

July 29, 2021

Upcoming DHCS audit: Frequently Asked Questions

Dear provider,

Last month, we sent out a notice about the upcoming audit that the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) will be conducting of the Health Plan of San Mateo (HPSM) between August 30 and September 10, 2021. Your practice could be selected for an onsite visit or receive a request for medical records. It is important that you respond and participate in these requests. Several providers have reached out with questions about the upcoming audit, so we are providing answers to some frequently asked questions below.

Who conducts the audit, and what is it?

DHCS's audit and A&I division conducts annual audits on all health plans like HPSM who hold a contract with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and serve Medi-Cal members. As a component of the audit process A&I selects a sample of contracted network providers to visit.

Will A&I visit my practice in person?

Given this year's annual audit is virtual, A&I has not stated if the provider site visit will be in person or remote: usually, visits are in person.

How will provider site visits be notified if their site is selected?

If A&I notifies HPSM of the selection of provider sites prior to the audit, a representative from HPSM will contact the provider site to inform the site they have been selected for a site visit. HPSM may or may not have information regarding what date/time A&I will visit, as that is generally facilitated through A&I with the provider site directly.

A&I will contact the site directly to notify the provider site of their visit and will provide the date/time of the visit. A&I may contact the provider site the same day or same week they intend on visiting. The visit has historically occurred during the audit period, which this year is scheduled from August 30, 2021, to September 10, 2021 (observing Labor Day).

What can I do to prepare?

Ensure staff is aware A&I may visit and identify a point person (generally the site manager) to be the liaison with A&I. Encourage all staff to take time to update your protocols and practices that pertain to HPSM. Review these protocols, as well as the HPSM provider manual, with any new staff.

What types of questions will A&I ask?

Working with Medi-Cal members:

- Is the site aware of the interpreter services available for Medi-Cal members? A&I will expect the site to know the phone number for interpreter services and what the process is for requesting in person interpreters. For more info, visit: www.hpsm.org/provider/resources/language-services for detail.
- Do you bill Medi-Cal members for services? Remember: balance billing of Medi-Cal members is strictly prohibited. See the Provider Manual Claims section for detail: www.hpsm.org/provider/resources/provider-manual
- How do you check a member's eligibility? Eligibility information is available 24/7 in our provider portal, www.hpsm.org/provider/portal/
- What health education materials are available to members? Familiarize yourself with these resources: www.hpsm.org/health-information

Access and availability:

- For PCPs: is your panel open to accept new members?
- When is your next available *new patient appointment* for Medi-Cal members?
- When is your next available appointment for an *established* Medi-Cal patient?
- When is your next *urgent appointment* available for a Medi-Cal member?
- When is your next available *specialist* appointment for a Medi-Cal member (if applicable)?
- What is the process for referring Medi-Cal members to a specialist or other service?
- Does the site hold slot(s) on the schedule for Medi-Cal members? If so, how many?

- What are the site's after-hours coverage protocols?
- Is there are difference between Medi-Cal appointment availability and commercial appointment availability?
- What is the provider site appointment cancellation policy?
- Where in the site scheduling system is it noted if a member was a no show?
- What types of reminders does the clinic send out regarding preventive care appointments/screenings and what is the frequency?
- How long is the wait time once members arrive? *Please note: some auditors will watch the waiting rooms and look at how long it took from check in to a patient being placed in a room.*

Basic site information:

- What is the payor mix of this site, and what percentage of the site's business is Medi-Cal?
- How many MD's, NP, PA, and nursing staff work at the clinic?

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, rather to provide visibility into what has been asked historically during site visits. Please direct any questions or concerns to HPSM's Provider Services department at PSInquiries@hpsm.org.

Thank you,
The Health Plan of San Mateo