

Behavioral Health Safety Net Providers

*Updated December 2023

What is an Essential Behavioral Health Safety Net Provider (Essential Provider)?

An Essential Provider is a licensed behavioral health entity or behavioral health provider approved by the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) to provide care coordination and at least one of the following behavioral health safety net services:

- Emergency or crisis behavioral health services
- Behavioral health outpatient services
- Behavioral health high-intensity outpatient services
- Behavioral health residential services
- Withdrawal management services
- Behavioral health inpatient services
- Integrated care services
- Hospital alternatives
- Additional services that the BHA determines are necessary in a region or throughout the state

What is a Comprehensive Community Behavioral Health Providers (Comprehensive Provider)?

A Comprehensive Provider is a licensed behavioral health entity or behavioral health provider approved by the BHA to provide care coordination and the following behavioral health safety net services, either directly or through formal agreements with behavioral health providers in the community or region:

- Emergency and crisis behavioral health services
- Mental health and substance use outpatient services
- Behavioral health high-intensity outpatient services
- Care management
- Outreach, education, and engagement services
- Mental health and substance use recovery supports
- Outpatient competency restoration
- Screening, assessment, and diagnosis, including risk assessment, crisis planning, and monitoring to key health indicators

What does it mean to be part of the safety net?

Behavioral health safety net providers serve priority populations and comply with the safety net no refusal requirements, ensuring that priority populations receive access to the care that they need to achieve whole person health through care and coordination.

What is a safety net “approval”?

A safety net approval demonstrates that a provider is in compliance with the safety net standards. An approval is **not** a license, and Essential and Comprehensive Providers will still be required to hold any professional or facility licenses they are obligated to hold pursuant to federal or state law or regulations. **Once approved, Essential and/or Comprehensive Providers will be eligible to seek enhanced payments for services they provide.**



Approval Process Fast Facts

Fee:
No fee

Application Opens:
November 15, 2023*

Approvals Issued:
Starting January 2024

Approval Duration:
Two (2) years

*Providers can apply for a safety net approval at any time. There is no deadline.

Questions?

Email:

cdhs_bharulefeedback@state.co.us

Visit our webpage:

<https://bha.colorado.gov/resources/laws-rules>



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Do I have to be a Behavioral Health Entity (BHE) to be approved?

Essential Provider approval is not predicated upon a BHE license, unless the provider is otherwise required to hold a BHE license. Behavioral health providers that do not require a BHE license can be approved as an Essential Provider by demonstrating that they hold any required licenses, and that those licenses remain in good standing (i.e. DORA professional license, CDPHE hospital license). Comprehensive Providers must be licensed as a BHE.

Do I have to be approved as a safety net provider to serve Medicaid members?

No. Behavioral health providers can continue to enroll with Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid program) and serve Medicaid members without being approved as a behavioral health safety net provider. Seeking approval is voluntary for providers. However, only approved safety net providers are eligible for enhanced reimbursement rates.

What does it mean to serve priority populations?

Priority populations include individuals who are:

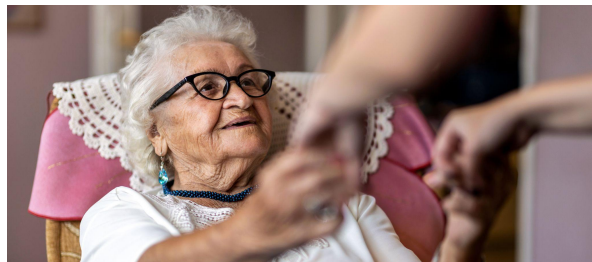
- Uninsured, underinsured, Medicaid-eligible, publicly insured, or fall below the BHA identified income threshold
- Present with acute or chronic behavioral health needs
- Are identified by the BHA as needing prioritization, including: people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, children and youth at risk of out-of-home placement and their parents, people involved with the criminal or juvenile justice system, people of color, American Indians, Alaska natives, Veterans, people who are pregnant, LGBTQ+ individuals, individuals with disabilities

Comprehensive Providers are required to serve all priority population individuals unless the individual requires a level of care the provider does not provide, or the provider does not have the capacity to serve the individual within an appropriate time frame.

Essential Providers can be approved to serve a subset of priority populations (i.e. a specific age range). Essential Providers must still comply with the no refusal requirements for the subset of priority populations they are approved to serve.

What rules would apply to me if I choose to become approved as a safety net provider?

Chapter 12 of the [*updated BHA Provider Rules \(adopted 11/3/2023\)](https://bha.colorado.gov/resources/laws-rules), as well as the services your agency is approved to provide in conformity with the service-specific endorsement chapters, Chapters 3-10. The adopted rule language and additional resources can be found at <https://bha.colorado.gov/resources/laws-rules>.



No Refusal Requirements

The following are conditions under which a behavioral health safety net provider cannot refuse treatment to an individual, as indicated in 27-50-301(4), C.R.S.

1. insurance coverage, lack of insurance coverage, or ability to pay
2. clinical acuity
3. readiness to transition out of an inpatient setting
4. involvement in the criminal or juvenile justice system
5. current involvement in the child welfare system
6. co-occurring disorders or disabilities
7. displays of aggressive behavior, or history of aggressive behavior
8. clinical presentation or behavioral presentation in any previous interaction with a provider
9. place of residence
10. disability, age, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, or tribal affiliation



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