



C A L I F O R N I A D E P A R T M E N T O F

Mental Health

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June 17, 2010

DMH INFORMATION NOTICE NO.: 10-14

TO: LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM CHIEFS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
CHAIRPERSONS, LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH BOARDS

SUBJECT: MENTAL HEALTH PLAN COVERAGE OF SPECIALTY MENTAL
HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDED BY PSYCHOLOGISTS

REFERENCE: WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 14131.10

The purpose of this Information Notice is to clarify for Mental Health Plans (MHPs) coverage of services provided by psychologists under the Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Services Waiver Program.

Welfare and Institutions Code Section 14131.10 eliminated the optional psychology benefit in the Fee-For-Service/Medi-Cal (FFS/MC) program administered by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) effective July 1, 2009. In June 2009, DHCS issued Medi-Cal Provider Bulletin #405 explaining this coverage reduction. This provider bulletin can be found at:
<http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/publications/bulletins/psy/archive/pdf/psy20090601.pdf>.

Some MHPs have interpreted this change in coverage in the FFS/MC program to mean that specialty mental health services provided by psychologists are no longer covered services in the Specialty Mental Health Services Waiver Program and have used this statute and provider bulletin to support discontinuing specialty mental health services provided by psychologists. This change in coverage, however, only applies to the FFS/MC program and does not affect services provided to beneficiaries receiving services under the Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Services Waiver Program that are claimed through the Short-Doyle/Medi-Cal system.

MHPs continue to have discretion as to the provider types they designate to provide specialty mental health services in accordance with state law as long as they ensure access to medically necessary specialty mental health services as defined at Title 9, California Code of Regulations, Section 1810.247. Psychologists remain a provider

type that can provide specialty mental health services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries that meet medical necessity criteria to receive specialty mental health services.

If you have questions regarding this information notice, please contact your County Programs Technical Assistance representative. A current list of county assignments can be found at: http://www.dmh.ca.gov/Services_and_Programs/Local_Program_Support/County_Technical_Assistance.asp.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by

STEPHEN W. MAYBERG, Ph.D.
Director

cc: Dina Kokkos-Gonzales, Chief, DHCS Waiver Branch
Mark Heilman, Acting Deputy Director, Community Services Division
Sophie Cabrera, Chief, DMH Local Program Support
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