



Provider Alert

ALERT #39

Date: August 1, 2008

CANS Update #1

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION SHOULD BE NOTED AND COMMUNICATED IMMEDIATELY TO ALL PERTINENT OFFICES WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION

As previously communicated in MBHP Provider Alert 37, beginning **November 30, 2008**, in conjunction with Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan, Fallon Community Health Plan, Network Health, Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP), and Neighborhood Health Plan, MBHP will require a uniform behavioral health assessment process for members under 21 that includes a comprehensive needs assessment using the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool. Because many clinicians are being trained and certified in the use of the CANS now, effective **September 1, 2008**, MBHP will reimburse at an enhanced rate CANS certified providers who use the Massachusetts version of the CANS during a diagnostic evaluation (CPT code 90801 with modifier HA).

Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Tool Description

The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths tool (CANS), developed by John S. Lyons, PhD, is a document that organizes clinical information collected during a behavioral health assessment in a consistent manner to improve communication among those involved in planning care for a child or adolescent. The CANS is also used as a decision-support tool to guide care planning, and to track changing strengths and needs over time. The CANS is used in child-serving systems in more than 30 states across the country.

There are two forms of the Massachusetts CANS (“CANS Birth through Four” and “CANS Five through Twenty”). In addition, the CANS assessment form includes a determination of whether a child meets the criteria for Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED).

Services that Require the Use of CANS

Effective 11/30/2008, The CANS will be *required* as part of an initial behavioral health assessment and updated at a minimum of every 90 days as the treatment plan is reviewed in the following services:

- Outpatient Therapy (diagnostic evaluations, individual, family, group)
- Family Stabilization Team (FST)

The CANS must also be completed as part of a discharge planning process in the following 24-hour level of care services:

- Psychiatric inpatient hospitalization
- Community-Based Acute Treatment (CBAT)
- Intensive Community-Based Acute Treatment (ICBAT)

The CANS is NOT required and enhanced payment will not be available in the following circumstances:

- Psychopharmacology evaluations
- Psychological/neuropsychological testing
- Emergency Services Provider (ESP) evaluations
- Acute Treatment Services for Substance Abuse
- Community Support Services for Substance Abuse
- Ongoing medication management
- Psychiatric day treatment
- Partial hospitalization
- Structured Outpatient Addiction Program
- Community Support Program

Payment for CANS in Outpatient Therapy

The initial behavioral health assessment using the CANS for outpatient therapy (individual, family, and group) is provided during a psychiatric diagnostic interview evaluation, which is billed with the CPT code 90801 with modifier HA.

Effective 9/1/2008, MBHP will reimburse Providers at an enhanced rate for billing CPT 90801-HA. A diagnostic evaluation that includes a CANS may require two sessions, and providers may bill MBHP for two 90801-HA visits. MBHP will be issuing new outpatient fee schedules in August, which will include the enhanced rate.

The review and updating of the CANS required every 90 days for members in ongoing individual, group, or family therapy is part of treatment planning and documentation and, as such, is not a separately billable service.

Payment for CANS in All Other Services

Rates and billing requirements for all other services are being reviewed. Further information on billing and payment for CANS in these services will be provided in advance of the November 30th 2008 effective date of the CANS requirement.

CANS Certification Requirements

Clinicians who are required to use the CANS must pass an online CANS certification examination. This includes psychologists, LICSWs, LMHCs, LMFTs, LCSWs, or unlicensed master's level clinicians working under the supervision of a licensed clinician. Bachelor's level direct service providers or paraprofessionals will not be trained or certified in the CANS.

Certified clinicians can use both forms of the Massachusetts CANS ("CANS Birth through Four" and "CANS Five through Twenty").

CANS Certification and Training Process

Information on the CANS certification and training can be found on the web at <https://masscans.ehs.state.ma.us>. This web site includes an online training course, an online certification exam, and the schedule of in-person CANS training sessions.

Persons with previous training for using the CANS do not need to repeat training offered in order to take the certification exam. For persons who have not received any CANS training, in-person training is being provided by the University of Massachusetts Medical School at various dates and times across the state. Web-based online training is available now at the web site listed above. Participation in both the in-person and web-based training will be free of charge, and will include free Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

Recertification is required every two years. In order to be recertified, log on to the Massachusetts CANS training website (<https://masscans.ehs.state.ma.us>) and pass the certification exam.

