



DIRECTOR'S NEWSLETTER: BHRS Behind the Scenes



Happy summer! In this edition, we hear from leaders of teams who keep BHRS going. I'm excited for you all to read about the work of Admin, MIS, Contracts and Fiscal - the unsung heroes of BHRS along with Payroll/Personnel and Facilities. Even before the implementation of California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM), the transformation of California's Medi-Cal system which has been a significant lift for us, we have relied on the work of these amazing teams to ensure that our operations run smoothly. We cannot do our work well – addressing our client's needs – without these teams supporting us and maintaining BHRS' daily business and functions. Ultimately, providing services to our clients is a team effort and it is behind the scenes teams such as these that help make it all possible.

Administration Team Facilitates, Improves Client Experiences

While there are a variety of important administrative roles that support BHRS functions, the Patient Services Administration team plays a key role in improving client experiences. In our roles, we serve as the initial point of contact for clients - offering them a secure and welcoming environment to access our services. We're problem-solvers, dedicated to the individuals we serve, demonstrating patience and empathy towards their unique needs. By developing procedures for both front and back-office workflows (a collaborative sequence of tasks completed to provide services to a client), we ensure that essential tasks are completed promptly. We cultivate a supportive culture among our colleagues, all working towards the shared objective of delivering exceptional customer service to our community. Currently, the administration team is collaborating with other BHRS teams to provide valuable input for optimizing new patient workflows under CalAIM and seamlessly integrating these into our existing procedures for new clients joining our services.

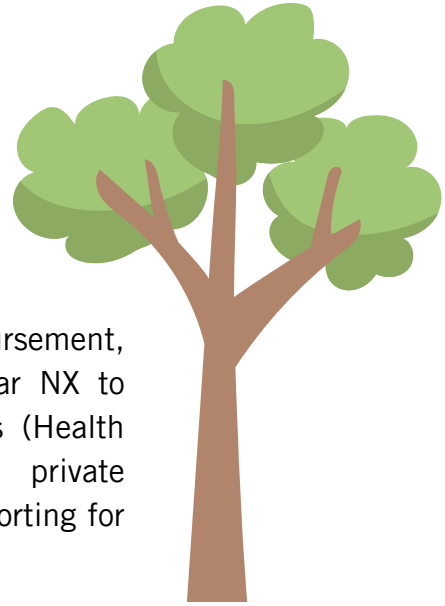


By Maggie Tapia. Maggie is the Patient Services Office Manager at BHRS as of April 2024.

More Than Just “Billing”

Picture a tree. Now try to picture a tree with only branches. You can't do it, right? A tree needs a trunk. The Management Information Systems (MIS) team, also known as the “billing” department, functions like the trunk of a tree. It is the structure that supports many BHRS business functions.

A key initiative led by MIS is helping BHRS to best utilize Avatar NX, a behavioral health electronic health record that contains a patient's medical history. Many of the functions and reports that clinicians and administrative staff use in Avatar NX starts with MIS. MIS has configured Avatar to allow for users to pull data that reports on important aspects of BHRS business, including claiming and revenue reimbursement, fee schedules and more. In addition, MIS has built Avatar NX to adhere to claiming regulations specified by various payors (Health Plan of San Mateo, Medicare, Short Doyle Medi-Cal, private insurance) as well as to mandated federal and state data reporting for mental health and substance abuse services.



A significant mandate from the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is CalAIM, a multi-year initiative to transform and strengthen existing Medi-Cal, the statewide Medicaid health insurance system. CalAIM has been a particularly challenging implementation as MIS has had to reconfigure the entire outpatient service delivery system to report services in a different way. Under CalAIM, Medi-Cal no longer reimburses counties by the type of service that was delivered but instead by the type of practitioner delivering the service. For example, pre-CalAIM, the state reimbursement rate for therapy was by the number of minutes a clinician spent providing the service. Now under CalAIM, the state reimbursement rate for therapy is by the discipline of the provider rendering the service. MIS tried to lessen the impact of this change on clinicians by configuring the system in the backend to report the myriad of modifiers, which are used to report unique aspects or circumstances received by clients, now required for claiming services. This was a major change to the standard billing process.

Finally, the federal and state government continuously issue Information Notices to Counties requiring new reporting and claiming regulations and it is the responsibility of MIS to ensure that the County complies with these regulations and meets the timelines issued. In a nutshell, the mission of MIS is to ensure the integrity of data and maximize revenue throughout the system.

By Doreen Avery, Financial Services Manager II at BHRS.

Making Contact with Contracts

Overview

The BHRS Contracts Team manages approximately 600 contracts, amendments, MOUs (memorandum of understanding), small dollar amount agreements and contract waivers; and within the County is second only to the San Mateo Medical Center in the number of active contracts overseen. Every year we renew approximately 300 contracts (including System of Care services and Specialty Mental Health Private Provider Network), handle approximately 100 new requests for contracts and small dollar amount agreements, and run approximately 20 Requests for Proposals and/or other contract selection processes. Most of our contracts are agreements involving services to our clients, or administrative services such as staff training. We generally do not handle agreements for goods and commodities as that is handled centrally through the county's Procurement Office.



