



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**Executive Office of Health and Human Services**  
**Office of Medicaid**  
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**MassHealth**  
**Speech and Hearing Center Bulletin 11**  
**December 2004**

**TO:** Speech and Hearing Centers Participating in MassHealth  
**FROM:** Beth Waldman, Medicaid Director *BW*  
**RE:** **New Prior Authorization Policy for Rehabilitation Therapy Services**

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***Changes in Policy  
for Certain Therapy  
Services***

To simplify the administration of the MassHealth therapy benefit for providers and members, MassHealth is making changes in its policies for speech and language therapy (ST) services delivered on an outpatient basis. This bulletin describes these changes, which are effective for dates of service on and after **January 1, 2005**.

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***PA Requirements  
Effective January 1, 2005***

**Increase in Number of Payable Visits Before PA Is Required**  
MassHealth is increasing the number of medically necessary ST visits that are payable by MassHealth before prior authorization (PA) is required from 15 visits within a rolling 12-month period to 35 visits within a rolling 12-month period.

**Therapy Evaluations**

When counting the number of therapy visits, MassHealth will no longer count a comprehensive evaluation. In addition, MassHealth will not require PA for a second comprehensive evaluation within a rolling 12-month period.

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***How to Request PA***

MassHealth encourages providers to submit their requests for PA through its Web-based Automated Prior Authorization System (APAS) at [www.masshealth-apas.com](http://www.masshealth-apas.com). To receive more information about requesting PA using APAS, including training for and access to APAS, call 1-866-378-3789.

Information about how to request PA on paper can be found in Part 2 of Subchapter 5 of your provider manual.

Whether submitting requests for PA using APAS or on paper, it is important to complete your request properly and attach the necessary documentation, to reduce the possibility of a deferral or denial of your request.

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**How to Request PA**  
(cont.)

PA requests must include a current prescription, a completed Request and Justification Form for Therapy Services (THP-2), and a copy of a current comprehensive evaluation and treatment plan. Refer to Subchapter 6 of the *Speech and Hearing Center Manual* for service codes and descriptions. When requesting PA, estimate the amount of time required for each service, and request the number of time units accordingly.

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**Counting Visits**

Effective for dates of service on and after January 1, 2005, regardless of how many visits the member has had before January 1, 2005, MassHealth will count the first therapy visit occurring on or after January 1, 2005, as the first visit toward the 35 ST medically necessary visits that are allowed within a rolling 12-month period without PA.

**Exception:** If a member is receiving ST under a PA that was issued before January 1, 2005, and the PA expires on or after January 1, 2005, MassHealth will begin counting visits in accordance with the revised policy described in this bulletin after the number of visits approved under the PA have been provided or after the PA expires, whichever comes first.

**Example:** If a member is receiving ST under a PA that was approved by MassHealth on November 15, 2004, and the PA expires on February 15, 2005, the rolling 12-month period for counting therapy visits begins on the date of the first visit after all of the visits approved under that PA have been provided or on the first visit after February 15, 2005, whichever comes first. If this member's next ST visit is February 25, 2005, then the 12-month period in this example begins on February 25, 2005. In this example, MassHealth will pay for a total of 35 medically necessary ST visits between February 25, 2005, and February 24, 2006, without PA.

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**Regulation Changes**

MassHealth is using this bulletin to communicate these revisions as quickly as possible. MassHealth will update its regulations as soon as possible to reflect the PA policy changes detailed in this bulletin.

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**Questions**

If you have any questions about the information in this bulletin, please call MassHealth Provider Services at 617-628-4141 or 1-800-325-5231.

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