

The Mental Health Reform: Questions and Answers

What's changed? Who's entitled to receive mental health treatment? What services are included? Where can I receive treatment? How much will it cost me? Answers to all the important questions regarding the mental health reform, and how the issue is handled at the HMOs

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Since July 1, 2015 a significant change in Israeli medicine has taken place: Responsibility for the field of mental healthcare has been transferred from the Ministry of Health to the HMOs.

What does this mean for you?

Primarily, this means that you, Clalit customers, can receive mental health therapy and counseling much like any other service related to consultation medicine (such as orthopedics and ophthalmology).

The treatment is provided at dozens of Clalit's mental health clinics in the community - throughout Israel, and in the hospitals.

The change is expected to lead to a significant improvement in the quality, availability, and accessibility of the service provided in the field of mental health.

As every big change leads to many questions, we will try to answer the main ones here.

Who's entitled to receive mental health treatment?

Every insured patient with a diagnosis or suspected diagnosis in the field of mental health, in accordance with therapeutic considerations.

What mental health services are included in the health basket?

The basket of ambulatory services:

1. Diagnosis, evaluation, counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention, personal therapy, family therapy, group therapy, follow-up, support and maintenance, and home visits.
2. Day therapy.
3. Psychiatric opinion or a medical report regarding the insured person, after an examination at the clinic, according to a district psychiatrist's order or by court order in criminal proceedings, under the provisions of the Treatment of the Mentally Ill Law.
4. Assisting an insured person who is receiving service at the clinic, with submitting requests to the Regional Rehabilitation Committee, in accordance with the Community Rehabilitation of Persons with Mental Health Disability Law, including preparing an opinion for the Committee.

The basket of hospitalization services:

1. Emergency and ER services.
2. Psychiatric hospitalization services, day hospitalization.
3. Consultation and therapy during hospitalization in general hospitals.
4. An insured person's hospitalization for the purpose of observation, according to a district psychiatrist's order or by court order in criminal proceedings, under the provisions of the Treatment of the Mentally Ill Law, and providing a psychiatric opinion or medical certificate after an examination in the ER or after hospitalization, for the purpose of such a proceeding.
5. Assisting an insured person who is hospitalized or is in day hospitalization with submitting requests to the Regional Rehabilitation Committee in accordance with the Community Rehabilitation of

Persons with Mental Health Disability Law, including preparing an opinion for the Committee.

Please note: the services are given based on the clinical and professional considerations of the attending professionals, as in all fields of medicine.

Do I need a referral to receive mental health therapy?

Yes. The field of mental health belongs to consultation medicine (much like orthopedics and ophthalmology, among others).

This means that in order to receive the mental health service in the community, each of the treatment courses requires a referral form, unless it is a direct referral that can be done only by a liaison doctor or independent therapist.

The referral can be given by the family doctor, a liaison doctor, or a consulting doctor (e.g. a gynecologist who has diagnosed a patient with symptoms of postpartum depression).

Is there a limit to the number of treatments I can receive?

Each person receives mental therapy based on their health condition, their needs and their situation, and according to the recommendation of the attending professionals and the approval of the relevant bodies, provided the person has a diagnosis or suspected diagnosis related to mental health.

Who can I get treated by?

Courses of treatment in the community:

- Mental health clinics - these clinics are located throughout Israel and have a multidisciplinary team that includes a psychiatrist, a social worker, a psychologist, and a nurse. In these clinics you can receive treatment for a quarterly fee of NIS 25, only for a doctor's visit, with no extra charge or deductible.

[For more information about this course click here](#) (Hebrew)

- Liaison doctor - a psychiatrist who provides consultation services in primary clinics in the community.

[For more information about this course click here](#) (Hebrew)

- Independent doctor - much like in other fields of consultation medicine, mental health services are provided by independent doctors specializing in general psychiatry or child and adolescent psychiatry.

[For more information about this course click here](#) (Hebrew)

- Independent therapist (psychotherapy) - psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, who provide psychotherapy outside the framework of the mental health clinics, in private clinics. This course involves a deductible paid by the patient.

[For more information about this course click here](#) (Hebrew)

- Private provider - the service is provided in private institutions that have a multidisciplinary team, and is subject to the submission of pledge forms.

[For more information about this course click here](#) (Hebrew)

Treatment courses in hospitals

- ER - psychiatric hospitals

[For more information about this course click here](#) (Hebrew)

- ER - general hospitals

[For more information about this course click here](#) (Hebrew)

- Hospitalization / day hospitalization

[For more information about this course click here](#) (Hebrew)

- The ambulatory clinic in hospitals - besides mental health clinics in the community, there are mental health clinics in psychiatric hospitals and general hospitals. These clinics include a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker, and a nurse.

[For more information about this course click here](#) (Hebrew)

- Day therapy unit - Day therapy is an alternative to hospitalization. This framework is suitable for patients coming from the community, who don't need to be hospitalized and who have another therapy framework.

[For more information about this course click here](#) (Hebrew)

How many mental health clinics are there in Clalit and who works in them?

There are dozens of such clinics located throughout the country, and Clalit is continuing to set up additional clinics. Each clinic includes a multidisciplinary team that comprises a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker, and a nurse.

