

MEDICAL ASSOCIATES HEALTH PLANS AND HEALTH CHOICES HEALTH CARE SERVICES POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

POLICY TITLE: MENTAL HEALTH/SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER ACCESS STANDARDS

POLICY STATEMENT: Medical Associates Health Plans (MAHP) and Health Choices (HC) has established this policy to assure medically necessary access to members needing behavioral health and/or substance use disorder services.

PROCEDURE

1. All MAHP Tri-State Health members have open access to Medical Associates Clinic (MAC) Behavioral Health Department and contracted providers for behavioral health. Members not in the Tri-State Health network, refer to the corresponding network directory to find contracted providers for behavioral health services/substance use disorder providers.
2. Requests for out of plan mental health/substance use disorder will be triaged through the MAHP and HC Health Care Services Department. A Physician or appropriate Behavioral Health Practitioner is available to review these requests as needed.
3. The mental health/substance use disorder request for service is assessed for emergency vs. urgent vs. routine needs of the member and triaged as follows:
 - A member with life-threatening emergency needs has access to care immediately and is directed to the nearest ER.
 - Example: A member who is threatening suicide or endangering the lives of others.
 - A member with non-life-threatening emergency needs has access to care within 6 hours.
 - Example: A member is exhibiting erratic and/or irrational behavior and requires supervision to prevent harm to him/herself or other: hallucinations; severe mood swings; increased use of alcohol or drugs.
 - A member with urgent needs has access to care within 48 hours.
 - Example: A member experiencing new or recent changes in symptoms resulting in significant dysfunction in activities of daily living and/or significant relationships, but not an immediate threat to him/herself or others: loss of employment; death in family; news of a serious illness; etc.
 - A member with routine care needs (e.g. counseling appointment and/or medication management) has access to care within 10 business days.
 - Example: A member whose symptoms interfere with daily living and/or significant relations (e.g., family, work, school).

MAHP and HC members needing access to care after hours may contact the Patient Services department. Patient Services department is staffed by Registered Nurses, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Patient Services has access to protocols approved by Psychiatry and can contact the on-call Psychiatrist or member's treating Psychiatrist as indicated.

4. Members with life-threatening emergency needs will be authorized for emergency care per Health Care Services Emergency Room Usage Policy.

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5. If the emergency visit results in an admission, the Health Care Services (HCS) nurse will review the admission, perform concurrent review and initiate discharge planning according to HCS Authorization and Referral Management and Utilization Management Review Policies. Health Care Services staff will utilize a Physician or appropriate Behavioral Health Practitioner as indicated to provide direction in determining member's need for ongoing care and discharge planning.
6. Referral information is entered into the information system by the Health Care Services staff and letters sent as indicated.
7. For MAHP Commercial Members in Illinois, Illinois statute requires access to inpatient/residential or outpatient mental health or substance use disorder services within time and distance travel standards of 60 minutes or 60 miles from the Member's residence. If there is no in-network facility or provider available for timely and proximate access to treatment, HCS will authorize appropriate out-of-network care at the in-network cost sharing benefit level.
8. Treatment plans from the treating provider(s) are reviewed and additional visits are authorized based on each individual case.
9. During concurrent review for an out of area admission, the HCS nurse will ensure the member has a scheduled f/u appointment to occur within 7 days after discharge.

Original:	02/00	Revised:	03/06	Revised:	01/12	Revised:	01/19
Revised:	05/00	Revised:	03/07	Reviewed:	02/13	Revised:	01/20
Reviewed:	05/01	Revised:	09/07	Reviewed:	01/14	Revised:	07/21
Revised:	01/02	Reviewed:	03/08	Revised:	02/15	Revised:	07/22
Revised:	03/03	Reviewed:	03/09	Revised:	02/16		
Reviewed:	03/04	Reviewed:	02/10	Revised:	10/17		
Revised:	03/05	Reviewed:	02/11	Revised:	02/18		