

Behavioral Health FAQs

Get help now

What do I do if my loved one or I have an emergent mental health problem?

To access emergency/crisis services:

- For a life-threatening emergency, call 911
- For 24-hour suicide prevention or a mental health crisis, call or text 988
- For substance use, problem gambling, or mental health support, contact the Washington Recovery Help Line at (866)789-1511

For more information including regional crisis lines, crisis lines by county, and what may happen when you call a crisis line please visit HCA's [Mental health crisis lines](#) webpage at hca.wa.gov/mental-health-crisis-lines.

Behavioral health laws

What are the requirements for timely access to care?

A statute called “Brennen’s Law” (RCW 48.43.765) requires health plans to “prominently” place the following information on their websites in an easily understandable and obtainable format:

- Whether behavioral health treatment is covered as primary or specialty care
- Tools and resources to help find available providers
- The number of business days within which the plan must ensure the member has an appointment scheduled
- Information on what the member can do if they are unable to access covered behavioral health treatment within that timeframe
- Resources for people experiencing a behavioral health crisis, including the national suicide prevention lifeline

For non-urgent covered mental health and substance use disorder treatment, an appointment must be made available for PEBB members within 10 business days of an appointment request, or within 15 business days if the member needs a referral or the service is covered as specialty care.

If the member is unable to schedule an appointment within these time limits, their health plan must assist the member with scheduling an appointment. (WAC 284-170-200 (13)(b)(iii); WAC 284-170-300 (13)(c)(ii)).

Important note: The law requires scheduling of the appointment to happen within these time limits. The appointment itself can be for a later date.

What is the age limit for sharing patient information with parents or guardians?

In Washington state, youth ages 13 and older can get behavioral health services without their parent’s consent. As a parent or family member, you may want to support your youth in starting treatment. Encouraging youth to seek services voluntarily is the best first step. If a youth enters treatment under Family Initiated Treatment (FIT), parents or caregivers can withdraw their consent at any time. When that happens, the youth will either be discharged or need to transition to voluntary or involuntary treatment. For more details about FIT, visit HCA’s [Family initiated treatment](#) webpage at hca.wa.gov/fit.

How do I get help for someone who is not willing to go to treatment but is a harm to themselves and others?

The involuntary treatment act (ITA) process may be initiated for those ages 13 years and older within Washington state. An individual is typically referred by family members, first responders, care givers, or medical providers for an ITA evaluation. ITA referrals arise from concerns regarding an individual's safety, history, and presentation of mental disorder or substance use disorder. More information is available on the following HCA webpages and fact sheet from hca.wa.gov:

- [Ricky's Law: Involuntary Treatment Act](#)
- [Assisted outpatient treatment \(AOT\)](#)
- [How to file a petition for initial involuntary detention of a family member \(Joel's Law fact sheet\)](#)

Behavioral Health Services

How do I get behavioral health services and where do I start?

- Step 1:** Talk to your primary care provider. They can help you create a treatment plan that fits your needs, recommend specialized mental health providers, and connect you with resources available in the meantime. If you don't have a primary care provider, you can use your medical plan's provider search tool or contact your medical plan.
- Step 2:** Contact your medical plan to find available providers that work with your insurance. You can find your plan's contact information on the back of your insurance ID card. If you don't have your ID card handy, you can visit the PEBB [Contact the plans](#) webpage hca.wa.gov/employees-contact-plan.
- Step 3:** Schedule your appointment. Your plan's customer service can help you with this.

Will my health plan cover different therapies at the same time?

You can typically use multiple therapy modalities at the same time, such as talk therapy and medication management with a psychiatrist, as this can provide a more comprehensive approach to managing behavioral health conditions and their symptoms. Most insurance plans will cover both as long as you are seeing qualified network providers and the services are medically necessary. You can contact your medical plan to verify coverage and any limitations.

Can my PEBB insurance be used to get Naloxone from the pharmacy?

Yes, PEBB members can use their insurance to get Naloxone (also known as Narcan) from the pharmacy. Although it is a covered prescription drug, you may still have to pay a copay or coinsurance and meet your deductible. To get Naloxone, you need a prescription from your provider. In place of a prescription, you can use the [Statewide Standing Order to Dispense Naloxone](#) on the [Department of Health's](#) website at doh.wa.gov.

How do I decide which provider or type of therapy is right for me?

Start with your primary care provider. They should be familiar with available resources in your area and can make a recommendation on where to start.

Therapy takes time to work, but if you feel the modality you've chosen to start with isn't right for you, share those concerns with your doctor and/or therapist. They may be able to recommend other options or implement a different approach to your care.

Will my health plan cover telehealth or other self-care apps for behavioral health?

All PEBB medical plans cover virtual behavioral health visits and some self-care apps. More information about coverage for these services can be found on your medical plan's website.