



## Member Handbook

Helping you with your behavioral health  
(mental health and substance abuse) services

1-800-495-0086

TTY: 617-790-4130

[www.masspartnership.com](http://www.masspartnership.com)

**Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership  
(MBHP)  
Member Handbook**

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This Member Handbook and *Covered Services List* summarize the behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) services and benefits available to you through the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP) and other services available to you through MassHealth.

For more information about MassHealth benefits, services, rights, and responsibilities required by federal or state regulation, see 42 CFR 430 et seq. and 130 CMR 450 et seq. You can also visit [www.mass.gov/mashealth](http://www.mass.gov/mashealth) or call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss).

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Please note that you can call MBHP to have this handbook read to you or if you want to have a Spanish version sent to you. All written materials sent to members are also available in Spanish, and can also be read to you by a Community Relations Representative. For copies of materials in English, Spanish, or for oral interpretations into other languages or to have written materials read to you, please call the **MBHP Community Relations Line at 1-800-495-0086 (press 4, then 1 to skip prompts)**, Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and Friday, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. (English and other languages). To find a mental health provider, call the **MBHP Clinical Access Line at 1-800-495-0086 (press 4, then 2 to skip prompts)**, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

## Welcome!

Welcome to the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP).

MBHP is MassHealth's behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) services contractor. We are pleased to have you as an MBHP member.

This Handbook, along with the *Covered Services List*, will help you understand the behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) services and benefits you get as an MBHP member. It will also tell you how to call us if you have questions.

This Handbook also provides information on other services available to you through MassHealth.

Because this Handbook contains important information, please keep it in a place where you can find it when you need it.

## **Important things you should know as an MBHP member**

1. This Handbook is about the behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) services you get because you are enrolled with MBHP.
2. Call us with your questions 24 hours a day. The call is free. Call MBHP at **1-800-495-0086** (TTY: 617-790-4130 for people with partial or total hearing loss) to:
  - ask questions about MBHP or your behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) services and benefits or if you want more information about how to get these services;
  - ask for help reading any material you get from MBHP;
  - ask for Spanish versions of material you get from MBHP; or
  - speak to someone who speaks Spanish or another language.
3. Call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., if you have questions about any MassHealth service or benefit, in addition to your behavioral health services and benefits. MassHealth services and benefits include medical and pharmacy benefits. The call is free. When you join MBHP, you still remain a MassHealth member. You receive all your benefits other than behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) from MassHealth.
4. MBHP has behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) providers throughout the state.
5. You can use your MassHealth card to get MBHP services. Carry it with you always. If you lose your ID card, call **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss).
6. You do not need a referral from your primary care doctor or nurse to see an MBHP behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) provider.
7. You can get care for behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) emergencies.

## **If you have an emergency, get care right away!**

## **MBHP behavioral health provider network**

As an MBHP member, you can get behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) services from MBHP providers. MBHP has a large network of behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) providers and hospitals throughout the state.

Use your MassHealth ID card to get behavioral health services from any MBHP provider. You do not need a referral from your primary care doctor or nurse to see any of MBHP's providers.

All you need to do is choose a behavioral health provider from the *MBHP Provider Directory*. Call MBHP at **1-800-495-0086** (TTY: 617-790-4130 for people with partial or total hearing loss) if you did not receive a copy of the *MBHP Provider Directory*, or if you would like to request an additional copy. You may also visit the MBHP web site at [www.masspartnership.com](http://www.masspartnership.com) to find a provider (click on "Find a Provider" on the left side of the home page).

After you choose a provider from the directory, please call **1-800-495-0086** to make sure your provider still works with MBHP. Providers may change from time to time.

MBHP will not pay for services provided by a behavioral health provider who is not in the network unless:

- it is an emergency; or
- the MBHP network cannot provide those services.

You can get care for behavioral health emergencies from any behavioral health provider. For more information about behavioral health emergencies, see page 8.

### **If you have an emergency, get care right away!**

If MBHP's network cannot provide the services, MBHP will cover the out-of-network services until the network can provide them.

Call MBHP at **1-800-495-0086** if you have questions about out-of-network behavioral health services.

Although you do not need a referral to see any MBHP provider, some covered services need prior authorization (PA). For more information about PA, see page 6.

### **When you travel**

MBHP will pay for you to see an out-of-state behavioral health provider only if:

- you have an emergency; or
- your health would be at risk if you had to travel home.

