

Behavioral Health (BH) Screening for Tufts Health Plan Adolescent (Ages 12-21) Members

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Tufts Health RITogether

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 [Access Center at Bradley Hospital](#) can provide evaluation and level-of-care treatment recommendations. [Kids Link RI](#) is also available 24/7 to help triage and make referrals for children under age 18 who are in need of mental health services. Adolescents 18 and older can walk in to the program, or call 855-543-5465 for information.

Providers should remind families, caretakers, and patients that the free, confidential [988 Lifeline](#) can be accessed at any time via phone call, text, or chat. In addition, the [Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals](#) offers a variety of programs, support services, and resources for patients with mental health and/or substance use disorders.

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 and ask the family to contact you if they change their mind about seeking referral for BH treatment. Additionally, remind the family how to access the Tufts Health Plan [Find a Doctor](#) search and reach Tufts Member Services by phone at the number below.

Tufts Health Plan “Find a Doctor” Search	Tufts Health Plan Member Services
tuftshealthplan.com/find-a-doctor	866-738-4116

Where do I get an accurate list of BH providers who will see a Tufts Health RITogether member?

The table above includes online and phone options for assistance in locating providers.

The [Pediatric Psychiatry Resource Network \(PediPRN\)](#) is available to consult with pediatric primary care providers in need of quality mental health care services for their patients. This consultation program is free and open to all pediatric primary care providers in Rhode Island. Providers can call 401-432-1543, fax 401-432-1506, or email PediPRN@Lifespan.org for more information.

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

Call the Tufts Health Plan Member Services Line at 866-738-4116; locate a [Community Mental Health Center \(CMHC\) online](#) or by phone at 401-414-5465; or outreach to [KidsLink online](#) or via phone at 855-543-5465.

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?

The purpose of the BH screening is to identify underlying BH concerns so they can be addressed and resolved early on if the patient agrees to follow up on your referral for them to see a BH specialist for treatment.

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 could 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.

[Tufts Health RI Together home-based treatment services \(HBTS\)](#) are intensive outpatient services available for children and adolescents with moderate-to-severe special health care needs who experience chronic developmental, cognitive, physical, medical, neurological, behavioral and/or emotional conditions, and whose level of functioning is significantly compromised. The goal of HBTS is to help children attain their fullest potential and remain as independent as possible within their communities. Refer to the [HBTS Medical Necessity Guidelines](#) for more information.

For children with serious emotional disturbances, enhanced outpatient services offer home/community-based clinical treatment for up to 5 days per week, 4 hours per day. Care is provided by a team of specialized licensed therapists, case managers, and paraprofessionals.

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 specialist who is well-trained in assessing and addressing BH concerns and can make BH treatment recommendations, which you as the PCP can also help with. Some inherited BH conditions may be treatable with a combination of medication and talk therapy. Jump starting BH treatment early is important in making sure the patient remains healthy developmentally, socially, and physically.

Parents and caretakers who are interested in learning from families with shared experiences raising children with emotional, behavioral and mental health challenges can visit [The Parent Support Network of Rhode Island](#), or call 401-467-6855 for more information.

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 screen 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 have to 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, do the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent/legal guardian has the authority to determine who they want to share their child's medical and BH information with. The parent/legal guardian can decline sharing of information at their discretion. However, sharing this information may be beneficial, as it could help get the child additional academic support and/or reasonable accommodations can be included in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Where can I find information about BH prior authorization and notification requirements for Tufts Health RITogether?

Refer to the <https://tuftshhealthplan.com/documents/providers/general/rit-bh-pa-notification-grid> for detailed information.