Mental Retardation Bulletin

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania - Department of Public Welfare

Date of Issue: December 18, 1990
Effective Date: January 1, 1991
Number: 6000-90-05

Subject: Therapy and Other Specialized Services

By: [Signature]
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Scope:

County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Administrators
Base Service Unit Directors
Community Residential Mental Retardation Facility Directors
Adult Day Care Center Directors
Vocational Facility Directors
Early Intervention Program Directors
County Mental Retardation Fiscal Directors
County Mental Retardation Coordinators

Purpose:

The purpose of this Bulletin is to issue policy guidelines on the administration, management and reporting of therapy and other specialized services for persons with mental retardation enrolled in the County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Programs.

Background:

Since December, 1981, specialized behavioral and medical services have been available for persons with mental retardation under the County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Program pursuant to Mental Retardation Bulletin 99-81-53, titled "CLA Core Team Guidelines," issued on December 23, 1981. Various in-home therapies have also been provided under Family Resource Services regulations, 55 Pa. Code Ch. 6350. Funding for these services has been provided by County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Programs under their residential and non-residential allocations for community mental retardation services.

This new bulletin on therapy and other specialized services is needed to address advances in program practice, continued enrollment of individuals with complex needs in community services, new funding options, increases in the types and numbers of entities providing specialized services, and demands for cost-effectiveness.

This bulletin also clarifies that therapy and other specialized services are not restricted to recipients in residential placement, that appropriate administrative safeguards need to be in place to ensure the quality as well as the cost effectiveness of services, that generic services and choice are offered to recipients receiving these services, and that practitioners rendering services are qualified.

Comments and Questions Regarding This Bulletin Should Be Directed To:

Appropriate Regional Mental Retardation Program Manager
THERAPIES AND SPECIALIZED SERVICES

$6000.161. Intent.

(a) Therapy and other specialized services are intended to:

(1) Provide necessary and appropriate services for individuals with mental retardation whose condition requires the services of a health care or human services professional.

(2) Focus on supporting the individual, together with his family and support staff, to address the individual's needs to the greatest extent possible and to build upon the individual's strengths and assets.

(3) Be time limited based upon measurable outcomes for the service.

(b) A distinguishing aspect of therapies and other specialized services is that they are focused on meeting a specific condition of an individual. Training for staff or family members which is not directly related to such condition does not constitute a therapy or specialized service, but is reimbursable as a training cost if it is relevant to the trainee's general duties or responsibilities.

$6000.162. General Requirements.

(a) Each therapy and other specialized service must be specified in the individual's plan of care, individualized family service plan or habilitation plan and authorized by the County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Administrator.

(b) To be included in the plan of care, each therapy and other specialized service shall be based on a written assessment by a qualified professional and the recommendation of the individual's interdisciplinary team.

(c) The plan of care shall document the frequency (e.g., length and number of sessions a month) and duration of services (length of time the service is required) services methods to be employed, the name of the health care professional or agency responsible for the service, and expected outcomes.

(d) The plan shall be reviewed at regular intervals consistent with Department regulations, accepted standards of professional practice and changes in the individual's condition.

$6000.163. Definitions.

The following definitions apply to all therapies and specialized services that are approved by the County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Program:

(1) Under the 2176 Waiver Program, including visiting nurse services.

(2) Under the Family Resource Services Program (55 Pa. Code CH. 6350) and subsequent Family Support Services policy bulletins.
(3) Under any other program or service administered by the County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Program, including community residential services, adult day services, and early intervention services.

Therapy - A therapy consists of one of the following services:

(1) Physical therapy provided by a licensed physical therapist based on either documentation or a prescription for a specific therapy program by a physician.

(2) Occupational therapy by a registered occupational therapist based on either documentation or a prescription for a specific therapy program by a physician.

(3) Speech/language therapy provided by a licensed speech therapist or certified audiologist upon examination and recommendation by a certified or certification-eligible audiologist or a licensed speech therapist.

