



State of New Jersey
Department of Human Services
Division of Medical Assistance & Health Services

NEWSLETTER

Volume 28 No. 21

November, 2018

TO: Independent Clinics – **For Action**
Managed Care Organizations – **For Information Only**

SUBJECT: Billing for Social Work Student Interns

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

PURPOSE: To provide clarification concerning the use of, and subsequent billing for, social work student interns in an Independent Clinic-Mental Health or Independent Clinic-Drug/Alcohol setting.

BACKGROUND: With the implementation of Medicaid coverage for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) services, there was a need to address which standards to apply to the various student interns utilized in independent clinics for mental health and SUD treatment services. Newsletter Volume 28, No. 09 addressed this topic. However, this newsletter inadvertently created additional confusion concerning the use of social work interns. This Newsletter shall clarify services that may or may not be billed when provided by social work interns working in an independent clinic.

ACTION: Only staff possessing the appropriate clinical background and educational qualifications (determined by the licensing board governing their clinical discipline) may provide the diagnosis, assessment and treatment of clients with SUD, mental health or co-occurring disorders.

Independent clinics, who utilize a variety of licensed practitioners and interns from varying specialties, rely on licensing boards to establish what is, or is not, allowed to be performed within the individual's scope of work. The same practice applies to social work interns. Social work interns may perform only those functions that are allowable as determined by their profession's licensing board in order to allow a proper clinical experience. The licensing board defers to the Council on Social Work Education to determine those functions that require supervision and the level the supervision that shall be provided.

Under N.J.A.C. 13:44G-1.2, "clinical social work" means the professional application of social work methods and values in the assessment and psychotherapeutic counseling of individuals, families, or groups. Only staff possessing the appropriate clinical background and educational qualifications from the appropriate clinical discipline may provide the diagnosis, assessment and treatment of clients with mental health, substance abuse or co-occurring disorders. N.J.S.A 45:15BB-5 defines a social work intern as "a student enrolled in an educational program accredited, or in candidacy for accreditation, by the Council on Social Work Education, if the student is practicing as part of a supervised course of study and is clearly designated by the title 'social work

intern”. This statute authorizes social work interns to be exempt from the provisions of the scope of practice regulations authorized in N.J.A.C. 13:44G (NJ State Board of Social Work Examiners Regulations) so long as they meet the above stated requirements. Therefore, supervised social work interns are eligible to provide clinical social work functions.

As a result, services provided by social work interns during the clinical portion of their course of study shall be reimbursable by NJ FamilyCare as long as the services meet all requirements for billing other than “provided by a licensed clinician” and as long as all documentation is co-signed by the supervising licensed professional. Supervision requirements for student interns in social work are set forth by the appropriate educational institution and the appropriate regulatory board for licensed professionals.

If there are any questions regarding the information listed in this Newsletter, please contact The Office of Customer Service at 609-631-4642.

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