

New CANS assessment & digital platform go live in 2026

Be ready to update FHIR/HL7 connections, complete additional trainings and switch to the new processes

MassHealth, in conjunction with UMass, has updated and modernized the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment tool and the electronic platform used to complete it.

The new tool and platform are scheduled to go live in early 2026. Both will include separate training streams and workstreams for all users. Please note:

- CANS certification will still be required through the UMass CANS training team.
- FHIR/HL7 connections will need to be updated to the new system to allow for continued, or new, automatic upload from an Electronic Health Record (EHR).

What’s Changing

CANS Assessment Changes

The CANS assessment will be modernized and updated with new domains, changes to the strength ratings, expanded sections, etc.

- This change will require training on the new CANS clinical assessment tool which will include clinical training and testing on interrater reliability within the CANS tool.
- Training and implementation of the new CANS assessment will be facilitated by the UMass Chan Medical School Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative program

Who needs to be aware of this: Changes will be managed mostly by provider clinical teams and supervisory staff.

CANS Application Changes

The CANS online application will be used to complete the CANS assessment electronically, similar to how the Virtual Gateway is being used today.

- This change will require training for the ONLINE application for CANS entrance which will include technical training on the online platform.
- Training and implementation of this online portal/application will be completed by Wellsky.

Who needs to be aware of this: Changes will be managed by provider IT team, for FHIR/HL7 integration, and supervisors for compliance.

Resources



Please review the following items from MassHealth for more information:

- [CANS Application Transition Overview](#)
- [Preview of Updated CANS Assessment](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions/Answers](#)

Questions?

If you have additional questions, here’s who to contact via email:

- Technical integration or eCas application – MA-EHS-ECAS-IT@mass.gov
- Questions related to the new clinical assessment tool email – masscans@umassmed.edu
- Performance specifications or MassHealth regulations – the CBHI mailbox at mbhpcbhi@carelon.com

Reminder



Required Assessments

All network (contracted) providers/clinicians are required to complete the Child & Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) behavioral health assessment for MassHealth members under the age of 21 before providing any of the following services:

- Psychiatric inpatient hospitalization
- Community-Based Acute Treatment (CBAT)
- Psychiatric inpatient hospitalization
- Intensive Care Coordination (ICC)
- In Home Therapy (IHT)
- Outpatient Therapy (diagnostic evaluations, individual, family, and group therapy)