

Accessing Behavioral Health Services

What to Expect When You Reach Out for Help

El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency
Behavioral Health Division



Behavioral Health Commission | 2026

What to Expect

This presentation walks through what a person can expect when accessing El Dorado County Behavioral Health services, from first contact to ongoing care. It covers three service tracks:

**Adult
Outpatient**

**Children's
Outpatient**

**Substance Use
Disorder Services**

How People Access Our Services

There are many ways to reach Behavioral Health

Who Can Refer

- Self-referral
- Parents / guardians / family members (for minors or conserved adults)
- Primary care physicians
- Inpatient psychiatric units
- Community therapists
- Managed care plans
- Schools
- Child Protective Services (CPS)
- Probation
- Law enforcement / jails
- Emergency departments
- Homeless outreach programs

How to Reach Us

- Call our 24/7 Access Line
 - 1-800-929-1955
- Walk into the clinic
- Call during business hours
 - 530-621-6290
- Email to request services
 - EDCMH-Referral@edcgov.us

Where Services Happen

- In the clinic
- Via telehealth (video/phone)
- In your home
- Out in the community
- Hybrid of any of the above

TRACK 1

Adult Outpatient Services

County Outpatient Clinic
Mental Health Plan

What you can expect from first contact through ongoing care

Adult Outpatient | First Contact & Screening

Step 1: Your First Call or Visit

- Staff collects your name, date of birth, and contact information
- Insurance verified (Medi-Cal, private insurance, or uninsured)
- Basic information entered into our electronic health record

Step 2 : Screening Tool

- A brief DHCS-required screening tool is completed
- Determines whether you're best served by the Mental Health Plan (our system), Medi-Cal Managed Care, or a private insurer
- If managed care is a better fit, a referral is made on your behalf

Step 3 — Treatment Readiness Group

- Before meeting one-on-one with a clinician, you attend a Treatment Readiness Group session
- You'll receive information about services, go through key paperwork, and be assigned to a clinician
- A first appointment with your clinician is scheduled at this time

Adult Outpatient | Your First Clinician Appointment

What Happens at Your First Appointment

- Complete any remaining paperwork, including informed consent
- Your clinician conducts a comprehensive assessment: what brought you in, your history, what you hope to get out of services
- Questions cover mental health history, physical health, housing, relationships, and daily functioning
- A clinical diagnosis is established when clinically appropriate
- Treatment planning begins your goals guide the plan

Releases of Information

You can choose to sign a Release of Information (ROI) to allow a family member, caregiver, or support person to be involved in your care. This is your choice and you decide who is included and what they can know.

Medications

A referral for a medication evaluation can be made at any time, even at your very first appointment. Meeting with a psychiatrist is exploratory. You are never obligated to take medication.

Adult Outpatient | Services Once You're Enrolled

Individual Therapy

Regular sessions with your assigned clinician, focused on your treatment goals

Group Therapy

Structured therapy groups on topics relevant to your care

Wellness Center Groups

Skill-building, peer support, and wellness programming at our Wellness Center

Case Management

Support navigating primary care, CalFresh, county benefits, SSI, and other services

Housing Support

Assistance working toward permanent, stable housing

SUD Co-Referral

If substance use is identified, a concurrent referral to our SUD services is made

Your care team may include multiple providers: clinician, psychiatrist, mental health worker, psych tech, and more.

Adult Outpatient | What to Expect — Timeline

Day 1

First Contact

Call, walk in, or be referred.
Insurance verified, information gathered, screening tool completed.

Days 1–14

Treatment Readiness Group

Attend group session.
Complete paperwork. Meet your clinician assignment and schedule first appointment.

Weeks 1–4

Assessment & Diagnosis

Comprehensive assessment with your clinician.
Diagnosis established.
Treatment plan developed.
Medication referral if requested.

Month 1–6

Active Treatment

Ongoing therapy and case management begins. SUD co-referral if needed.

Ongoing

Continued Care

Services are dynamic and adjust to your needs. Multiple team members may be involved as your care evolves.

TRACK 2

Children's Outpatient Services

Contracted Provider Network
Children's Mental Health Plan

County screens and refers and contracted providers deliver care

Children's Outpatient | Access & Referral Process

Step 1: Contact & Screening

- Parents, guardians, schools, CPS, or the child may call our access line or clinic
- The same DHCS screening tool is completed to determine the appropriate level of care
- Insurance and basic demographic information is collected

Step 2: Referral to a Contracted Provider

- El Dorado County has four contracted children's mental health providers
- A referral is made to the appropriate provider based on your child's location, needs, and availability
- The contracted provider then leads all intake and treatment from that point forward

Step 3: What Families Can Expect From the Provider

- The provider conducts a comprehensive assessment of the child and family's needs
- Informed consent and releases of information are completed. Family voice and choice are central to children's treatment
- Services may include therapy, case management, medication referral, peer support services, and family therapy

Children's Outpatient | Family Involvement & Timeline

Child & Family Team (CFT) Meetings

For children with higher-acuity needs and multiple agencies involved (schools, CPS, probation, etc.), the contracted provider leads a Child & Family Team meeting, This bringing all key people together to coordinate a wraparound plan centered on the child and family.



