

Services Management Communication Bulletin #7 (1/12/05)

Dear Providers:

Here are a few updates on some important issues:

Second Notice: Letters of Authorization

At present, all Letters of Authorization (LOAs) are automatically e-mailed to the provider at the provider's e-mail address on file at Western Highlands Network (WHN). We now have the capability to send an LOA to multiple provider e-mail addresses. If you wish to have your LOAs sent to more than one address, or if you change your e-mail address, please contact your representative in the Provider Network Development department. It is essential that you always have an accurate e-mail address on-file at WHN to ensure that you receive your LOA. As a contractor of Western Highlands Network, you should have an e-mail address for this purpose. If you do not, contact Provider Network Development immediately so appropriate arrangements can be made.

Beginning on January 10, we will no longer fax a copy of the LOA to the case manager/case responsible agency. Instead we will begin e-mailing LOAs to these individuals and agencies so they can continue to track those authorizations. There are a couple of issues to be aware of:

1. If you submit electronic Service Authorization Requests (SARs), you must include an e-mail address on the SAR in order to proceed with the submission of the request. The copy of the LOA will be sent to that e-mail address.
2. If you submit paper Service Authorization Requests (SARs), you must include an e-mail address on the paper SAR. The copy of the LOA will be sent to that e-mail address. If you fail to include an e-mail address on the paper SAR, it will be administratively denied.

We hope that these changes will result in accurate communications that keep case providers and responsible agencies informed about the status of SARs. We hope through this process it will reduce your need to contact WHN to find out the status of an authorization. All providers and case responsible agencies will now be electronically notified via e-mail about the status of each request. Please consult these e-mails to track the status of SARs. If you have any questions or concerns please let us know.

Confirmation of Receipt of SAR

Beginning on January 12, we will e-mail the provider and case manager when a SAR has been received and accepted for review. "Acceptance" means that the SAR is complete and accurate, and there is a PCP, demographics, and an IPRS form on file at WHN.

Second Notice: Notification of Out of Home Community Placement for Children/Adolescents

Last year, the NC Legislature passed a law which requires the completion of the "Notification of Out of Home Community Placement for Children/Adolescents" form when a child is placed out-of-home. Originally, Western Highlands Network required the submission of this form to the Services Management Department when a request for residential placement was reviewed. At the request of providers, we relaxed this requirement and simply asked providers to complete the form and we would check compliance during provider reviews. We have been advised informally at the State-level that generally the forms are not being completed statewide. Additionally, our initial provider reviews have found a pattern of non-compliance in completing the form. Therefore, effective immediately, we are re-instituting the requirement that the provider must send us the form when requesting residential services, so that we know it has been sent to the appropriate officials, per the requirements stated on the form. No residential service will be authorized without the submission of the "Notification of Out-of-Home Community Placement for Children/Adolescents" form.

Some providers have expected WHN to send the form the schools, etc. Although you are required to submit a copy of the form to WHN, the provider is responsible for sending the form to all the parties who are outlined on the form. Attached to this e-mail are a number of resources about the notification responsibility. We will put them on the WHN website too.

PCP Target Dates

We continue to get lots of PCPs with expired target dates. We will not approve PCPs (and therefore, any requested service) on PCPs that have expired dates. Please check you PCPs before sending them to Services Management.

Stacking SARs

Numerous providers are attempting to save time by stacking SARs. For example, case management may only be approved in 90-day increments. So providers send in 2 requests: one for January through March, and another for April through June. The service authorization process constitutes an affirmation of medical necessity, therefore, we cannot authorize a service before the provider has completed their required UR to determine medical necessity. In the example above, you may submit a SAR anytime in March for the 90-day period April through June.

Electronic SAR Users

BUI SAR users now have the capability to amend a SAR. So if you have an approved SAR for 90-days of 90800 and you need additional sessions, simply go to the approved SAR and use the amend button to add units. This will generate an electronic SAR requesting the additional units.

Reminder: If you send us an electronic SAR, you should no longer fax us a copy of that SAR. If you do, it will create a duplicate request, so please don't.