If you are traveling and you have a behavioral health emergency, go to the closest emergency room right away! Read more about emergencies on page 8.

### **MBHP services**

You can look at the *Covered Services List* in this packet for more information about the services covered by MBHP and if the services need prior authorization (PA). For more about PA, see page 6.

This list and the Member Handbook may change. For the most up-to-date information, you can call MBHP at **1-800-495-0086**. You can also call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss).

### **Transportation**

You may be able to get transportation services when it is medically necessary to take you to get care. Call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** to find out if you can get these services.

### **Keeping your providers up to date**

We want to make sure you get the right services at the right time. Tell your providers about:

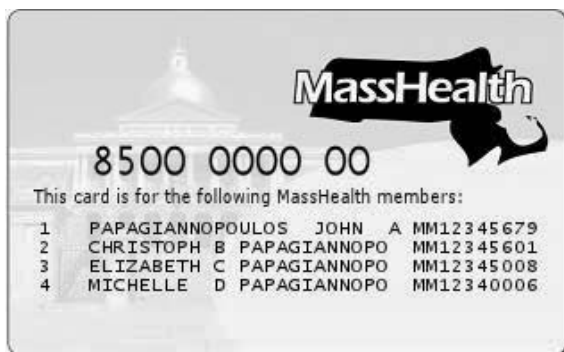
- all the healthcare you are getting;
- the medicines you are taking; and
- any health problems you may have.

## MassHealth

You still have MassHealth when you join MBHP. You get all your services and benefits, other than behavioral health, from MassHealth. If you have questions about MassHealth services and benefits or you lose your MassHealth ID card, call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss). The call is free. You can call Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### Your MassHealth ID card

MassHealth will send you an ID card that looks like the one below. Carry it with you, and use it to get your MBHP services and other MassHealth benefits.



#### Carry this MassHealth card at all times.

**This card is for identification purposes only. It does not guarantee eligibility.**

Cardholder: For questions call: **1-800-841-2900**  
(TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss)

Providers: Bill all other insurers first.

To verify eligibility and restrictions, call: **1-800-554-0042**  
or go to [www.massrevs.eds.com](http://www.massrevs.eds.com)

Provider HelpDesk: **1-800-462-7738**

Provider questions on card status: **1-800-833-7582**

Remember to carry your MassHealth ID card and show it or any other health insurance card you may have, to get healthcare services or medicine.

Please check your MassHealth ID card to make sure the information is correct. If it is not correct, if you did not get a card, or if you lose your card, please call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss).

You can get health services even if you don't have your card. Your doctor or other provider can look for your name in the MassHealth system. If your provider cannot find you in the system, he or she can call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900**.

## **Prior authorization (PA)**

MassHealth or MBHP must approve certain healthcare and pharmacy services before you can get them. This is called prior authorization (PA). If you want to know if you need PA for a service or medication, you can:

- check the *Covered Services List* to see behavioral health services that require PA from MBHP;
- call MBHP at **1-800-495-0086** for questions about behavioral health services that require PA from MBHP;
- go to [www.mass.gov/druglist](http://www.mass.gov/druglist) to see a list of medications that require PA from MassHealth; or
- call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss) for questions about healthcare services and medications that require PA from MassHealth.

If you don't agree with a decision made about a request for PA, you can appeal the decision. Read more about appeals starting on page 19.

### **Prior authorization from MassHealth for pharmacy services**

When your behavioral health provider thinks you need a pharmacy service that needs prior authorization (PA), your provider will ask MassHealth for PA.

MassHealth must make a decision on your provider's request within **24 hours**.

If MassHealth approves the PA request, they will send a letter to your provider and you can get the medication.

If MassHealth does not approve any of the medication asked for, approves only some of the medication asked for, or does not approve the full amount, time period, or scope of medication asked for, they will send you a letter telling you so. You have the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Hearings. Read more about appeals to the Board of Hearings on page 26.

MassHealth will not pay for a medication that needs PA if approval was not given.

### **Prior authorization from MBHP for behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) services**

When your behavioral health provider thinks you need a behavioral health service that needs prior authorization (PA), your provider will ask MBHP for the PA.

MBHP must make a decision on your provider's request within **14 calendar days** unless you, your provider, or MBHP asks for more time. This can be for up to **14 extra calendar days**. MBHP can ask for more time only if it is in your best interest and more information is needed.