(4) Visual/mobility therapy provided by a trained visual or mobility specialist/instructor based on an evaluation by a trained mobility specialist/instructor who has recommended a specific therapy program.

(5) Behavior therapy provided by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist based on an evaluation by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist who has recommended a specific therapy program.

(6) Visiting nurse services provided by a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse based on a prescription by a physician for a specific therapy program.

Specialized services - Specialized services, some of which have taken on the name of a therapy, are recognized and reimbursable by the Department for individuals requiring such services, but are not considered therapies for the purpose of this bulletin. Specialized services include but are not limited to: nutrition services, disease prevention procedures, medications training, medical supplies and equipment, family planning, behavioral assessment and related program development, training, supervision and evaluation. A specialized service must be needed for the habilitation of the individual. Habilitation means "health, social, and other services needed to insure optimal functioning of persons with mental retardation in their home and community" (42 CFR 440.180 and Fed. Reg. Vol. 46, No. 190, Oct. 1, 1981). The same administrative controls which are applicable to specialized therapies in §6000.163 (relating to definitions) also apply to specialized services.

§6000.164. Administrative controls.

The County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Administrator will ensure that all of the following administrative controls are in place for all therapy and specialized services:

(1) That the need for service is documented by a written assessment and recommendation for the service by the individual's interdisciplinary team.
(2) That the service incorporated in the individual's plan is focused on supporting the recipient, family and staff to ameliorate the targeted condition to the greatest extent possible.

(3) That the service is provided at a duration and frequency which meets the needs of the recipient as indicated in the recipient's individual plan.

(4) That the service is terminated or changed based on regular reviews by the qualified professional and the County case manager at intervals consistent with accepted standards of professional practice.

(5) That appropriate safeguards are implemented to protect the recipient's rights to treatment and choice.

(6) That services meet all applicable State, Federal and professional standards and requirements.

(7) That the provider is qualified to provide the services and documentation of the provider's qualifications is maintained by the County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Program, or its designee.

(8) That services are coordinated, reviewed and monitored through the County's case management system.

§6000.165. Department funding participation.

(a) Some therapies and other specialized services may be available through funding streams apart from the County's community mental retardation allocation. In keeping with the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Act of 1966, these sources of funding need to be explored and exhausted prior to funding by the County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Program. An example of a potential funding source is the Medical Assistance Program, particularly Home Health Services under the State's Medical Assistance Plan, for individuals eligible for these benefits.

(b) Funding for therapies and specialized services authorized by the County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Administrator is eligible for 100% State funding when the recipient receives services in a community residential facility or other service which qualifies as a "new service" under Section 507 of the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Act of 1966. Funding for therapies and specialized services authorized by the County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Administrator when criteria for 100% State funding participation are not met is eligible for 90% State funding.

(c) Therapy and other specialized services are eligible for Federal financial participation under the 2176 Waiver program in accordance with the conditions set forth in the Department's approved waiver proposal.

§6000.165. Fiscal reporting.

(a) As a general principle, costs for therapies and specialized services shall be applied to the cost center where costs can be readily classified.
(b) County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Programs shall report the cost and utilization of therapy and specialized services received by individuals receiving a community residential service under the community residential cost center on the Annual Income and Expenditure Report.

(c) County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Programs shall report the cost and utilization of all therapy and specialized services for all other recipients on the Annual Income and Expenditure Report under the Family Resource Services cost center. If the service was included as part of a negotiated services rate it need not be separately identified as a therapy or specialized service and reported separately. For example, if the service was provided as part of an early intervention service, the costs would be reported under the early intervention cost center.

(d) County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Programs shall report annual specialized therapy costs as requested by HCFA for the 2176 Waiver Program in accordance with Reporting Instructions issued by the Department.

OBSELETE BULLETIN:

Mental Retardation Bulletin #99-81-53, issued December 23, 1981, titled "CLA Core Team Guidelines."