

What is a Serious Mental Illness?

A Serious Mental Illness is a chronic and long term mental health condition which impacts a person's ability to perform day-to-day activities or interactions.

What is the SMI Determination Process?

The SMI determination is the process individuals go through to receive an SMI designation. An individual can request to be evaluated/considered for services through:

- Their provider,
- An AHCCCS health plan,
- A Tribal Regional Behavioral Health Authority (TRBHA),
- The Arizona Department of Corrections Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADOCRR),
- The Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC), or
- Solari Crisis & Human Services.

If you are already receiving services from an AHCCCS provider, you may ask your provider to submit an application for SMI services.

What to expect throughout the process?

You will be required to submit documentation of your mental illness and how it is affecting your quality of life. It is possible that you will be required to meet with a clinician face to face to complete an assessment. You will receive an approval or denial within seven days. If you are denied, you will receive a letter explaining the reason. You have the option to appeal this process.

What is an SMI Designation?

This designation is for adults ages 18 and older. SMI eligibility assessments and designations are available to all individuals regardless of AHCCCS eligibility. A co-occurring substance use disorder does not automatically disqualify a person from receiving a SMI evaluation and/or designation.

The Serious Mental Illness must result in either:

- An inability to live independently without adequate support,
- A risk of serious harm to self or others,
- A dysfunction in role performance, or
- A risk of deterioration if adequate supports and services are not provided.

Criteria must be met for 12 months OR be present for six months with an expected continued duration of an additional six months.

What are the benefits of an SMI Designation?

With an SMI designation, an individual who is 18 years or older has access to services that may help improve the quality of life and the ability to live independently. SMI is a designation not a diagnosis.

The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) is committed to ensuring the availability of timely, quality health care. If you know of an AHCCCS member who is unable to access health services, or if you have a concern about the quality of care, please call your AHCCCS health care plan's Member Services number. If your concern is not resolved, please call AHCCCS Clinical Resolution Unit at 602-364-4558, or 1-800-867-5308.