If your provider or MBHP thinks that taking 14 days to decide the request will put your health at risk, MBHP will make a decision within **three working days**. This time frame may be extended by an additional **14 calendar days** if you, your provider, or MBHP asks for more time. MBHP can ask for more time only if it is in your best interest and more information is needed.

Any time that MBHP asks for more time, we will send you a letter to let you know the reasons. You have the right to file a grievance if you don't agree with our reasons. Read more about filing a grievance on page 20.

If MBHP approves the request, MBHP will pay for the service.

If MBHP does not approve any of the services asked for, approves only some of the services asked for, or does not approve the full amount, time period, or scope of services asked for, we will send you a letter telling you so. You have the right to appeal the decision to MBHP. Also, if MBHP does not act on the request within the time frames above, you can file an appeal with MBHP. Read more about MBHP internal appeals on page 21.

MBHP will not pay for a service that needs PA if approval was not given.

For more information about requesting PA for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) services, see page 14.

## **If you get a bill for services**

You should never get a bill for a covered service (except for a copayment). Providers may not charge you or take money from you for any services if they can get paid by MassHealth or MBHP.

If you get a bill for a MassHealth-covered behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) service given by an MBHP provider, call MBHP at **1-800-495-0086**.

## **Emergency care**

An emergency is any serious behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) problem that you think needs to be treated right away. If you have an emergency, you should get care immediately!

If you have a behavioral health emergency, you can:

- call **911**;
- go to the closest emergency room right away; or
- contact the MBHP Clinical Access Line at **1-800-495-0086**, 24 hours a day, to find the name and location of an Emergency Services Program (ESP) in your area.

## **Examples of behavioral health emergencies**

- wanting to harm yourself
- wanting to harm other people

## Other things you should know about emergency care

- You do not need a referral or prior authorization (PA) for emergency care.
- You can get ambulance transportation for emergencies.

After a behavioral health emergency, call your behavioral health provider to let him or her know about your emergency.

## Appointments

When you don't feel well or when you want to see your behavioral health provider, you don't want to wait too long for an appointment. You should get care within these time frames.

- **Emergency care:** You must get emergency care immediately after you ask for care from an Emergency Services Program or other provider of emergency behavioral health services.
- **Urgent care:** If something is wrong, but you do not think it is an emergency, you must get care from a provider within three working days after you ask for an appointment.
- **Non-symptomatic or non-urgent care:** You must get care from a provider within 10 working days after you ask for an appointment.

If you do not get care or an appointment within these time frames, you can file an appeal. You can find more information about appeals on page 19.

You should keep appointments, be on time, and call if you are going to be late or have to cancel.

## Pharmacy coverage and copayments

Your behavioral health provider needs to write or call in a prescription for all medications you need, including those that are sold over the counter.

## **Copayments**

When you pick up your medications, you will need to pay a copayment. The copayment is:

- \$1 for prescription generic (not brand-name) medications and over-the-counter generic and brand-name medications. The copayment is for first-time prescriptions and each refill; and
- \$3 for brand-name prescription medications. This is for first-time prescriptions and each refill.

You will not have a pharmacy copayment if:

- you are under age 19;
- you are enrolled in MassHealth because you were in the care and custody of the Department of Social Services (DSS) when you turned 18, and your MassHealth coverage was continued;
- you are pregnant (you must tell the pharmacist you're pregnant);
- your pregnancy ended less than 60 days ago;
- you are receiving family-planning supplies;
- you are in hospice care; or
- you are getting inpatient care in:
  - ◆ an acute hospital;
  - ◆ a nursing facility;
  - ◆ a chronic disease hospital;
  - ◆ a rehabilitation hospital; or
  - ◆ an intermediate-care facility for the mentally retarded.

## **Pharmacy copayment cap**

If you have paid \$200 in pharmacy copayments in a calendar year, you have reached the pharmacy copayment cap, and you do not need to pay any more pharmacy copayments that year. You should get a letter from MassHealth telling you when you reach the pharmacy copayment cap. If your providers try to charge you any more pharmacy copayments that year, show them your letter from MassHealth.

If you do not receive a letter or if you have any questions, call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss).

### **If you can't pay the copayment**

The pharmacy must give you your medication even if you can't pay the copayment. However, the pharmacy can bill you later for the copayment. Please call **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss) if a pharmacy will not give you your prescription.

### **Specialized care-management services for members with special needs**

MBHP offers specialized care management services for members with specific mental illness and substance abuse problems and those who need help getting healthcare services.

