

Top Story



STATE OF WASHINGTON
 DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
 CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION
 1115 Washington St. SE OB2 • PO Box 45040 • Olympia WA 98504-5040

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November 19, 2014

To: Children's Administration All Staff
 From: Jennifer A. Strus, Assistant Secretary
 Children's Administration
 Subject: Psychological Evaluation & Mental Health Services

As of October 2014, it is forecasted that we will be overspent by \$658,000 in the CA contracted Evaluation and Treatment category by the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2015. In order to prevent over expenditures, we are providing the following guidance.

Considerations:

- Not every case with individuals needing mental health services requires a psychological evaluation.
- **Use CA contracted services only after all other Medicaid options have been explored and exhausted.**
- In a majority of cases, social work staff can refer parents and children to a community based mental health provider (Medicaid funded) for a comprehensive mental health evaluation.
- For CA contracted services, authorization for therapy, counseling and treatment are for maximum of 15 hours in a three (3) month period per family or individual per a referral. Extensions are only granted with careful reviews and additional referrals.
- Workers should not propose a psychological evaluation as a court ordered service until the internal approval process (outlined Approval Process section below) is completed.

Mental Health Resources:

- All children in foster care are eligible for Medicaid when they enter placement.
- Medicaid mental health services are delivered through the community mental health providers contracted by the Regional Support Network (RSN).
www.dshs.wa.gov/dbhr/rsn.shtml
- Health care insurance is available for most of our parents through the Affordable Care Act. www.wahealthplanfinder.org/
- **Referring to community mental health is the first choice for a comprehensive mental health exam, diagnosis, and treatment.**
- Community Mental Health providers are scaling up Evidence Based Practices, and an array of these are available with Medicaid; Provider One coverage.
- Medicaid covers RSN services if clients meet access to care standards.
- Medicaid Fee-For-Service providers are available for unlimited counseling/therapy sessions for clients who do not meet the RSN access to care standards
- If Medicaid funded services for treatments and evaluations described above are not applicable or available, prioritize use of CA contracted Evidenced Based Practices before Professional Services contracts.

Approval Process:

Psychological Evaluation

- Before a worker requests a CA contracted psychological evaluation, the worker must receive prior approval from their Supervisor. If approved, the AA signature is required on the referral form.

Psychotherapy (Psychological & Psychiatric Service)

- Before a worker requests a CA contracted psychological evaluation, the worker must receive prior approval from the Supervisor. If approved, the AA signature is required on the referral form.
- Initial extension requires prior approval from the Supervisor. If approved, the AA signature is required on the referral form.
- Second extension requires prior approval from the AA and DRA or RA. If approved, the DRA or RA signature is required on the referral form.

Counseling, Therapy, Treatment (Professional Service)

- Initial extension requires prior approval from the Supervisor. If approved, the Supervisor signature is required on the referral form.
- Second extension requires prior approval from the AA. If approved, the AA signature is required on the referral form.

A Supervisor will not approve any request in the following circumstances:

- There is no indication of mental/behavior health issues,
- The client is eligible and is more appropriate for a mental health assessment or treatment provided by community based mental health providers, or
- An Evidence Based Practice (<http://ca.dshs.wa.gov/intranet/ebp/index.asp>) or the Professional Services (www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/partners/statewideContractors.asp) is available to meet the mental health needs of the client.

Thank you for your dedicated service and engagement with our youth and families. If you have questions please contact Taku Mineshita minesta@dshs.wa.gov.