



STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR
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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
CHARLES J. KROGMEIER, DIRECTOR

August 28, 2009

GENERAL LETTER NO. 3-A-4

ISSUED BY: Office of the Deputy Director of Field Operations

SUBJECT: Employees' Manual, Title 3, Chapter A, **MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTES**, Contents (pages 2 through 5), revised; page 48, revised; and pages 48a, 48b, and 48c, new.

Summary

Chapter 3-A is revised to add policy and procedures on the provision of and billing for outpatient services, community consultation, and direct medical services.

Effective Date

Upon receipt.

Material Superseded

Remove the following pages from Employees' Manual, Title 3, Chapter A, and destroy them:

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Additional Information

Refer questions about this general letter to the Deputy Director, Division of Field Operations.

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- ◆ Training curriculum shall be updated regularly to reflect changes in professional practices, laws, policies, and procedures.
- ◆ Training shall be implemented in a timely manner.

Policy on Outpatient Services and Community Consultation

Mental health institutes may offer voluntary outpatient services to individuals. The goal shall be to prevent hospitalization and maintain the individual in an appropriate community setting. Outpatient services may include individual counseling or day treatment as part of the inpatient program.

Outpatient Treatment

Mental health institute written policies and procedures shall assure that:

- ◆ Application for outpatient treatment shall be made using the same process as an application for voluntary admission.
- ◆ Treatment shall be based on an assessment of the individual's need as defined in [Comprehensive Assessment](#).
- ◆ Treatment shall be based on a treatment plan as defined in [Treatment Plans](#).

Outpatient Admission Approval

Mental health institute written policies and procedures shall assure that voluntary outpatient admission approval is given only when:

- ◆ An application has been submitted using, as appropriate, form 470-0420, *Application for Voluntary Admission – MHI*, or 470-0425, *Application for Voluntary Admission – Substance Abuse*.
- ◆ An application has been approved through a central point of coordination process, when required, and by a county board of supervisors.
- ◆ When the individual is or is alleged to be a state case, the deputy director or the deputy director's designee shall also sign the application.

Outpatient Billings

Mental health institute written policies and procedures shall assure that the cost of outpatient treatment is appropriately billed:

- ◆ To the individual if the individual elects to privately pay, or
- ◆ To the individual's county of legal settlement if the individual has a county of legal settlement, using the county billing system, at the same percentage rate as determined for inpatient services.
- ◆ As a state expense for an individual with no county of legal settlement.

Outpatient Treatment Billing Rate for Individual Counseling

Mental health institute written policies and procedures shall establish, at the beginning of each fiscal year, the billing rate for individual counseling based on a quarter hour unit rate determined by:

- ◆ Using the top of the salary range for the salary classification of the employee providing the service,
- ◆ Multiplying the hourly rate by 1.5,
- ◆ Dividing by four, and
- ◆ Rounding to the nearest whole dollar.

Outpatient Treatment Billing Rate for Day Treatment

Mental health institute written policy and procedure shall assure that the billing rate for day treatment is calculated by using the capped per diem rate for the program providing the day treatment:

- ◆ For four hours or less, multiply the capped per diem by 37.5%.
- ◆ For over four hours, multiplying the capped per diem by 75%.

Determine the final billing charge by multiplying the result by 80% for mental health treatment or by 25% for substance abuse treatment.

Private-Pay Outpatient

Mental health institute written policies and procedures shall assure that if an individual elect to pay privately for outpatient services, payment shall be made in accordance with [Voluntary Application Process: Private Pay](#).

Community Consultation

Community consultation is the provision of a service that is outside the normal legal responsibilities of the institute. A mental health institute may, upon request, provide community consultation to any public or private non-Department agency or organization with the goal of assisting the community to improve the community's mental health services delivery system.

Community Consultation Billing Rate

Mental health institute written policies and procedures shall establish the cost for community consultation by

- ◆ Using the hourly pay rate for the employee providing the consultation,
 - Multiplied by 1.5,
 - Multiplied by the number of hours of the consultation, including one-way travel time; plus
- ◆ The cost for round-trip travel expenses (mileage, lodging, and meals) at the state-established rates.

Community Consultation Billings

Mental health institute written policies and procedures shall assure that the cost of community consultation is appropriately billed to the agency or organization requesting the consultation at 100% of the determined rate.

Direct Medical Services

Mental health institutes shall bill counties of legal settlement for direct medical services, as defined in 441 IAC 29.4(2). Direct medical services shall be billed for both inpatient and outpatient services. Direct medical services provided to individuals without legal settlement shall be charged as a state expense.

Billing Direct Medical Services

Mental health institute written policies and procedures shall assure that:

- ◆ Individual receiving direct medical services shall have the direct medical services billed to the individual's county of legal settlement as part of the quarterly billing system operated under Iowa Code section 230.20.

- ◆ Each mental health institute shall determine the cost of each defined direct medical service at the beginning of each calendar year in accordance with generally accepted accounting procedures, based on the actual cost of the service in the preceding calendar year.
- ◆ Training curriculum shall be updated regularly to reflect changes in professional practices, laws, policies, and procedures.
- ◆ Training shall be implemented in a timely manner.

Policy on Court-Ordered Evaluations

It is the policy of the Department of Human Services that court-ordered evaluations shall be completed by qualified mental health professionals and the reports to the court shall be completed in a timely manner.

Evaluations Principles

- ◆ Qualified mental health professionals shall be available providing a broad range of professional expertise to evaluate an individual's mental health status so a report to the court can be prepared on the person's current mental health condition and based on that condition, recommendations for appropriate treatment.
- ◆ Court-ordered evaluation shall be made by and in accordance with accepted professional standards for the discipline performing the evaluation.
- ◆ All members of the individual's treatment team shall provide input into the evaluation.
- ◆ Evaluations shall result in a written report that clearly states the findings of the evaluation regarding the individual's current mental health status, the most appropriate treatment services needed, and the least restrictive setting in which the services can be provided.
- ◆ The findings of the evaluation shall support the recommendations.
- ◆ The only treatment provided during the evaluation period shall be that treatment necessary to preserve the individual's life, or to appropriately control behavior by the individual that is likely to result in immediate physical injury to the individual, an employee, or others unless the individual provides consent for treatment or the committing court orders treatment.