



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

NEWSLETTER

Volume 33 No. 07

April 2023

TO: DIR Providers, Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, Home Care Providers, and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) – **For Action**

SUBJECT: Provision of the Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-Based Model (DIR)

EFFECTIVE: April 1, 2023

PURPOSE: The Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS) is expanding the range of professionals who are eligible to provide Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-Based Model (DIR) services to support families with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD refers to a collection of neurodevelopmental disorders characterized by communication challenges, repetitive behaviors, and limited social skills. For the purposes of eligibility, these services are available to any NJ FamilyCare (NJFC) child, under the age of 21, who has been diagnosed with ASD, as defined by ICD-10 diagnosis codes F84.0 through F84.9, by a qualified healthcare provider.

BACKGROUND: New Jersey provides DIR services under the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit which the provision of all medically necessary services needed to correct and ameliorate health conditions for Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare members under the age of twenty-one. To meet the needs of the Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare Autistic population, Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare is expanding how DIR services may be provided.

ACTIONS: Effective April 1, 2023, DMAHS is expanding who can provide DIR services. DIR services may now be provided by individuals with a DIR certification and a minimum of a high school diploma when supervised by a master's-level practitioner with an advanced certification in DIR. New providers who possess less than a bachelor's degree must be supervised. Supervised providers must be certified to provide DIR by a certification/endorsement recognized by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and possess, at a minimum, a high school diploma, or equivalent. Reimbursement for supervision of each provider at this level shall be for a minimum of 1 hour per week, but not to exceed 2 hours per week.

Treatment assessment and treatment plan revision can only be completed by a licensed master's - level clinician whose scope of practice allows for assessment and treatment

planning. These individuals are known as DIR Qualified Healthcare Providers (QHPs). Only QHPs shall review/revise the treatment plan while supervising the DIR provider. Supervision services will be billed using 96156EP26 in 15-minute units. Supervision services are billed concurrently with the services being provided by the DIR provider utilizing 96158EP through 96171EP. Supervision must be provided face-to-face.

For individuals enrolled in a Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare managed care organization (MCO), the MCO shall be responsible for providing all autism services through their managed care network contracted providers. For all individuals enrolled in Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare fee-for-service (FFS) Medicaid, but waiting to be enrolled with a MCO, the State shall be responsible for coverage of all medically necessary autism services through the Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare FFS program until the individual is enrolled in the MCO.

Claims for any DIR services billed to a MCO shall report the procedure codes identified in this Newsletter. For those services provided by providers who are already a MCO network provider, the provider need only seek authorization to provide and bill for these services from the child's MCO. For providers not under contract with a managed care organization, the provider must request a "single case" provider agreement from the MCO. This agreement will allow the provider to continue to provide these services while they contract with the MCO to ensure continuity of care.

What is DIR?

DIR provides the foundational framework for understanding human development and the critical role of social-emotional development. This development begins at birth and continues throughout the remainder of the lifespan. It allows providers to understand how each person individually perceives and interacts with their environment. The key components of DIR involve establishing emotional connections and established relationships to contribute to the individual's unique development and most importantly, understanding how an individual interacts and develops their relationships can be used to promote healthy development and improved fulfillment of the child's potential.

Provision of DIR Services

Once an individual is clinically diagnosed with ASD, the MCO shall authorize a QHP to assess the child for the development of a proposed treatment plan. The QHP shall be licensed in NJ with the ability to assess within their scope of practice. They shall be certified by a nationally accredited credentialing body approved by DHS or be a recognized provider of continuing education listed in the grid below. Qualified DIR providers must be a NJFC Medicaid provider (FFS and/or managed care). Supervised providers must be certified in DIR by a nationally accredited credentialing body or by a recognized provider of continuing education.

Intervention Model		Credentialing Organization
DIR	DIR/Floortime- Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-based Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary Council on Development and Learning (ICDL) • Profectum Foundation • The PLAY Project • Greenspan Floortime Approach
DRBI	RDI- Relationship Development Intervention	<u>The RDI Professional Training Program</u>
	DMAI- Clinical, Developmental Models of Autism Intervention	Montclair State University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of the Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health
DRBI	Infant Mental Health Endorsements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NJAIMH- Level III and IV Infant Mental Health Endorsed- Alliance for IMH
NDBI	ESDM- Early Start Denver Model	ESDM Certified

Examples of DIR specialties, qualifications and credentialing requirements are listed in the table below.

