



Provider **Alert**

ALERT #82

November 30, 2009

IN-HOME BEHAVIORAL SERVICES: ANNOUNCEMENT OF A FIFTH CREDENTIALING CRITERION FOR THE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT THERAPIST AND ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION REGARDING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT MONITOR

The following information should be noted immediately to your chief executive officer, chief operating officer, program director, billing director, and staff.

The purpose of this *Alert* is to inform providers of the existence of a fifth credentialing criterion for the Behavior Management Therapist, as well as to provide additional clarification regarding the requirements of the Behavior Management Monitor. This *Alert* supersedes all previous communication pertaining to the credentialing criteria for In-Home Behavioral Services. This *Alert* should be reviewed alongside the In-Home Behavioral Services Performance Specifications.

As noted within the In-Home Behavioral Services Performance Specifications, In-Home Behavioral Services are delivered by one or more members of a team consisting of professional and paraprofessional staff, offering a combination of medically necessary Behavior Management Therapy and Behavior Management Monitoring.

Behavior Management Therapy: This service includes a behavioral assessment (including observing the youth's behavior, antecedents of behaviors, and identification of motivators); development of a highly specific behavior plan; supervision and coordination of interventions; and training other interveners to address specific behavioral objectives or performance goals. This service is designed to treat challenging behaviors that interfere with the youth's successful functioning. The behavior management therapist develops specific behavioral objectives and interventions that are designed to diminish, extinguish, or improve specific behaviors related to the youth's behavioral health condition(s) and that are incorporated into the behavior plan and the risk management/safety plan.

Behavior Management Monitoring: This service includes implementation of the behavior plan; monitoring the youth's behavior; reinforcing implementation of the behavior plan by the parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s); and reporting to the behavior management therapist on implementation of the behavior plan and progress toward behavioral objectives or performance goals. Phone contact and consultation may be provided as part of the intervention.

Credentialing criteria for the Behavior Management Therapist: Must be a master's-level practitioner¹ **AND**

- 1) Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA); **OR**
- 2) Enrolled in a behavior analyst training program and eligible for certification within nine months; **OR**
- 3) A psychologist licensed by the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Psychology with experience performing functional behavioral assessments and implementing and evaluating intervention strategies; **OR**
- 4) A master's-level mental health practitioner working under the supervision of a BCBA; **OR**
- 5) A master's-level mental health practitioner with relevant training **and** two years experience inclusive of but not limited to:
 - a) conducting functional behavioral assessments (FBA) of youth with serious emotional and behavioral disturbances that include: observing and analyzing behavior in settings where the behavior is naturally occurring; evaluating specific antecedent stimuli and consequences; and understanding the values, skills, and resources of those who are responsible for implementing the behavior plan; **AND**
 - b) selecting interventions and strategies based on the results of the FBA and designing behavior plans that include intensive behaviorally oriented interventions; **AND**
 - c) evaluating progress based on both qualitative and quantitative data and making adjustments to the behavior plan as needed; **AND**
 - d) working with parents/caregivers and paraprofessional staff in homes and other community-based settings to implement behavior plans using techniques grounded in principles of positive behavior support (PBS) and/or applied behavioral analysis (ABA) with an aim toward extinguishing a wide range of challenging behaviors and increasing more socially acceptable behaviors that are age or developmentally appropriate.

For the Behavior Management Monitor

The behavior management monitor works closely with the behavior management therapist to ensure the behavior management plans and risk management/safety plan are implemented as developed, and reports to the behavior management therapist if the youth is not achieving the goals and objectives set forth in the behavior management plan so that the behavior management therapist can modify the plan as necessary.

¹ A mental health practitioner for these purposes include persons with the following credentials: Developmental-behavioral pediatricians, developmental-behavioral pediatric fellows, LICSWs, LCSWs, LMFTs, LMHCs, licensed psychologists, master's-level counselors, marriage and family therapy interns, mental health counselor interns, psychiatric nurse mental health clinical specialists, psychiatric nurse mental health clinical specialist trainee, psychiatric nurses, psychiatrists, psychiatry residents, psychology interns and social work interns. Note that all unlicensed master's-level counselors and/or interns must provide services under the direct supervision of a LICSW, LMFT, LMHC, LCSW, LADC I, Psychologist, Psychiatric Nurse, or Nurse Clinical Specialist consistent with applicable state licensure requirements. Please see Massachusetts State Plan 08-004 for further definition of the credentials described above.

Behavioral management monitors must have a bachelor's degree in a human services field from an accredited university and one (1) year of relevant experience working with families, children, or adolescents who require behavior management, or an associate's degree and a minimum of two (2) years of relevant experience working with families, children, or adolescents who require behavior management.

The In-Home Behavioral Services provider ensures that a licensed, senior clinician with the following credentials – LICSW, LMFT, LMHC, LCSW, LADC I, Psychologist, Psychiatric Nurse, or Nurse Clinical Specialist – provides adequate supervision to all unlicensed master's-level behavior management therapists and/or interns as well the behavior management monitor consistent with applicable state licensure requirements.

If you have questions regarding this *Alert*, please 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.