

SAN MATEO COUNTY
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES

DATE: July 3, 2001

POLICY: BHRIS 01-02
SUBJECT: Flexible/Alternative Work Hours
AUTHORITY: Divisional
AMENDED: August 13, 2008
SUPERCEDES: MH Policy 96-08, Alternative (9/80) Work Schedule

ATTACHMENT: Proposal for Flexible/Alternative Schedule

PURPOSE

To institute a work hours policy within San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) to assist in recruitment and retention of qualified staff, to comply with the County's goal of reducing commute time for San Mateo County employees, and to provide services at times that increase access for behavioral health clients and their families.

PRE-EXISTING AGREEMENTS

Staff working in Alcohol and Other Drug Services, prior to the merger with Mental Health Services in fall, 2007, may have had alternative work schedules approved that lie outside of the conditions of this policy. This policy applies to AOD staff employed after the policy amendment date.

POLICY

Priority will be given to proposals that extend employee working hours to improve direct services to consumers. In all proposals, administrative support and security factors must be addressed. Any alternative work plan must assure that there will be no diminution of service to our clients and that no additional or disproportionate share of work will fall on other employees as a result of staff members working an alternative schedule. *The usual alternative work schedule will be a 9/80 schedule.*

NOTE: The following information concerning submission of a specific proposal applies to any unit/team that has never submitted a request for flexible/alternative work hours to the BHRS personnel committee. Teams operating with an existing approved flexible/alternative work hours schedule are responsible for assuring that all principles and conditions described in this policy continue to be met.

Each BHRS Unit Chief/supervisor is responsible for developing a proposal for flexible/alternative work hours when this is requested by one or more employees. Each unit's "Proposal for Flexible/Alternative Schedule" must be reviewed and supported by all affected employees in the work/program unit and submitted the BHRS Personnel Committee for approval. No changes in employee schedules may be implemented prior to Personnel Committee approval. *When new employees are hired, changes to the schedule should be resubmitted to the Personnel Committee.* Proposals will be reviewed for compliance with the conditions outlined below and each unit's proposal must insure that the following outcomes can be met and/or maintained:

- Services accessibility is maintained or improved with minimum public access of 5 days per week, Monday – Friday, between the hours of 8AM – 5PM.
- Individual and team productivity as measured by recorded billable client services is maintained or enhanced.
- Individual and team attendance is maintained or enhanced.
- Support staff and direct service staff coordinate flexible/alternative schedules in order to minimize negative impacts of adjusted schedules on coverage and other staff functions.
- Flexible hours schedule improves client, other agency and community satisfaction and, at a minimum, does not result in an increase of complaints.
- All current requirements concerning medical chart management must be followed.
- Client and staff safety and security are provided for, especially during days/hours when there is minimal staffing due to the flexible hours schedule.

CONDITIONS

This flexible/alternative work hours policy is applicable to full-time employees and is not intended to change existing part-time work schedules or agreements. (Part-time employment is subject to definitions and terms in applicable Memoranda of Understanding.) Any and all forms of flexible hours and alternative work schedules must result in a total of 80 hours worked during each two-week pay period. Flexible hours options may include:

- Flexible work hours schedule - Employee start and end time will vary from routine business hours but a set (routine) schedule is developed and adhered to. The flexible work schedule(s) shall comprise 40 hours in a given week.
- Weekend work schedules - Employees may work a schedule that includes Saturday and/or Sunday provided that: (1) weekend services are used by clients and can be provided safely or (2) the employee's work assignment can be appropriately and effectively performed outside of a regular business schedule.

- Alternative 9/80 Schedule - Each employee works a total of 80 hours during a two-week pay period and an employee's off day must be the same day of the week as his/her 8 hour day. A declaration of work week form must be completed and signed.
- Telecommuting - San Mateo County telecommuting policy and procedures, including Mental Health Policy 96-07, Telecommuting, must be followed.
- For adjusted schedules, special conditions apply for holidays. Employees can be credited with no more than 8 hours for holidays and when a holiday falls on a scheduled 10 or 9 hour work day, the employee must use accrued vacation, compensatory or holiday time for the additional one or two hours. Alternatively, the employee may work a regular work schedule of 10 eight-hour days during the pay period with the holiday.
- Employees on flexible/alternative schedules who attend training courses may be required, at the discretion of their supervisor, to revert to a regular schedule of 10 eight-hour days during the pay period in which the training occurs.

