

Apple Health (Medicaid) coverage of intensive outpatient programs and partial hospitalization programs for mental health services FAQ

Background

In 2022, [Second Substitute Senate Bill 5736](#) directed the Health Care Authority (HCA) to cover intensive outpatient programs (IOP) and partial hospitalization programs (PHP) services for persons under 21 years of age under [Washington's Medicaid State Plan](#) by January 1, 2024.

HCA confirmed that IOP and PHP services as treatment models for persons under 21 years of age was already permitted under the Washington State Plan (SPA) Attachment 3, Section 4b: Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT). HCA determined a State Plan Amendment was not necessary. Mental health IOP and PHP services became available by January 1, 2024 for Apple Health eligible individuals under age 21.

Under federal requirements, an individual who is 20 years of age or younger is to receive any service deemed medically necessary. Visit HCA's [Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment](#) webpage for more information about EPSDT services.

What are IOP and PHP for mental health?

Intensive outpatient programs (IOP) and partial hospitalization programs (PHP) for mental health are structured intensive outpatient treatment of daily or near-daily sessions with the client returning home each day. These service models provide active treatment using a multidisciplinary approach and individualized treatment plans.

- IOP models must be at least 9-12 hours of services per week with an average of 2 to 3 hours per day, at least three sessions each week, occurring on separate days.
- PHP models must be at least 15-20 hours of services per week with an average of 4 to 5 hours per day, occurring on separate days.

What are the age limitations?

The mandate applies to persons age 20 and younger. Managed care organizations (MCO) and behavioral health administrative services organizations (BH-ASO) may choose to provide IOP and PHP mental health services for adults over age 21.

What are the types of services offered?

- Individual, group, and family therapy.
- Medication management.
- Medical monitoring.
- Nutritional and wellness support.

Frequency, duration, and array of services are tailored to meet individual needs determined by intake evaluations and supported by individualized treatment plans.

Does the directive apply to substance use disorder (SUD)?

The directive applies only to mental health services, not SUD treatment. See [RCW 71.24.385](#): Section 1(a).

Can IOP or PHP clients also receive SUD services?

Yes. Clients receiving mental health IOP or PHP are not precluded from also receiving SUD services if clinically indicated and medically necessary.

Is current SUD American Society for Addiction Medicine (ASAM) 2.5 PHP covered by Apple Health (Medicaid)?

Third edition ASAM 2.1 IOP and 1.0 outpatient SUD services are covered by Apple Health (Medicaid).

ASAM 2.5 PHP is not covered by Apple Health.

What is the future of ASAM 2.5 PHP - high intensity outpatient?

HCA is reviewing new ASAM Criteria 4th Edition levels, including high intensity outpatient treatment. We are exploring ways to incorporate co-occurring enhanced and BIO levels of care.

HCA will provide opportunities for feedback throughout the implementation process.

Billing and encountering resources for behavioral health agencies

- **Managed Care:** [Service Encounter Reporting Instructions \(SERI\) Guide](#)
- **Fee-for-Service:** Part 2 of the [Mental Health Services Billing Guide](#) and the specialized fee schedule.
- **Acute care hospital bills:** [Outpatient Hospital Services Billing Guide](#).
- **Professional services billed outside Enhanced Ambulatory Patient Groups (EAPG):** [HCA's provider billing guides and fee schedules](#)

Contact

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