

**THIS CA UPDATE HAS BEEN SENT TO THE FOLLOWING:****COUNTIES:**

- ☒ Imperial
- ☒ Riverside/San Bernardino
- ☒ Los Angeles
- ☐ Orange
- ☒ Sacramento
- ☒ San Diego

**LINES OF BUSINESS:**

- ☒ Molina Medi-Cal Managed Care
- ☐ Molina Medicare Options Plus
- ☐ Molina Dual Options Cal MediConnect Plan (Medicare-Medicaid Plan)
- ☐ Molina Marketplace (Covered CA)

**PROVIDER TYPES:**

- ☒ **Medical Group/ IPA/MSO**
- ☒ **Primary Care**

- ☒ IPA/MSO

- ☒ Directs

**Specialists**

- ☒ Directs

- ☒ IPA

- ☐ **Hospitals**

**Ancillary**

- ☐ CBAS
- ☐ SNF/LTC
- ☐ DME
- ☐ Home Health
- ☐ Other

**FOR QUESTIONS CALL****PROVIDER SERVICES:**

(888) 562-5442, Extension:

**Los Angeles/Orange Counties**

X123017

**Riverside/San Bernardino Counties**

X120613

**Sacramento County**

X125682

**San Diego County**

X121735

**Imperial County**

X125682

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG SCREENING, ASSESSMENT, BRIEF INTERVENTIONS AND REFERRAL TO TREATMENT (SABIRT) APL 21-014**

This is an advisory notification to Molina Healthcare of California (MHC) network providers.

This notification is based on an APL 21-014, which can be found in full on the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) website at:

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/Documents/MMCDAPLsandPolicyLetters/APL2021/APL21-014.pdf>

Under the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Services (EPSDT) benefit, MHC is required to provide coverage for screening services for all members under 21 years of age. As part of the EPSDT requirement, MHC is contractually required to provide services as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Bright Futures initiative for all members under 21 years of age. The AAP develops guidance and recommendations for preventive care screenings and well-child visits for children and regularly publishes updated tools and resources for use by clinicians and state agencies. Per AAP/Bright Futures recommendations, tobacco, alcohol, and drug use screening and assessment with appropriate follow-up action as necessary should begin to occur at 11 years of age. MHC is also contractually required to provide all preventive services for members who are 21 years of age or older consistent with USPSTF Grade A and B recommendations. The USPSTF assigned a Grade B recommendation for Screening and Behavioral Counseling Interventions to Reduce Unhealthy Alcohol Use in Adolescents and Adults, as of November 2018, and for Screening for Unhealthy Drug Use, as of June 2020.

The USPSTF recommends screening for unhealthy alcohol use in primary care settings in adults 18 years or older, including pregnant women, and providing persons engaged in risky or hazardous drinking with brief behavioral counseling interventions to reduce unhealthy alcohol use. Additionally, the USPSTF recommends screening by asking questions about unhealthy drug use in adults age 18 years or older. Screening should be implemented when services for accurate diagnosis, effective treatment, and appropriate care can be offered or referred.

The USPSTF uses the term "unhealthy alcohol use" to define a spectrum of behaviors, from risky drinking to alcohol use disorder (AUD) (e.g., harmful alcohol use, abuse, or dependence). Risky or hazardous alcohol use means drinking more than the recommended daily, weekly, or per-occasion amounts, resulting in increased risk for health consequences, but not meeting criteria for

AUD. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) defines “heavy use” as exceeding the recommended limits of 4 drinks per day or 14 drinks per week for adult men or 3 drinks per day or 7 drinks per week for adult women. The term “unhealthy drug use” is defined as the use of illegally obtained substances, excluding alcohol and tobacco products, or the nonmedical use of prescription psychoactive medications; that is, use of medications for reasons, for duration, in amounts, or with frequency other than prescribed or by persons other than the prescribed individual.

Unhealthy alcohol and drug use plays a contributing role in a wide range of medical and behavioral health conditions. Counseling interventions in the primary care setting can address risky drinking behaviors in adults by reducing weekly alcohol consumption and increasing long-term adherence to recommended drinking limits. Brief behavioral counseling interventions decrease the proportion of persons who engage in episodes of heavy drinking. Additionally, brief counseling interventions increase the likelihood pregnant women will abstain from alcohol throughout their pregnancy. Effective treatment options for AUDs and/or substance use disorders (SUDs) depend on the severity of the disorder and include some combination of the following: alcohol and/or drug counseling sessions, participation in mutual help groups, structured, evidence-based psychosocial interventions, Federal Drug Administration-approved medications, residential treatment (when medically necessary), or some combination of these services.

### **SABIRT Requirements**

Consistent with USPSTF Grade A or B recommendations, AAP/Bright Futures, and the Medi-Cal Provider Manual, MHC will provide SABIRT services for members 11 years of age and older, including pregnant women. These services may be provided by providers within their scope of practice, including, but not limited to, physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, licensed midwives, licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional clinical counselors, psychologists and licensed marriage and family therapists

### **Screening**

Unhealthy alcohol and drug use screening must be conducted using validated screening tools.

Validated screening tools include, but are not limited to:

- Cut Down-Annoyed-Guilty-Eye-Opener Adapted to Include Drugs (CAGE-AID)
- Tobacco Alcohol, Prescription medication and other Substances (TAPS)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Quick Screen for adults
- The single NIDA Quick Screen alcohol-related question can be used for alcohol use screening
- Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10)
- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT-C)
- Parents, Partner, Past and Present (4Ps) for pregnant women and adolescents
- Car, Relax, Alone, Forget, Friends, Trouble (CRAFT) for non-pregnant adolescents
- Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test Geriatric (MAST-G) alcohol screening for geriatric population.

### **Brief Assessment**

When a screening is positive, validated assessment tools should be used to determine if unhealthy alcohol use or SUD is present. Validated alcohol and drug assessment tools may be used without first using validated screening tools. Validated assessment tools include, but are not limited to:

- NIDA-Modified Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (NM-ASSIST)
- Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-20)
- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)

## **Brief Interventions and Referral to Treatment**

For recipients with brief assessments that reveal unhealthy alcohol use, brief misuse counseling should be offered. Appropriate referral for additional evaluation and treatment, including medications for addiction treatment, must be offered to recipients whose brief assessment demonstrates probable AUD or SUD. Alcohol and/or drug brief interventions include alcohol misuse counseling and counseling a member regarding additional treatment options, referrals, or services. Brief interventions must include the following:

- Providing feedback to the patient regarding screening and assessment results;
- When a screening is positive, validated assessment tools should be used to determine if
- Discussing negative consequences that have occurred and the overall severity of the problem;
- Supporting the patient in making behavioral changes; and
- Discussing and agreeing on plans for follow-up with the patient, including referral to other treatment if indicated.

## **Documentation Requirements**

Member medical records must include the following:

The service provided (e.g., screen and brief intervention); The name of the screening instrument and the score on the screening instrument (unless the screening tool is embedded in the electronic health record); The name of the assessment instrument (when indicated) and the score on the assessment (unless the screening tool is embedded in the electronic health record); and, If and where a referral to an AUD or SUD program was made.

## **QUESTIONS**

If you have any questions regarding the notification, please contact your Molina Provider Services Representative at (888) 562-5442. Please refer to the extensions on page one.