



Independent Clinical Assessment for Children's Mental Health Rehabilitative Services

Department of Medical Assistance Services
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Fact Sheet

Authority	<p>The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), as the sole State agency under State and federal authority with the responsibility of administering the Medicaid program, implemented an independent assessment process contracted through the Community Service Boards (CSBs) in July 2011. The process included an evaluation of the clinical necessity for children's mental health services. The objectives of the independent clinical assessment are to improve the care of children who are accessing mental health services, ensure appropriate utilization of services, measure outcomes and increase the cost effectiveness of services provided.</p>
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant increases in utilization and expenditures for CMHRS services in recent years necessitated an additional level of review. The largest growth was in the children's services such as intensive in-home and therapeutic day treatment services. • Internal review and a federal audit results for CMHRS, provided by Medicaid enrolled providers to Medicaid enrollees, identified potential areas for improvement to the Department's service provision, service authorization, care coordination, and reimbursement policies. • Desire to educate and inform parents/legal guardians of all behavioral health service options for their children and to provide parents/legal guardians freedom of choice and access to the appropriate providers.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardized clinical assessments performed by a Licensed Mental Health Professional helps to determine most appropriate, medically necessary mental health services; • The DMAS Service Authorization Contractor will continue to review the treatment requests, and the additional level of review helps to ensure the "Right care at the right time by the right provider" for the child; • The process helps to inform and empower parents/legal guardians to understand service options for their children and to promote their freedom of choice of qualified providers; • The independent assessment provides an opportunity to coordinate linkages between the primary care system, the health plans and the behavioral health care delivery system to address comprehensive needs of the child; and • Medicaid enrolled providers are provided additional experience with the application of medical necessity criteria to assure services to eligible children.
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first year of the program ending June 2012, there were over 28,000 independent assessments completed. Through the second quarter of year two, over 8,900 independent assessments were completed; • In year one, the services that were recommended most frequently were TDT, non-physician Outpatient Counseling and Outpatient Psychiatry/Medical Evaluation. Approximately 2% of children were not recommended for any professional service; this is trending similarly through the second quarter of year two. (Based on VACSB reports.); and • Utilization of the targeted services such as IIH, TDT and MHSS (under age 21) is trending downward since July 2011. For SFY2012, IIH is down almost 27%; TDT is down approximately 16%; and MHSS for recipients under age 21 is down approximately 20%. Downward trends continue through the second quarter of year two.
Performance Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of year one, only 14 total appointments were offered outside of the required timeframe. Year two data demonstrates continued overall compliance with this requirement. • For the three targeted services (IIH, TDT, MHSS), the number of recommended services closely matches the number of paid claims in DMAS claims data, suggesting the majority of recipients were able to access the recommended service following the independent assessment; and • DMAS continues to review and approve provider marketing plans to support families' freedom of choice and access to appropriate behavioral health providers.
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