Separate from contract work, we manage the contract invoices that are submitted for payment and adjudicate those to each contract. We also perform initial credentialing of our Private Provider Network contractors (managed care) and a secondary credentialing at time of contract renewal.

It is the goal of the Contracts Team to conduct the contract process in compliance with all laws and regulations applicable to the County and in accordance with the Administrative Memorandum B-1 for the Selection of Independent Contractors. We also strive to complete all contracts by the deadlines set.

It is the goal of the Contracts Team to conduct the contract process in compliance with all laws and regulations applicable to the County and in accordance with the Administrative Memorandum B-1 for the Selection of Independent Contractors. We also strive to complete all contracts by the deadlines set.

Fiscal Year End Renewals

The Contracts Team is currently extremely busy working to renew the approximately 300 contracts before the fiscal year end on June 30 and expiration of the current term. This is a collaborative process that takes communication and coordination between the Program Teams, Fiscal Team, MIS, County Attorney, Risk Management, Health Administration, and County Executives to create and execute all contract renewals.

Contract Tracking Database

As we work to complete the renewals for FY 24-25 we are also looking to identify ways to improve the overall process and communication between the many different stakeholders. The Contracts Team recently created a Contract Tracking Database that was made available to all BHRS staff to see the current status of any contract. This additional transparency will be extremely beneficial in the contracting process by providing accessible information to all on the progress of each individual contract.

By Brad Johnson, Contracts Manager at BHRS.

Fiscal Team Ensures Accuracy, Keeps Critical Functions on Track

The Fiscal Team manages all aspects of BHRS's fiscal operations. Fiscal processes thousands of invoices and reimbursements annually, working diligently to ensure that all BHRS vendors and provider payments and employee reimbursements get paid appropriately, accurately and as quickly as possible. The work includes reviewing financial coding which assigns expenses to one of 200+ expense classifications and a corresponding revenue source, of which there are 15+ to choose from.

The team also handles reporting for various funds the County receives that are dedicated for different purposes. Some of these programs include:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Community Mental Health Services Block Grant, which provides for comprehensive, community-based mental health services to adults and children.
- Tracking of settlement funds such as the new Opioid Settlement, which is anticipated to contribute to various opioid related efforts at BHRS, including community opioid education and response.
- Measure K, which provides funding to meet critical service needs and address service gaps in the priority areas of children, families and seniors, housing and homelessness and emergency preparedness.
- Various Medi-Cal reports to the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

The team works closely with the County Controller and the Treasurer, who both participate in financial decision making for the County. Conversations with the Controller are often focused on finding ways to find flexibility in a generally inflexible system that is bounded by county, state, and federal rules and regulations. In sum, the team tries to find ways to cut through red tape.

All fiscal audits are overseen by the Fiscal Team as well. The teams' attention to detail, past and present, has kept BHRS from needing to repay significant amounts of dollars to funders.

As the implementation of CalAIM continues and as the Mental Health Services Act reform (through the recent passage of Proposition 1) comes into play, the team will be changing invoicing processes for some providers, adapting to new, extensive reporting requirements from DHCS. The team is also investigating ways to improve the invoice processing system, including ways to automate.

As with all of the BHRS support teams, Fiscal works hand-in-hand with MIS and Contracts to provide seamless internal customer service.

By Janet Gard, Deputy Director of Finance and Administration at BHRS .

June Events and Updates

Governor Newsom in San Mateo County

Gavin Newsom visited the Cordilleras Health and Healing Campus on Tuesday May 14 to announce the state is accelerating the first round of funding, made available by Prop. 1, to boost California's transformation of the statewide behavioral health system. He commended County officials for an ambitious project that reflects the governor's twin priorities: improving mental health treatment and combatting the homelessness crisis. Watch his comments here, as well as a shout out to BHRS staff by County Executive Officer, Mike Callagy!



Dr. Jei Africa touring the Cordilleras Campus with Gov. Gavin Newsom and County Executive, Mike Callagy.

Pride Parade and Celebration: Love at our Core, Pride in 2024!

The 2024 San Mateo County Pride Parade and Celebration will take place on Saturday June 8. The parade starts at 10:30 am and will follow B Street from 2nd Avenue and ends at Central Park, 50 E 5th Street, San Mateo, where the celebration will take place from 11 am-5 pm. Both events are open to all at no cost and are sober events! Visit smcpridecelebration.com for more information. Volunteers for both the parade and celebration are still needed. Fill out a volunteer form to help make these events a success!



2023 Pride celebration preparation.

Juneteenth Celebration: Hope, Persistence and Purpose: The Continued Journey

The San Mateo County 2024 Juneteenth Celebration is Friday June 14 from 3:30 to 8:00 pm at Eastside Preparatory Academy, 1041 Myrtle St., East Palo Alto. There will be a presentation on the history of Juneteenth, dancers, live music, resource tables and food at this free community event. Register to attend here!



Supervisor Noelia Corzo and BHRS Community Program Specialist II Charo Martinez at the 2023 Juneteenth Event.