TRACK 3

Substance Use Disorder Services

DMC-ODS

Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System

24/7 access line — level-of-care matched services through contracted providers

Substance Use Disorder Services | First Contact & Screening

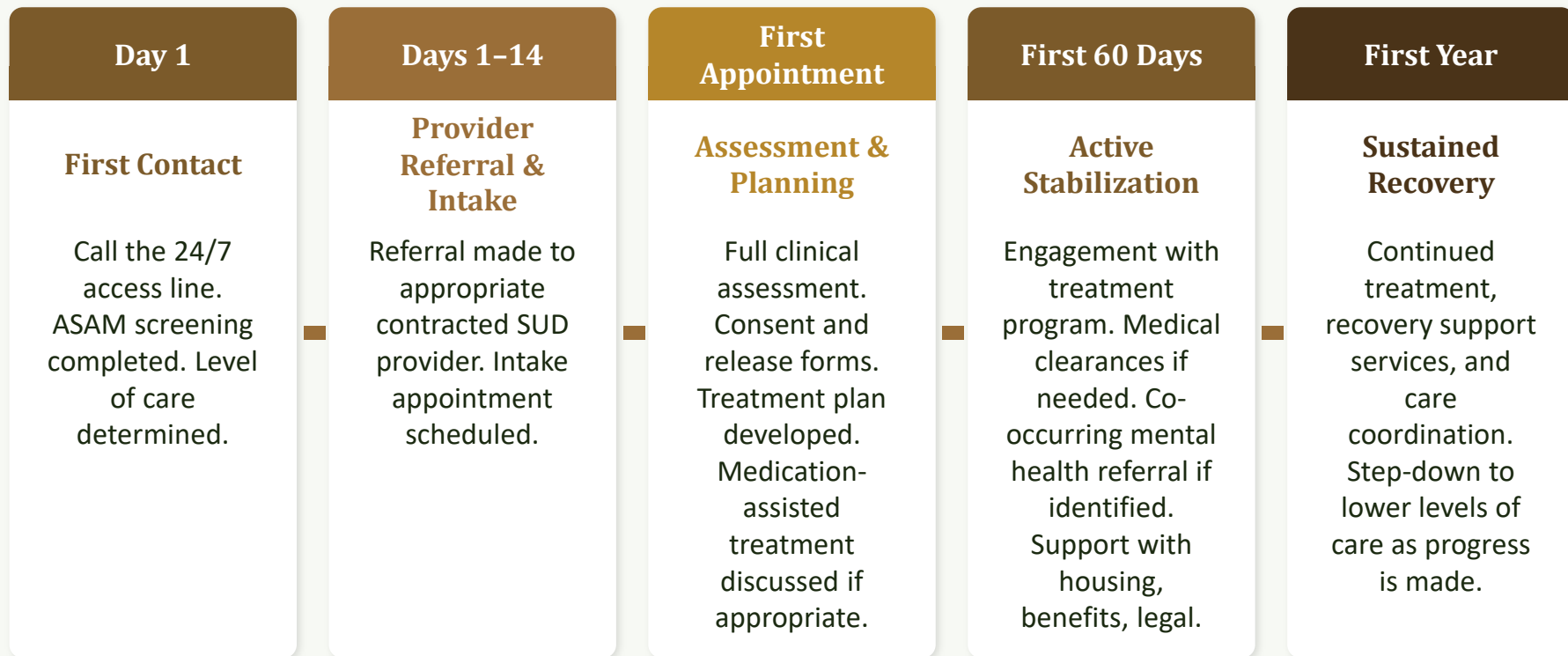
Step 1: Call the 24/7 Access Line

- Our 24/7 access line is available any time
- You can also walk into the clinic or be referred by a physician, court, or another provider
- Basic information is collected to get you into the system
- An ASAM screening is completed. This is a standardized clinical tool that determines the right level of care for you

What the ASAM Screening Covers

- Substances used, frequency, and how long you've been using
- Any withdrawal symptoms or medical concerns
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Motivation and readiness for treatment
- Living situation, social supports, and work or legal involvement
- Based on your answers, you are triaged to an outpatient level of care or provided a full biopsychosocial assessment. The information gathered during this process guides the level-of-care recommendation.

Substance Use Disorder Services | What to Expect & Timeline



Questions?

To Access Services:

24/7 Access Line | Clinic Walk-In | Telehealth Available

Adult Outpatient

County Clinic — MHP

Children's Outpatient

Contracted Provider Network

SUD Services

DMC-ODS — 24/7 Line

El Dorado County HHSA | Behavioral Health Division
Transforming Lives and Improving Futures