

Prior Authorizations and Correctional Facilities Release to SUD Residential Facilities

When a client who has Apple Health (Medicaid) coverage is incarcerated, they will continue to retain their status as a Medicaid client. However, their Apple Health benefits are suspended while in a correctional facility.

Post-incarceration, benefits cannot be confirmed until the person is released and the ProviderOne suspended status has ended. It can take HCA up to one business day to update a client's status in ProviderOne. This can create challenges in obtaining prior authorization for clients to be released from jail, when a residential treatment option is available. This type of release requires the client to go directly from a correctional facility to a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) residential treatment facility.

HCA has developed the following **High Priority Guidance Document** to establish consistent processes for obtaining prior authorization for these clients. This guidance is intended to ensure safety and coordination for clients who are incarcerated but need access to behavioral health services.

Process for Coordination Prior to Release:

Medicaid

If a client needs to access SUD residential treatment directly from the correctional facility, follow the steps below:

1. **Identify the Managed Care Organization (MCO)** the client was enrolled with prior to incarceration and confirm the plan is still available in your region. Providers can access this information using the Benefit Inquiry Function in ProviderOne (www.waproviderone.org), by entering a date one month prior to the incarceration.
 - Once identified, confirm with the client that this is their plan of choice or work with the client to select a different plan, and use the process in the bullet below to report the request to HCA.
 - If the client has an MCO that is no longer an available plan within the region, and has no plan preference, coordinate with HCA to assign an MCO to be responsible for the person upon release, by sending a request to HCAintegratedMCquestions@hca.wa.gov.
2. **Request a prior authorization (PA)** for SUD residential treatment from the MCO identified in step 1. Each MCO will review clinical documentation, per their defined PA process for services.
 - If the MCO **approves** the PA for services, the plan will provide a notification of contingent approval to the provider coordinating the discharge plan. This approval is based upon the individual's eventual reinstatement of benefits. The HCA refers to this as an **"Honor Authorization"**.
 - If the PA request does not meet the MCOs "medical necessity" criteria, the plan will reach out to the provider to request additional information.
 - The provider can coordinate transportation through HCA's transportation broker. Please indicate to the broker that the client will be released from jail directly to treatment, and will continue to show suspended status in ProviderOne until the client is retroactively enrolled to the beginning of the month, upon release.
 - In the occasional case **an individual has lost Medicaid eligibility**, after obtaining an "Honor Authorization" from a MCO, the provider would instead coordinate authorization and payment for services with the regional BH-ASO, within available resources.

Non-Medicaid

For non-Medicaid individuals, the provider should work with the BH-ASO to obtain prior authorization and coordination of payment within available resources.

If an individual (prior to incarceration) did not have an Apple Health Plan, the correctional facility or provider can help the individual apply for Medicaid benefits, if the individual may be eligible. For more information on how the correctional facility staff or a provider can help an individual apply for Medicaid, visit: <https://www.hca.wa.gov/health-care-services-supports/apple-health-medicare-coverage/medicaid-suspension>

Contact HCA:

Contact HCA if a provider continues to experience barriers after attempting to coordinate services for a Medicaid client, from a correctional facility to a residential SUD treatment facility. **Please contact HCA as quickly as possible at HCAintegratedmcquestions@hca.wa.gov.** Providers can also use this inbox for additional questions or guidance.