



NCSCC CLINIC DIRECTORS AND CLINICAL TEAMS

SCDF ANNOUNCES BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Behavioral health care has long been underfunded, underappreciated, and stigmatized. The pandemic has only intensified the unmet need for services and made it more difficult for individuals and families with sickle cell disease and behavioral health conditions to access care.

At the same time, our health care providers have reported extremely high rates of stress, anxiety, exhaustion, and depression in their patients. Although some hospitals and clinics have implemented programs to foster well-being for persons with sickle cell disease, the need is tremendous.

The SCDF is pleased to announce the opening of the Behavioral Health Department under the Direction of Carla Francisco, LCSW, MA. Along with other Behavioral Health Therapists on the SCDF team, she will provide mental health services to your patients at no cost.

Our process is as follows:

If a referral is made or an individual reaches out independently, the client's need is determined based on information disclosed during the consultation call. For example, if the client needs case management services, the client is referred to the Department of Family Programs and Services (DOFPS) for CHW services.

If determined that therapy services are appropriate, the Behavioral Health Therapist (BHT) schedules an appointment for an assessment, completes an initial progress note in SC Cares, makes the second contact with the Client for plan development, and subsequently schedules the initial psychotherapy appointment. Our therapists complete the plan development and note it in SC Cares. Services continue with weekly or biweekly psychotherapy sessions with the client (30 to 60-minute sessions). Progress notes are completed within 48 hours of the session. The BHT administers PHQ-9 and/or GAD-7 at the beginning of treatment and at three-month intervals. All services are currently provided through ZOOM or by phone. Face-to-Face can be accommodated if requested or if the therapist is requested to be in the Sickle Cell Clinic.

All Therapists participate in monthly meetings. If approved by the Client and requested by the clinical team, the Behavioral Health Therapist will be available to discuss their findings and recommendations with the client's clinical team.

Clients are more than welcome to return to treatment if symptoms return or for maintenance sessions. Therapy can be preventative or maintenance vs. crisis intervention and problem-focused. Therapy is not always trauma-focused; sometimes, it's about flushing out situations and thought patterns.

There is no limit to how many therapy services a client can receive. Treatment will be terminated when the treatment goals are met.



The Behavioral Health Department has received requests for services outside of California. In such cases, we assist them in finding local resources.

Please feel free to contact the Sickle Cell Disease Foundation at 909-743-5226 or 310-693-0247 for more information or to begin the process. All initial consultations are conducted on Fridays with an appointment between 11:00 am and 1:00 pm.

We look forward to offering this service to your patients.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Brown
President & CEO