DEFINITION OF 9/80 WORK SCHEDULE

Over a two-week pay period an employee works four nine-hour days with one day off (36 hours) in one week and four nine-hour days plus one eight-hour day in the other week (44 hours). This results in a total of 80 hours worked during the two-week pay period.

- The employee will work a full nine-hour work day, not including meal times.
- If providing direct services to clients, employees must be able to schedule all clients within the workweek without inconvenience to clients.
- The employee's request must fit with the unit's overall plan for adequate staff coverage. Staff requests for alternative work schedules will be coordinated at the unit/team level. When an employee is working in two units, both unit chiefs must approve the plan.
- The modified work week must be arranged around team meetings and other meetings that are essential for the employee to attend in order to function effectively in the position.
- In the planned absence of a clinician, his/her clients must be able to have contact with another clinician with whom they are familiar.
- The employee must remain current in his/her paperwork and demonstrate that he/she can achieve and maintain targeted productivity standards. Employees must meet this criteria in order to work an alternative work week.
- In work units with four workers or less, no more than one worker will schedule the same regular day off.
- No person will be permitted to work for out-of-classification pay solely because of the absence of a supervisor on a regularly scheduled 9/80 day, or due to an assignment to open or close an office.

- Employees on the 9/80 schedule will be required to make the following holiday adjustments:
 1. Work 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday-Friday in the week that contains a schedule holiday off, or
 2. Retain their 9/80 schedule and charge their time as follows:
 - a. If the holiday falls on the employee’s regularly scheduled day off, the employee will receive eight (8) hours added to this/her holiday balance (to be used within two years).
 - b. If the holiday falls on the employee’s regularly scheduled nine (9) hour work day, the employee will receive eight (8) hours pay and will be charged one (1) hour vacation, compensatory time or accrued holiday time.

Employees working a flexible/alternative schedule must sign a “Staff Agreement and Support for Proposed Flexible/Alternative Work Schedule. (page 3 of Attachment)

PROCEDURE

1. Proposals for flexible hours must be developed with consideration for the impact of such changes on the functioning of support staff, direct service staff and supervisory staff. Units are encouraged but not required to use the attached “Proposal for Flexible/Alternative Schedule” format.
2. Each unit’s flexible schedule proposal must contain the following elements and assurances:
 - a. Description of current vs. proposed hours of operation and chart of proposed staffing pattern of unit/program that indicates coverage for all staffing categories- support staff, service providers and unit administrative/management staff.
 - b. For units housed in clinics with multiple services or mental health teams, and/or sharing services of support staff, evidence of consultation regarding safety and support services with co-located teams.
 - c. Chart of proposed work schedule for each employee indicating any flexible schedule or telecommuting accommodations.
 - d. Statement regarding how the unit/program’s services will be maintained or improved. (Note: small units are encouraged to collaborate with other units/services to develop flexible scheduling plans.) This statement shall include:
 - Anticipated positive outcomes for clients, community and staff.
 - Potential problems or negative results of the proposed change with indication for how these anticipated problems will be proactively addressed.

- Assurance of client access to clinical staff for at least regular business hours (8AM-5PM, Monday-Friday). Proposals that include provisions for expanded hours are encouraged.
- e. Safety Plan must be attached and should indicate any changes or special provisions required as a result of scheduling accommodations/changes.
 - f. Current Annual Performance (productivity) Agreements must be negotiated and signed by each employee and attached to the Flexible Hours Plan. If an employee has not achieved annual productivity goals, s/he is not necessarily precluded from participation in an alternative schedule. Participation is subject to the concurrence of the supervisor and requires the negotiation and submission of a mutually agreed performance improvement plan to supplement the Annual Performance Agreement.
 - g. Satisfactory Attendance Standards – Each proposal must include a provision that employees will achieve and maintain a satisfactory attendance record.
 - h. A request for flexible schedule and agreement is to be signed by each employee in the work unit and attached to request.
3. Flexible scheduling proposals are to be submitted simultaneously to the service area manager and the Assistant BHRS Director who acts as chair of the Personnel Committee. Every effort will be made to act on each proposal within two weeks of submission. Incomplete proposals may be returned to the Unit Chief/Supervisor with a request for additional information or clarification.

Approved: _____
 Louise Rogers, Director
 Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

Reviewed: _____