- For more information about specialized care management services, call the Assessment Unit at **1-800-495-0086, ext. 5633**.

MBHP provides the following specialized care management services:

- **Targeted Outreach** provides short-term interventions for members who have mental illness or psychosocial issues that may interfere with their ability to access medical care and community-based services. Targeted Outreach aims to remove any barriers to care and connect members with available resources and services, such as temporary transportation to and from the healthcare provider's office.
- **Care Coordination** provides supportive services for members who have both medical and behavioral health issues. Care Coordination reviews the care members are currently getting to ensure that it is the most appropriate and coordinates treatment services to support member recovery. Care Coordination also monitors the provision of a member's medical care. This includes ensuring treatment compliance with any chronic conditions and developing a crisis-prevention plan with the member to reduce further hospitalizations.

- **Intensive Clinical Management (ICM)** is set up for the most vulnerable members, who are at the highest risk of hospitalization. ICM coordinates services across all levels of care. Care managers work with the treatment team and the member to create an individualized care plan to develop strategies and goals for integrating behavioral health and medical care, preventing crisis, and ensuring the member can function in the community. ICM also provides support for pregnant women who have alcohol and/or substance abuse problems.

If you have any questions about specialized care management or other behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) services and how to get them, call the MBHP Clinical Access Line at **1-800-495-0086**. The Clinical Access Line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## **Additional services for children**

Children who are under 21 years old are entitled to certain additional services under federal law. Some of these services are behavioral health services provided by MBHP. The rest are services paid for by another contractor or directly by MassHealth.

### **Preventive and well-child care schedule for all children**

Children who are under age 21 should go to their primary care provider for checkups even when they are well. As part of a well-child checkup, your child's primary care provider will perform screenings that are needed to find out if there are any health problems. These screenings include health, vision, dental, hearing, behavioral health, development, and immunization status screenings.

Behavioral health screening can help you and your child's doctor or nurse identify behavioral health concerns early.

MassHealth will require that MassHealth primary care doctors and nurses use standardized screening tools, approved by MassHealth, to check a child's behavioral health during a well-child visit.

Screening tools are short questionnaires or checklists that the parent, guardian, or child (depending on the child's age) fills out and then discusses with the doctor or nurse. The screening tool might be the

Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC), the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS), or another screening tool chosen by your child's primary care provider. You can ask your child's primary care provider which tool he or she has chosen to use when screening your child for behavioral health concerns.

Your child's provider will discuss the completed screening with you. Talking about the completed tool will help you and your child's doctor or nurse decide if your child needs further assessment by a behavioral health provider or other medical provider. If your child's doctor or nurse thinks your child needs to see a behavioral health provider, information and assistance are available. For more information on how to access behavioral health services or to find a behavioral health provider, you can talk to your child's primary care doctor or nurse, contact your child's health plan, or call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss).

MassHealth pays your child's primary care provider for these checkups. At well-child checkups, your primary care provider can find and treat small problems before they become big ones.

Here are the ages to take a child for full physical exams and screenings:

- 1 to 2 weeks
- 1 month
- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 12 months
- 15 months
- 18 months
- ages 2 through 20 — children should visit their primary care provider once a year.

Children should also visit their primary care provider any time there is a concern about their medical, emotional, or behavioral health needs, even if it is not time for a regular checkup.

### **Preventive pediatric healthcare screening and diagnosis (PPHSD) services for children enrolled in MassHealth Basic, Essential, Prenatal, and Family Assistance**

For children who are under age 21 and are enrolled in MassHealth Basic, Essential, Prenatal, or Family Assistance, MassHealth also pays for all medically necessary services covered under the child's coverage type. This means that, when the child's primary care provider (or any other clinician) discovers a health condition, MassHealth will pay for any medically necessary treatment that is included in the child's coverage type if it is prescribed by a provider who is qualified and willing to provide the service.

### **Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program for children enrolled in MassHealth Standard or CommonHealth**

For children who are under age 21 and enrolled in MassHealth Standard or CommonHealth, MassHealth also pays for all medically necessary services that are covered by Medicaid law, even if the services are not provided by MBHP. This coverage includes healthcare, diagnostic services, treatment, and other measures needed to correct or improve defects and physical and mental illnesses and conditions. When the child's primary care provider (or another clinician) discovers a health condition, MassHealth will pay for any medically necessary treatment that is covered under Medicaid law if it is delivered by a provider who is qualified and willing to provide the service and a MassHealth-enrolled physician, nurse practitioner, or nurse midwife supports, in writing, the medical necessity of the service.