DIR services shall be provided and billed using the following CPT procedure codes:

2020 Health Behavior Intervention Services	Description
96156EP (per diem) 96156EP26 (15 mins)	Health behavior assessment or re-assessment Supervision/treatment plan modification
96158EP (30 mins) 96159EP (additional 15 mins)	Health behavior intervention, initial 30 mins Health behavior intervention, each additional 15 mins
96164EP (30 mins) 96165EP (additional 15 mins)	Health behavior intervention, initial 30 mins Health behavior intervention, each additional 15 mins
96167EP (30 mins) 96168EP (additional 15 mins)	Health behavior intervention, family, initial 30 mins Health behavior intervention, family, each additional 15 mins
96170EP (30 mins) 96171EP (additional 15 mins)	Health behavior intervention, initial 30 mins Health behavior intervention, each additional 15 mins

DIR services shall be provided in 15 minute or 30 minute units by the allowable provider specialties only. EPSDT services are provided to meet individual medical necessity and do not allow for the denial of services based on preset limitations. The following limits are for guidance purposes only and can be overridden when medically necessary based on individual need.

Code	Unit Description	Suggested Daily Limits
96156EP	Per diem	1 unit
96156EP26	15 minutes	2 units
96158EP	30 minutes	1 unit
96159EP	15 minutes	30 units
96164EP	30 minutes	1 unit
96165EP	15 minutes	22 units
96167EP	30 minutes	1 unit
96168EP	15 minutes	14 units
96170EP	30 minutes	1 unit
96171EP	15 minutes	14 units

Service Provision

- **Code 96156EP** is to be used for billing for development of the initial assessment and development of a treatment plan as well as reassessment and progress reporting by the QHP. Allowable activities include face-to-face time with the patient and/or caregivers to conduct assessments as well as non-face-to-face time for reviewing records, scoring and interpreting assessments, and writing the treatment plan or progress report.
- **Code 96156EP26** is to be used for supervision and/or treatment plan re-assessment and development by a QHP. Supervision may be provided by a clinician possessing a master's degree and an advanced DIR certification. Supervision must be face-to-face with the patient and the supervised employee present. Supervision is a minimum of 1-hour per week and a maximum of 2-hours per week. Treatment plan reassessment must be completed by a QHP.
- **Codes 96158EP-96159EP** are billed for behavior treatment by protocol, administered by, or under the direction of, a QHP, face-to-face with one patient.
- **Codes 96164EP-96165EP** are billed for group-led sessions, by or under the direction of a QHP, for a minimum of 2 individual patients to a maximum of 8 individual patients. Billing is made for each child in the group session.
- **Codes 96167EP-96168EP** are billed for guidance services provided by, or under the direction of, a QHP to a family with an autistic child with the child present. Family members/caretakers are taught to apply the same treatment protocols and interventions to reduce unwanted behaviors and reinforce appropriate behavior. The provider may bill for each set of parents/caregivers. In the event of two autistic children with the same parents/caregivers, billing is only allowed for the parents or caregivers once.
- **Codes 96170EP-96171EP** are billed for guidance services provided by, or under the direction of, a QHP to a family with an autistic child without the child present. Family members/caretakers are taught to apply the same treatment protocols and interventions to reduce unwanted behaviors and reinforce appropriate behavior.

The provider may bill for each set of parents/caregivers. In the event of two autistic children with the same parents/caregivers, you would only allow billing for the parents or caregivers once.

Location of DIR Services

DIR services may be provided in the therapist’s office, a community setting or a child’s home.

Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare FFS rates: The following FFS rates were determined based on the hourly rate for a QHP certified to provide DIR. Services are billed using only the modifiers listed below.

CPT Procedure Code*	NJFC Medicaid Maximum Fee Allowance
96156EP	\$200.00
96156EP26	\$25.00
96158EP	\$42.50
96159EP	\$21.25
96164EP	\$11.20
96165EP	\$5.60
96167EP	\$50.00
96168EP	\$25.00
96170EP	\$50.00
96171EP	\$25.00

Non-QHP DIR certified providers are reimbursed based on their educational level and training. Billers should use the appropriate modifier below. Providers will be paid the listed percentage of the QHP rates in the grid above. For example, a master’s-level clinician will bill 96158EPHO and will be paid \$36.13.

HS Diploma/Associates Degree	HM Modifier	70%
Bachelor’s degree	HN Modifier	80%
Master’s Degree	HO Modifier	85%
Doctoral Level	HP Modifier	90%

Prior authorization

Providers are required to contact the child’s Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare MCO to request authorization to provide DIR services. For children covered under the Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare FFS program, no prior authorization is required for DIR services.

Provider enrollment

Those providers currently providing DIR services who wish to become a NJ Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare provider must complete the **DIR Provider Enrollment Application** which may be found on the www.njmmis.com website by selecting Provider Enrollment Application and Provider Type to download a copy of the application. Non-QHP providers shall complete a DIR addendum and have their NPI number associated with the billing provider.

If there are any questions regarding coverage of DIR services, please contact the Medicaid/NJ Family Care Autism Inquiry Helpline at (609) 588-8522 or send an email to MAHS.ASDinquiries@dhs.nj.gov.

For questions regarding claims processing, please contact the Gainwell Technologies Provider Services Unit at 1-800-776-6334.

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