

Introduction

Good morning. My name is Ann Harvey, and I am a Public Policy Fellow within the MassHealth Office of Accountable Care and Behavioral Health, Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). I am here to present testimony on the proposed amendments to regulation 130 CMR 429.000: Mental Health Center Services.

MassHealth is committed to the provision of outpatient behavioral health services to MassHealth members. Accordingly, MassHealth is proposing several amendments to 130 CMR 429.000. These amendments, which I will discuss in more detail today, are intended to clarify and modernize existing requirements and update the program requirements for Mental Health Centers designated as Behavioral Health Urgent Care providers, thereby increasing access to a robust set of behavioral health services at such centers for MassHealth members.

Background for Mental Health Center Regulation

The Mental Health Center regulation, 130 CMR 429.000, covers the requirements for mental health services provided by outpatient community mental health centers, an existing MassHealth provider type.

Proposed Amendments

The proposed amendments to 130 CMR 429.000 update requirements for mental health center providers. Language throughout 130 CMR 429.000 was adjusted to reflect programmatic and industry practice by updating terms in the definitions section and throughout. Specifically, the proposed amendments will establish new definitions and clarify current definitions to support the provision of medically necessary services by providers under this regulation, including establishing or clarifying definitions for the following: American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM); Care Coordination;

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Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS); Co-occurring Disorder; Core Discipline; Enhanced Structured Outpatient Addiction Program (E-SOAP); Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD); Neuropsychological and Developmental Assessment; Peer Recovery Coach; and Psychological Assessment. Where applicable, definitions are aligned across other MassHealth behavioral health programmatic regulations.

The proposed amendments will also clarify provider eligibility requirements for Mental Health Centers designated as Behavioral Health Urgent Care providers. Enrollment as a Behavioral Health Urgent Care provider is dependent on a Mental Health Center attesting to meeting a specific set of programmatic requirements and criteria included in this regulation. These criteria and requirements are updated to include that BHUCs must be able to provide services to members who are younger than 21 years of age and who are 21 years of age and older. The proposed amendments also require BHUC providers to provide access, induction, and prescription for FDA-approved medications to treat members experiencing Opioid Use Disorder and Alcohol Use Disorder. BHUCs must maintain the ability to use two-way video communication for translation services and/or have multilingual staff that align with the language needs of the communities served. Further, the proposed amendments clarify service limitations language for multiple visits on the same date of service to reflect the establishment of an encounter bundled code for BHUC provider services.

Further, the proposed amendments to this regulation will align clinical practice for Mental Health Centers with other outpatient mental health services as applicable, including alignment of CANS assessment frequency to a minimum of every 180 days, alignment of diagnostic evaluation requirements to industry standards, and amendment of the frequency of treatment plan updates to a minimum of every twelve months for members 21 years of age and older who are receiving services at a Mental Health Center that is not designated as a BHUC. Staff composition requirements have been updated to include care coordination services and developmental assessments.

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The proposed regulation clarifies administrative management requirements including amending reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

The proposed effective date for the proposed amendments to 130 CMR 429.000 is August 1, 2025.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you.