You and your primary care physician can get help from MassHealth or MBHP to determine which providers may be available in network to provide these services or, if necessary, how to use out-of-network providers.

Most of the time, these services are covered by the child's MassHealth coverage type and are included on the *Covered Services List*.

If the service is not already covered or is not on the list, the clinician or provider who will be delivering the service can ask MassHealth for prior authorization (PA) for the service. MassHealth uses this process to determine if the service is medically necessary. If PA is given for a behavioral health service, in most cases, MBHP will provide the service. If PA is given for another kind of service, or a behavioral health service that MBHP does not cover, MassHealth will pay for the service.

If PA is denied, you have the right to appeal. See page 19 for more information about the appeals process.

Talk to your child's primary care provider, behavioral health provider, or other specialist for help in getting these services.

### **Dental care for children**

MassHealth pays for dental services, such as screenings and cleanings, for children under age 21.

Your child's primary care provider will do a dental exam at each well-child checkup. When a child is three years old, his or her primary care provider will suggest that he or she visit a dentist at least twice a year.

When children go for routine dental exams, the dentist will give a full dental exam, teeth cleaning, and fluoride treatment. It is important that children get the following dental care:

- a dental checkup every six months, starting no later than age 3;
- a dental cleaning every six months, starting no later than age 3; and
- other dental treatments needed, even before age 3, if a child's primary care provider or dentist finds problems with the child's teeth or oral health.

Children who are under age 21 and enrolled in MassHealth Standard or CommonHealth can get all medically necessary treatment covered under Medicaid law, including dental treatment, even if the service is not otherwise covered by MassHealth.

Children who are under age 21 and enrolled in MassHealth Basic, Essential, Prenatal, or Family Assistance can get all medically necessary services covered under the child's coverage type, including dental treatment.

Talk to the child's primary care provider or dentist for help getting these services.

- Children do not need a referral from a primary care doctor or nurse to see a MassHealth dentist.
- Children can visit a dentist before age 3.

## **Early intervention services for children with growth or development problems**

Some children need extra help for healthy growth and development. Providers who are early intervention specialists can help them. Some early intervention specialists are:

- social workers;
- nurses; and
- physical, occupational, and speech therapists.

All of these providers work with children who are under 3 years old — and their families — to give these children extra necessary support. Some of the services are given at home and some are at early intervention centers.

Talk to your child’s primary care provider as soon as possible if you think your child has growth or development problems. Or contact your local Early Intervention Program directly.

## **Advance directives**

An advance directive is something you write or sign that tells who you would like to make healthcare decisions for you and what healthcare treatment you do or do not want if you get sick or injured and can’t talk or write.

There are two kinds of advance directives: a health care proxy and a living will.

**A health care proxy** is your written permission for a family member or friend to make healthcare decisions for you if you cannot make them yourself. This person is called your “agent” or “proxy.”

**A living will** lets you tell what kind of care you want or do not want if you cannot make healthcare decisions. For example, you may not want to be kept alive using life support. Your living will helps your healthcare proxy make decisions for you. If you do not have a healthcare proxy or your healthcare proxy is not available, the living will can help your providers care for you.

If you choose to sign a healthcare proxy or a living will, you can change your mind at any time and write and sign a new healthcare proxy or living will.

There is no Massachusetts law specifically governing or recognizing living wills. However, if you have legally authorized someone to take care of your healthcare needs, living-will instructions are recognized as evidence of your wishes.

You should talk to a lawyer to learn more about advance directives. For more information, you can call MBHP at **1-800-495-0086** or MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss).

## Member rights

As a member of MassHealth and MBHP, you have certain rights. Your rights include:

- your provider cannot refuse to give you medically necessary treatment, but your provider may refer you to a specialist for treatment;
- employees of MassHealth, MBHP, and your providers must treat you with respect and dignity;
- MassHealth, MBHP, and your providers must keep your health information and records private. They and we must not give other people information about you unless you give permission or the law says we must (see page 28 for privacy information);
- your providers must tell you in advance — in a manner you understand — about any treatments, risks associated with the treatments, and treatment options;
- your providers must make you part of decisions about your healthcare. You can refuse treatment if you want to (as far as the law allows). You can also know what might happen if you refuse treatment;
- you can talk about your healthcare records with your providers and get copies. You can also ask for changes to the records as the law allows;

