or personally given to you or before the effective date of the change in service, whichever is later. The State must reach its decision within 90 calendar days of the date of request for Standard Hearings and for Expedited Hearings

within 3 days of the date of request.

The BHP shall authorize or provide the disputed services promptly within 72 hours from the date it receives notice reversing the BHP's ABD. You may request a State Fair Hearing by calling 1(800) 952-5253, or for TTY 1 (800) 952-8349, online to <https://secure.dss.cahwnet.gov/shd/pubintake/cdss-request.aspx> or writing to: California Department of Social Services/State Hearings Division, P.O. Box 944243, Mail Station 9-17-37, Sacramento, CA 94244-2430.

**For more detailed information on the Grievance or Appeals process, please ask your provider for a copy of *Guide to Medi-Cal Mental Health Services OR Guide to Drug Medi-Cal Services*.**

**For questions or assistance with filling out forms, you may ask your provider or call:  
Consumer Assistance: 1(800) 779-0787**



**Behavioral Health  
Department**

Alameda County Health

**GRIEVANCE or APPEAL REQUEST**



# Behavioral Health Department

Alameda County Health

This form is used to file a Grievance or to request an Appeal. If you need assistance in completing this form,

you can request help from your provider or by calling Consumer Assistance at (800) 779-0787. **A signed *Authorization for Release of Confidential Information* needs to be submitted along with this form.** The Grievance or Appeal Request can be submitted to your provider (MD, case manager, clinician, the Program Supervisor, etc.) or mailed directly to Consumer Assistance at: 2000 Embarcadero Cove, Suite 400, Oakland, CA 94606. **Please fill out both sides of this form.**

I wish to file: (choose one)     Grievance     Appeal

Check here if you are requesting that your Appeal be processed through the Expedited Appeals Process (see requirements for an Expedited Appeal)

Your address and phone number are important. We need this information to contact you about the outcome of your Grievance or Appeal. **PLEASE PRINT:**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

May we leave a message at the above #?     Yes     No

Current Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

If Applicable, Person Representing You: \_\_\_\_\_

Their Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Their Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



# Behavioral Health Department

Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services  
Alameda County Health  
A Department of Alameda County  
Health Care Service Agency

## Authorization for Release of Confidential Information

*(Please fill out both sides of this form)*

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Consumer's Last Name      First Name      Middle Name      Date of Birth

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Street Address      City      Zip Code      Daytime Telephone

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Social Security Number      **\*(Required)**

**I, request that my protected health information (PHI) from:**

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Health Care Provider Name      Telephone

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Street Address      City/State      Zip Code      FAX # (if known)

**Be disclosed to:**      ACBH – QA Office  
Consumer Assistance  
2000 Embarcadero Cove, Suite 400  
Oakland, CA 94606

**I authorize the following PHI to be released from my medical record(s):**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Room Record              | <input type="checkbox"/> Pathology Slides/Report             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory Reports                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Itemized Billing Records            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radiology Reports                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Discharge Summary                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immunization Record                | <input type="checkbox"/> History and Physical, Consultations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Medical Record (all pgs.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Operative Reports                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                       |  |





**State and Federal law protect the following information. If this information applies to you, please indicate if you would like this information released/obtained** (include dates where appropriate):

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mental Health Records                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Psychotherapy Records                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| HIV Testing and Results                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Alcohol, Drug, or Substance Abuse Record | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Genetic Records                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**Covering the period of healthcare from:** Specific Date(s) \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ **OR**

All past, present, and future encounters/visits

**Purpose for requesting information:** Resolving my grievance or appeal request

This consent is subject to revocation by the undersigned at any time except to the extent that action has been taken in reliance hereon, and if not earlier revoked, it shall terminate six (6) months from the date of consent. The signer may revoke this release in writing or by verbally informing Consumer Assistance.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client or Authorized Representative Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Patient (if applicable)

**Any disclosure of medical records information by the recipient(s) is prohibited except when implicit in the purpose of the disclosure. PROHIBITION ON RE-DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED SUD INFORMATION: 42 CFR Part 2 prohibits unauthorized disclosure of these records.**