

Behavioral Health (BH) Screening for Adolescent (ages 12-21) Members Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Tufts Health Direct

What do I do if my patient screens in as a danger to themselves or others? Should I send them to the Emergency Department or is there another option?

Yes. The Emergency Department is the best option if a patient is actively suicidal.

If your patient is not actively suicidal, the [Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership \(MBHP\) Emergency Services Program](#) is available to offer Mobile Crisis Intervention for anyone experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis. Call 877-382-1609, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

The MBHP website includes [information and downloadable flyers](#) for a variety of audiences—including providers and affiliated staff—that are available for members and their families in English and Spanish.

The BH screen for my patient is positive, but the family refuses to call a therapist. What do I do?

BH treatment after screening is opt-in/voluntary for members. Remain supportive and open to questions. Try to engage the family in identifying barriers to seeking treatment and offer a follow-up appointment with your office. Remind the family to contact you if they change their mind about seeking a referral for BH treatment. Additionally, educate the family about how to access the Tufts Health Plan [Find a Doctor search](#).

For providers working with families of children and adolescents, the [Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program \(MCPAP\)](#) offers general and patient-specific consultation, support, and valuable resources that practitioners can share with families.

Where can I find an accurate list of BH providers who will see a Tufts Health Together member?

The table below includes online and phone options.

Tufts Health Plan “Find a Doctor” Online Search	Tufts Health Plan Member Services
tuftshealthplan.com/find-a-doctor	888-257-1985

Where can I find available resources and support for treatment of BH patients?

MassHealth’s 24/7 [Behavioral Health Help Line](#) (BHHL) and [Community Behavioral Health Centers](#) (CBHCs) connect individuals and families to a full range of treatment services for mental health and substance use. Call, text, or chat at any time to receive individualized support, clinical assessment, and treatment referrals.

MCPAP and [MCPAP’s Adolescent Substance Use and Addiction Program \(ASAP\)](#) also offer mental health and substance use treatment consultation and facilitate referrals for children, adolescents, and their families. Regional contact phone numbers for the ASAP program can be found below.

Eastern Massachusetts Team: Boston North	855-627-2763
Eastern Massachusetts Team: Boston South	844-636-2727
Western and Central Massachusetts Team	844-926-2727

How do I bill for Telehealth/Telemedicine services?

Refer to the Tufts Health Plan [Telehealth/Telemedicine Payment Policy](#) for detailed information.

I have called all the BH providers in my area and they have no availability for my patient. What should I do?

Call the Tufts Health Plan Member Services Line at 888-257-1985 for further assistance.

Primary care providers can also contact MCPAP for peer-to-peer consultation at the regional office numbers above.

If the patient’s BH screen is positive, I will need to spend more time with the patient. How do I get reimbursed for that time?

If the patient’s BH screening and related discussion occur at a well-child (annual physical) visit, providers can bill an E&M code with Modifier-25 for reimbursement. For more information, please refer to the [Tufts Health Plan Evaluation and Management Professional Payment Policy](#) and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#).

What if a parent is reluctant to allow a BH screening for fear that a new problem will be discovered, or they are concerned that their child will have a serious problem?

Providers are encouraged to offer support to the patient and family and address their concerns, fears, doubts, and barriers to receiving the screening. Reassure them that in most cases, the identified BH concerns are not considered serious. Help is available, and you can help find a BH provider that may be able to resolve any issue or problem quickly. Most identified issues can be resolved within four to eight visits with a BH provider who can reassure the family/legal guardian/patient that what they are experiencing is not unusual, and that many kids may have similar problems.

Behavioral health for children and adolescent services include:

- Intensive care coordination
- In-home therapy
- In-home behavioral services
- Family support and training
- Therapeutic mentors

How do I respond to a family with a history of mental illness who is fearful of discovering a BH condition in their child?

Remain compassionate and validate the family’s feelings. Let the family know if their child screens positive, the most important thing is to get a good clinical evaluation from a BH specialist who is well-

trained in assessing and addressing BH concerns and can make BH treatment recommendations, which you as the PCP can also collaborate on. Let them know that some BH conditions are inherited and may be treatable with a combination of medication and talk therapy. Jump starting BH treatment early on is important in ensuring the patient remains healthy emotionally, developmentally, socially, and physically.

Parent/Professional Advocacy League

The Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL) is a state-wide family organization dedicated to improving the mental health and well-being of children, youth, and families through free education, advocacy, and partnership. The [PPAL website](#) includes information on support groups, legal and advocacy resources, information on transition-age youth, and more.

What if a parent doesn't want a BH screening for fear that their child who admits to a problem will feel "broken" or "inferior" because they screened positive?

Typically, children are often relieved when a problem is identified. Once out in the open, most children respond positively knowing that they no longer must manage the presenting problem alone. This can help the patient and family feel more reassured that they can get help that may make a difference in the child's behavioral and/or emotional state. Explaining that these types of issues are common and can be resolved with treatment may also assist with reducing feelings of shame for the family. Let them know you are available for support throughout this journey.

If a child screens positive for a BH condition, does the caregiver need to tell their child's school?

No. Health information is considered confidential and protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The caregiver has the authority to determine with whom they would like to share their child's medical and BH information. The caregiver can decline sharing of information at their discretion. However, sharing this information may be beneficial, as it could help the child receive additional academic and social supports in addition to accommodations afforded by an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).