- if you speak a language other than English, you can ask for an oral interpreter by calling the MBHP Community Relations Line at **1-800-495-0086** (press 4, then 1, to skip prompts), Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.;
- if you read a language other than English, you can get printed materials about MBHP read aloud to you in your language by calling the MBHP Community Relations Line at **1-800-495-0086** (press 4, then 1, to skip prompts), Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.;
- if you have trouble seeing or reading, you can get MBHP materials read aloud to you by calling the MBHP Community Relations Line at **1-800-495-0086** (press 4, then 1, to skip prompts), Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.;
- you can choose your own behavioral health provider from MBHP's provider network. You can change this provider any time;
- you must get behavioral healthcare within the time frames on page 9. If you do not get care when you should, you can file an appeal. See page 19 for more information;
- you can file a grievance with MBHP. You can also file an internal appeal with MBHP if you disagree with certain actions or inactions by MBHP. If you disagree with the internal appeal decision, you can appeal to the MassHealth Board of Hearings and request a fair hearing. See page 26 for more information;
- MassHealth must tell you about all benefits, services, rights, and responsibilities you have under MassHealth;
- you can ask for a second opinion from another provider if you get behavioral healthcare from MBHP;
- you can get emergency care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. See page 9 for more information;
- no one can physically hold you, keep you away from other people, or do anything to force you to accept treatment; and
- you can do anything on this list without worrying that MBHP providers will treat you differently because you did it.

## Appeals and grievances

MBHP expects that you will be treated well when you see an MBHP provider. However, there may be times when you are not happy with the care you get from an MBHP provider. If so, you or your representative can file an **appeal** or **grievance**.

The appeals process for behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) services is a little different than the process for other MassHealth services and benefits, such as medical or pharmacy services.

For more information about the appeals process for MassHealth services other than behavioral health services, call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss).

### **Naming a representative for your grievance or appeal**

You can name someone to represent you at an MBHP grievance, an MBHP internal appeal, or an appeal to the MassHealth Board of Hearings. Your representative should be someone who knows you (such as a family member or friend) and knows about your problem.

Your representative could also be someone who has the legal authority to act for you in making decisions about healthcare or payment for healthcare. For example, a representative may be a:

- guardian;
- conservator;
- executor;
- administrator;
- holder of a power of attorney; or
- healthcare proxy.

To choose a representative, you must provide MBHP a signed and dated letter that tells MBHP the name of your representative and that this person can act for you.

## **If you do not speak English**

If you do not speak or read English, MBHP will help you for free with interpreter or translation services. If you have any questions about this, please call the MBHP Community Relations Line at **1-800-495-0086**.

## **The grievance process**

You have the right to file a formal grievance if:

- you were not treated with respect by MBHP staff or providers;
- your rights were not respected by MBHP staff or providers;
- you are not happy with the service you received from an MBHP provider;
- you are not happy with any other action by MBHP, except if it had to do with authorizing treatment or getting an appointment. In this case you can file an MBHP internal appeal;
- you don't agree with MBHP's decision to extend the timelines for deciding your request for prior authorization or for deciding an internal appeal; or
- you don't agree with MBHP's decision not to review your appeal as an expedited (fast) internal appeal.

It may be best to first talk to your provider about your concern. If you don't want to talk to your provider or don't like your provider's answer, you have the right to file a grievance with MBHP.

## **How to file a grievance**

Call MBHP at **1-800-495-0086**. We will help you fill out the form. We will also help you if you need interpreter or TTY services (for people with partial or total hearing loss).

Or write a letter to MBHP telling us about your grievance. Send it to:

Member Grievance Coordinator  
Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership  
150 Federal Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02110

MBHP will send you a letter to tell you that we got your grievance. MBHP will review your grievance and may call you or your provider to get more information.

MBHP will decide if you were right within **30 days** or sooner. MBHP will send you a letter when MBHP makes a decision.

Before MBHP finishes the review, you or your representative can ask for more time (an extension) of up to **14 days** in the event you need more time to provide necessary information. MBHP may also get a 14-day extension if it's in your best interest, and MBHP needs more information. If MBHP gets more time, MBHP will send you a letter to tell you the reason.

