

# WAIT TIME TIP SHEET



## Determining Patient's Date of Initial Contact for BSAS Enrollment Assessment



### WHAT

This item asks about the **number of days between initial contact with the program by the patient or someone on behalf of the patient and the first available appointment or bed availability**. The initial contact date is when the patient or their representative first contacts the program to request an appointment or admission.



### WHY

This item captures the number of days the patient has to wait to receive services. It is used to identify issues with program capacity, treatment availability, admissions requirements, or other program requirements. The purpose of this question is to monitor waiting lists and capacity needs.



### HOW

To determine a patient's wait time, tally the number of days between the date of first contact with the program and the date of the first available appointment or bed.

### Do's:

- Your agency decides which staff member records patients' initial date of contact with the program and where the date is recorded. **Where a patient's date of first contact may be located:**
  - If you work in a large agency, the patient's date of initial contact may be available in your agency's central intake system.
  - For treatment programs that receive patient information from the Institute for Health & Recovery, the date of first contact should appear on the referral that is faxed to your program.
  - For programs that provide Section 35 services, the date of initial contact is on the commitment order from the court.
- If the number of days between initial contact with the program and the first available appointment/bed is **unknown**, enter 999.
- If your program receives a referral for a patient and **time elapses before the patient is ready to enroll** in the program, use the date the patient was ready to enroll as the date of initial contact.
- **For patients entering Clinical Stabilization Services (CSS) directly**, this item refers to the first available bed day. Enter the number of days from the first request to first bed availability.
  - For those coming directly from Acute Treatment Services (ATS) with no break in service, the number is 0.
  - If the information is unknown, enter 999.

# WAIT TIME TIP SHEET CONTINUED

- **For patients entering Transitional Support Services (TSS) directly and those who left ATS or CSS because a TSS bed was unavailable**, this item refers to the first available bed day. Enter the number of days from the first request to first bed availability.
  - For those coming directly from ATS or CSS with no break in service, the number is 0.
  - If the information is unknown, enter 999.
- **For traditional outpatient (ambulatory) programs**, the days waited should be based on service availability, not patient availability.
  - If the program and patient agree on an appointment date that meets the patient's needs, the number is 0.
  - If the patient asks for an appointment within a specified time frame (e.g., that day or in a week) and the program cannot accommodate the request because provider schedules or groups are full, enter the number of days between the date of the call or request and the first available appointment.
- **For guest dosing**, the initial date of contact with the program is when the patient requests that the guest dosing program be their home program.

## Don'ts:

- **Do not ask the patient the date of their initial contact** with the program or how many days elapsed before they were admitted.
- Wait time **should not include** time delays caused by the patient's lack of availability or the patient's failure to meet requirements or obligations.
- **Do not use the date the patient was referred** to the program as the initial date of contact; use the date the patient (or someone on behalf of the patient) requested an appointment or admission to the program.