For more information on training, please contact the Massachusetts CANS Training Center by calling **(508) 856-1016 ext. 61016** or emailing Mass.Cans@umassmed.edu.

CANS as an Outcome Instrument

The CANS is an approved standardized assessment instrument for MBHP's Clinical Outcomes Management Program for Members under 21 years of age.

Effective 11/30/2008, MBHP will **require** the CANS as an assessment instrument for Members under age 21 receiving services that require a CANS assessment. As an MBHP-approved instrument, the CANS can be used in lieu of previously used assessment instruments. Inpatient providers can use the CANS as part of the discharge planning process in lieu of the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS). A provider still has the option, of course, to use additional standardized assessment instruments for its own clinical or quality improvement purposes.

Consistent with the current MBHP Clinical Outcomes Management Program policy, providers will be required to incorporate the results of the CANS evaluation into the Member's treatment plan.

CANS in other EOHHS Agencies

Separate from MassHealth, certain other EOHHS agencies including the departments of Mental Health (DMH), Children and Families (DCF), and Youth Services (DYS) will adopt the Massachusetts CANS for use within their programs. Those agencies will provide instructions to their providers.

CANS When a Member Is Seeing More Than One Provider

Effective November 30, 2008, the CANS is an integral, requisite part of the behavioral health assessment process. When a member is treated by more than one provider, each provider is required to perform their own behavioral health assessment, which will include the CANS.

CANS Paper Form

Beginning September 1, 2008, until the Web-Based Massachusetts CANS Data System is available, the CANS tool must be completed using a paper copy of the appropriate version of the Massachusetts CANS ("Birth through Four," or "Five through Twenty"). On or before September 1, 2008, links to these forms as well as supporting documentation will be found at the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) web site www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth and at www.masspartnership.com

For audit purposes, the paper version of the CANS tool must be stored and maintained with the client's medical record.

Web-Based Massachusetts CANS Data System

EOHHS is developing a new web-based application that will permit providers to enter and view CANS data in a secure environment, subject to Member consent, which informs parents that protected health information will be stored and accessed in this way. The CANS application will be accessible through The Virtual Gateway web portal. This application is scheduled to be available on or after November 30, 2008. To have access to The Virtual Gateway and the CANS tool, your provider/agency organization must have a Virtual Gateway Service agreement (VGSA) in place as well as other documents.

Each clinician who will be entering and viewing data in the CANS application will need to have a Virtual Gateway User ID in order to access the tool.

To assist you in the process of being granted access to the CANS tool, please follow these simple steps and send your responses back to the following email address;

VirtualGatewayCBHI@state.ma.us

Name of your Organization

Identify a CANS point of contact for your organization

This person will be working with The Virtual Gateway Deployment team on ensuring that all of the requirements needed to have access to the CANS tool are in place prior to November 30, 2008.

Name of person

Address

Phone

Email

Does your organization already have access to the Virtual Gateway Web portal (Yes or No)

Number of clinicians needing access to the CANS tool

Has anyone from your organization completed the CANS tool assessment training? (Yes or No) If yes, number of individuals who have completed training.

Please send responses back as soon as possible and **no later than August 15th**. The sooner we get responses, the quicker we can begin the on-boarding process.

If you have any comments or concerns, please send them to the address listed:

VirtualGatewayCBHI@state.ma.us

Contact Numbers

If you have questions regarding requirements about the CANS, contact our Community Relations department at **1-800-495-0086 (press 1 for the English menu, 2 for the Spanish menu, then #3 then #1 to skip prompts)**, Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you need technical assistance with the Virtual Gateway (VG), you may contact the VG Customer Service group at **1-800-421-0938, ext 5**.

If you have questions regarding CANS training or certification, contact the Massachusetts CANS Training Center by calling **(508) 856-1016, ext. 61016** or emailing Mass.Cans@umassmed.edu.

Web sites

Visit the Praed Foundation web site at www.buddinpraed.org for the most comprehensive description of the history and development of the CANS approach.

A bibliography of published papers on the CANS is also available at the web site of the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI): www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth

In advance, thank you for your cooperation and participation.