## **The MBHP internal appeals process**

You can file an internal appeal with MBHP if you don't agree with one of these actions or inactions by MBHP:

- MBHP denied your request for a service, approved less service than you asked for, or said that a service you asked for is not covered;
- MBHP reduced, suspended, or stopped a service MBHP had covered or approved for you in the past;
- MBHP did not decide your request for prior authorization (PA) for a service within the time that we should have (see page 6 for more information about PA); or
- you cannot get an appointment for behavioral health services within the time that you should be able to (see page 9 for more information about appointments).

In most cases, you will get a letter from MBHP about one of these actions. However, you may appeal even if you did not get a letter from MBHP.

## How to file an MBHP internal appeal

If you get a letter from MBHP telling you about any of the actions or inactions above, you or your representative must file your appeal within **30 calendar days** after you got that letter. If you did not get a letter from MBHP, you or your representative can appeal within **30 calendar days** after you learned that one of the above actions or inactions happened.

You can file an appeal by telephone or in writing. Call MBHP at **1-800-495-0086**.

Or write a letter to MBHP at:

Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership  
Attn: Appeals Coordinator  
150 Federal Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02110

We will also help you if you need an interpreter or TTY services (for people with partial or total hearing loss).

If you have an urgent behavioral health need, you can ask to have your appeal processed more quickly. This is called an **expedited appeal**.

## Information you need to file an MBHP internal appeal

Please include:

- your full name;
- the name of the service that your appeal is about if your appeal involves a decision by MBHP to:
  - ◆ deny your request for a service,
  - ◆ approve less service than you asked for,
  - ◆ not cover a service, or
  - ◆ reduce, suspend, or stop a service MBHP had covered or approved for you in the past;
- why you feel MBHP should change the decision; and
- if you would like to keep the service during your appeal.

If you are appealing because MBHP did not decide your request for prior authorization for a service within the time that we should have, you will receive a letter from MBHP explaining how to appeal this decision.

If you are appealing because you could not get an appointment for behavioral health services within the time frames described on page 9, send a letter to MBHP including the following information:

- the type of service you were trying to get;
- the date you called to ask for the appointment; and
- the date of the appointment you got.

MBHP will send you a letter telling you that we got your appeal.

### **Continuing benefits during your MBHP internal appeal**

If your internal appeal is about an MBHP decision to stop or reduce a service you get now, you may want to keep the service while you are appealing. If you keep the service but lose the appeal, you may have to pay back the cost of the service.

If you want to keep your services during the appeal, you or your representative must send your appeal request within **10 calendar days** from the date of the letter that told you the service would change. You must also ask to keep your service while you are appealing.

### **After you file an MBHP internal appeal**

You have the right to tell the facts and provide evidence (proof) about your appeal. You can do that in person or in writing. These facts and proofs will be used in the review of your appeal.

You may look at your case file, medical records, and other documents and records. If you would like to review these documents, call your provider or call MBHP at **1-800-495-0086**.

### **Getting a decision on your MBHP internal appeal**

If you do not file an expedited (fast) internal appeal, MBHP will send you a written decision within **20 calendar days**. This could be up to **five days** longer if you, your representative, or MBHP asks for more time to review or provide the evidence for the appeal.

### **An expedited (fast) MBHP internal appeal**

If you have an urgent behavioral health need and you think a 20-calendar-day review is too long, you, your representative, or your behavioral health provider can ask MBHP for an expedited appeal (fast review).

In most cases, if your provider asks for a fast review, MBHP will approve the request. MBHP will refuse the request by your provider for a fast review only if it is not related to your health. If your provider is not involved in the request, MBHP can decide if MBHP should do a fast review.

If MBHP denies your request for a fast review, MBHP will tell you in writing of this decision. MBHP will process your appeal within the 20-calendar-day time frame. You have the right to file a grievance if you don't agree with this decision (see page 20 for more information).

If MBHP approves your request for a fast review, we will review your appeal within **three working days**. MBHP will send you a letter telling you the decision on your appeal. If you don't agree with MBHP's decision on your appeal, you can file a request for a fair hearing with the MassHealth Board of Hearings (see page 26 for more information).

### **Extending MBHP internal appeal time frames**

If more time is needed to resolve the appeal you, your representative, or MBHP can ask for an extra **five calendar days**. If the appeal is an expedited (fast) appeal, you, your representative, or MBHP can ask for an extra **14 calendar days**.

MBHP can ask for more time only if:

- the extension is in your best interest; and
- MBHP needs more information to make a decision about your appeal, and it expects to receive this information within the extra time.