To find out which mental health clinic is closest to you, contact the Clalit call center at *2700.

Why is it important for my family doctor to know about the mental health therapy I receive?

The approach at the heart of the reform is that mental and physical health go hand in hand. The family doctor is the link connecting all the specialists with whom the patient comes in contact, in order to provide the best comprehensive treatment.

As there is a connection between mental and physical conditions (e.g. diseases such as diabetes and blood pressure are affected by mental stress), information about a person's mental and emotional difficulties can help the doctor with early detection and prevention of physical illnesses that are typical of certain populations.

In addition, information about the medication a patient is taking, including psychiatric medication, is critical for the family doctor to have in order to prevent reactions between medications that could endanger the patient.

What about patients treated in psychiatric out-patient clinics in general hospitals?

A patient treated in an out-patient clinic in a hospital requires a pledge form (Form 17) to continue treatment, as is customary in other fields of medicine.

I want to continue treatment with the same psychiatrist. Is that possible?

A patient treated by a psychiatrist in the public system can continue being treated by the same psychiatrist if the latter is included in one of Clalit's treatment courses, and subject to the approvals required in that course.

I need immediate help. Who can I turn to?

- As was the case prior to the reform, you can go to the ER in psychiatric hospitals. Every psychiatric hospital has a psychiatric ER that operates 24 hours a day, and you can go there free of charge and with no pledge form (Form 17).
- You can go to the ER in general hospitals, where they have psychiatric consultants. Payment in these places is according to the accepted rules when going to an ER in a general hospital.
- During operating hours you can get help at the mental health centers in the community.

Are there psychiatrists treating patients at Clalit primary clinics in the community?

Yes. In most of the primary clinics there are psychiatrists who consult and provide therapy (liaison doctors). They receive patients for 1-on-1 sessions (up to 3 sessions). There is no need for a referral to see a liaison doctor

(direct referral), and you can only book an appointment through the primary clinic office.

Some of the children's health centers have a psychologist or psychiatrist for minors for initial diagnosis of mental health problems among children and adolescents.

Who can I go to for psychological treatment (psychotherapy)?

A psychologist is present on a regular basis in each mental health clinic. In addition, you can get psychotherapy through the independent therapy course from a psychologist, psychiatrist, or social worker who has an arrangement with the HMO.

The first session with an independent therapist is used for making the diagnosis (the intake session) and does not require a referral form (direct referral). Further sessions require approval from the district psychologist.

I don't feel comfortable going to the clinic to get therapy. What should I do?

As mentioned, there are several options to get therapy from an independent therapist or psychiatrist in a private clinic and not in a public one.

Please note: Therapy with an independent therapist involves a deductible payment by the patient.

How much will I need to pay for the sessions?

- **Therapy at a mental health clinic in the community** or with an independent psychiatrist or a psychiatric clinic in a mental health hospital – a payment of NIS 26 as a quarterly fee (every three months) for a doctor's examination (as of April, 2019).

It's important to note that the payment in this case is only for seeing a psychiatrist, and a session in those clinics to see anyone who is not a doctor (a psychologist or social worker) will not involve any payment.

- **Therapy in an out-patient clinic in a general hospital** - payment of a quarterly fee (every three months) of NIS 35 (as of April, 2019).
- **Psychotherapy sessions with an independent therapist** - a deductible of NIS 59 for the first session and NIS 142 per session from the second session (as of April, 2019). Group therapy costs NIS 65.

As in the case of general medicine, insured patients recognized as having a medical disability of 40% and over by the National Insurance Institute are exempt from paying these fees.

What to do when a psychiatric patient needs a home visit?

A patient who belongs to a mental health clinic but cannot reach the clinic is entitled to a home visit by the therapists from the team at the clinic.

Who can prescribe sedatives for me if I need them?

A psychiatrist or family doctor.

Do I have the option of changing therapists?

Yes, subject to the rules for. This means that every course of treatment involves a minimal time frame in which the patient must stay with the same therapist.

For example, the minimal time for staying with a psychiatrist in a mental health clinic is one month. This means that if you want to switch therapists, you can do so one month after the start of therapy, meaning the first appointment.

It is possible to leave the therapist earlier under certain conditions. If the therapist is not a doctor but a psychologist or social worker - the rules for staying with the therapist do not apply.

For information about the time required in each course, choose the relevant course.

Where can I find mental health service providers?

You can receive information at Clalit's call center at *2700.

Who knows that I'm getting therapy?

We place a lot of importance on notifying the family doctor while maintaining our patients' privacy. Therefore, Clalit is discrete and information regarding mental health will not be available to all the staff members at Clalit, and the information passed on to the attending physician will include diagnoses and medication.

Have you read the article and still have questions?

Several options are available to you:

- Your family doctor
- Clalit's call center at *2700
- Clalit's mental health clinics close to your area

If I feel I haven't received the treatment I'm entitled to - who can I turn to?

You can turn to one of the following:

- The Ombudsman at the place of treatment (the hospital or clinic).
- The director of the place of treatment.
- The HMO's regional or national administration.
- The Public Complaints Commission under the National Health Insurance Law at the Ministry of Health.