

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

What are Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)?

Stressful or traumatic experiences people have by age 18 split up by 10 categories in three domains:

1. Abuse:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual

2. Neglect:

- Physical
- Emotional

3. Household challenges:

- Mental illness
- Household with incarceration
- Domestic violence
- Divorce/separation
- Substance dependence

What are the health consequences?

Individuals who have experienced ACEs are at significantly increased risk of serious health consequences including chronic issues throughout the life span:

Mental and behavioral health:

- Engage in high-risk behaviors
- Substance use
- Mental health disorders

Physical and mental health:

Pediatric health:

- Failure to thrive
- Growth/developmental delay
- Sleep disruption
- Viral infections/other atopic diseases
- Somatic complaints
- Engage in high-risk behaviors

Adult health:

- Severe obesity
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Chronic lower respiratory disease
- STDs
- Depression
- Attempt suicide
- Reduced life expectancy



Benefits of screening for ACEs

By screening for ACEs, providers can:

- Better determine the likelihood a patient is at increased health risk due to ACEs.
- Better identify ACE-associated health conditions that may benefit from a trauma-informed intervention.
- Identify which patients may be at risk of vertical transmission of ACEs and target prevention efforts.
- Empower patients to achieve better health by addressing potential stressors.



ACEs Aware mantra – Screen. Treat. Heal.

- Department of Health Care Services and CA Office of Surgeon General launched the ACEs Aware Program in December 2019.
- All Medi-Cal Managed Care (Medi-Cal) providers should go to www.ACEsAware.org to learn how to screen patients and respond with trauma-informed care.
- Response to identification of ACEs and increased risk of toxic stress should include:
 - Applying principles of trauma-informed care, including establishing trust, safety and collaborative decision-making.
 - Identification and treatment of ACE-associated health conditions.
 - Patient education about toxic stress and buffering interventions.



Provider training

- Medi-Cal providers can take a free, two-hour training to learn about ACEs, screening tools, and trauma-informed care by going to www.ACEsAware.org.
- Providers will receive continuing medical education (CME) credits and Maintenance of Certification (MOC) credits upon completion.



Payment

- Anthem Blue Cross (Anthem) is reimbursing Medi-Cal providers a minimum fee of \$29 for each qualifying ACE screening service.
- Use the following HCPCS codes when billing for ACEs screening:
 - **G9919** - Screening performed — results positive and provision of recommendations provided: when the patient's screening is determined to be high risk (a score of 4 or greater)
 - **G9920** - Screening performed — results negative: when the patient's screening is determined to be lower risk (a score between 0 and 3)

Testimonial

Here's what our Medical Director Dr. Dennis B. McIntyre, MD, FAAP, has to say about ACEs:

"The ACEs screening service is an extremely helpful tool that all healthcare providers should consider using in their daily practice, whether they treat children or adults. The free, two-hour training video produced by ACEs Aware Initiative demonstrates the value of screening and applies it to realistic clinical and social scenarios. This training video and other resources available on acesaware.org empower providers with tools and tactics to care for patients with high ACEs scores.

ACEs screening, and its ability to detect and stratify patients at risk of toxic stress, can serve as an entry point for patients who are not fully engaged with the healthcare system. In addition, ACEs screening results can help providers direct patients and families to the services, agencies and organizations that are relevant to their needs. We all recognize the importance of the social determinants of health in contributing to a patient's overall health. ACEs screening takes that recognition to a higher level.

Please consider joining me and the other 700+ California providers in the Anthem network who have already been trained in the ACEs screening process. It will be time well spent, and doing so will allow you to gain a broader understanding of your patients' needs. In turn, your patients will better understand what resources and interventions are available to improve their situation, and they will be grateful."

To get more information on the ACEs Aware Program, visit <http://www.ACEsAware.org>.

<https://providers.anthem.com/ca>

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