If MBHP asks for more time, we will send you a letter. If you don't agree, you or your representative may file a grievance (see page 20 for more information).

### **Approval of your MBHP internal appeal**

You will get a "Notice of Appeal Resolution" that tells you that your appeal is approved. Your provider can immediately give you the service you asked for.

### **Denial of your MBHP internal appeal**

If MBHP denies your internal appeal, we will send you a letter telling you.

If you do not agree with the decision, you can file an appeal directly with the MassHealth Board of Hearings.

### **Dismissal of your MBHP internal appeal**

MBHP may dismiss your internal appeal before making a decision if:

- someone else files the appeal for you and MBHP does not get your written permission for that person to serve as your representative before the time frame for deciding your appeal ends; or
- you or your representative filed the appeal more than **30 calendar days** after the letter from MBHP telling you that you had a right to appeal (or more than **30 calendar days** after you learned about MBHP's actions or inactions if you did not get a letter).

If MBHP dismisses your internal appeal, we will send you a letter telling you.

If you think that you filed your appeal within **30 calendar days** and have proof, you or your representative can disagree with MBHP's decision to dismiss your internal appeal.

You or your representative must send MBHP a letter asking for a review of this dismissal within **10 calendar days** of the letter telling you that your appeal was dismissed.

MBHP will review its decision and notify you if it will continue with your appeal.

### **If MBHP does not resolve your internal appeal within the required time frames**

You can file your appeal with the MassHealth Board of Hearings if:

- MBHP does not resolve your appeal within **20 calendar days** (or within **five extra calendar days** if there was extra time); or
- MBHP does not resolve your expedited (fast) appeal within **three working days** (or within **14 extra calendar days** if there was extra time).

## **The Board of Hearings appeals process**

You can ask for an appeal with the MassHealth Board of Hearings if you don't agree with the decision that MBHP made on your internal appeal. You can also appeal certain other actions or inactions by MassHealth about your medical and pharmacy benefits. For questions about these appeals, call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss).

Appeals with the Board of Hearings are called **fair hearings**. You have the right to receive a fair hearing from an impartial hearing officer of the Board of Hearings of the Office of Medicaid.

Appeals relating to MBHP must first go through MBHP's internal appeals process. If you still don't agree with MBHP's decision, you can ask for a fair hearing.

### **How to file a Board of Hearings appeal**

You must file your Board of Hearings appeal in writing within **30 calendar days** of the decision you want to appeal. To do so, you must fill out the Fair Hearing Request Form that comes with the notice about the decision.

If you would like to choose a representative for the purpose of your Board of Hearings appeal, fill out the section on the MassHealth Fair Hearing Request Form.

### **An expedited (fast) fair hearing at the Board of Hearings**

You can ask for an expedited (fast) fair hearing if:

- you are appealing MBHP's decision to deny an acute hospital admission; or
- you are appealing MBHP's decision on an expedited (fast) internal appeal.

If you want the Board of Hearings to handle your request as a fast fair hearing, you must ask for the fair hearing within **20 calendar days** from the day that you got MBHP's decision. If you file between 21 and 30 calendar days, the Board of Hearings will not make the hearing faster.

### **Continuing benefits during your fair hearing at the Board of Hearings**

If your fair hearing is about a decision to stop or reduce a service you get now, you may want to keep the service during the fair hearing process. If you keep the service and lose the fair hearing, you may have to pay back the cost of the service.

If you want to keep the service during the appeal, you or your representative must send your fair hearing request within **10 calendar days** from the date of the letter telling you MBHP's decision on your internal appeal. You must also ask to keep your service during the appeal process.

### **After you file a Board of Hearings appeal**

You or your representative may read your case files to prepare for the Board of Hearings appeal process. The Board of Hearings does not have your file, so you must contact MBHP to get your files.

At the hearing, you may represent yourself or come with an attorney or other representative at your own expense.

If you do not understand English or are hearing or sight impaired, tell the Board of Hearings. They will get an interpreter or assistive technology.

If you have any questions about the fair hearing process, please call MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900** (TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people with partial or total hearing loss).

## **Notice of Privacy Practices**

To find out about how MBHP uses behavioral health information and shares it with others, you can call MBHP at **1-800-495-0086**.

You can get a copy of MBHP's Notice of Privacy Practices at [www.masspartnership.com](http://www.masspartnership.com). Select "Your Privacy" in the "For Members" section.