

SAN MATEO COUNTY
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES

DATE: February 13, 2008

BHRS POLICY: 08-03

SUBJECT: Practice Guidelines

AUTHORITY: Title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 438.236, and
DMH Letter No.: 04-07

SUPERSEDES: Prior Existing Practice

PURPOSE

To define a process for the development, dissemination and ongoing evaluation of clinical practice guidelines.

DEFINITION

Practice Guidelines – a set of strategies, techniques, and treatment approaches that support or lead to a specific standard of care, and that guides mental health systems, clinical care, and professions in their relationship to consumers [Wiche Mental Health Report, 1997 (adapted)]

POLICY

San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) will adopt practice guidelines that comply with regulatory requirements, cited above. Practice guidelines:

- Are based on valid and reliable clinical evidence or a consensus of health care professionals in the particular field;
- Consider the needs of beneficiaries of the Mental Health Plan (MHP);
- Are adopted in consultation with contracting health care professionals;
- Are reviewed and updated periodically as appropriate; and
- Are disseminated to all affected providers and, upon request, to beneficiaries of the MHP and to other consumers served by BHRS.

BHRS will ensure that decisions for utilization management, enrollee education, coverage of services, and other areas to which the guidelines apply are consistent with the guidelines.

BHRS will develop, implement and maintain written policies and procedures that describe at least two practice guidelines that have been adopted by the system. The practice guidelines policies and procedures will illustrate how the specific elements listed above are addressed and the process to ensure that these policies and procedures are reviewed and updated as necessary.

General Guidelines for the Use of Practice Guidelines
(Adapted from Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Practice Parameters)

- Practice guidelines represent critical factors to be considered in the provision of care, but are not comprehensive treatment guidelines. An in-depth knowledge of the clinical skills essential for the provision of quality mental health services to consumers should result from ongoing clinical training and regular review of relevant literature.
- These guidelines represent the consensus among San Mateo County BHRS clinicians and experts.
- These guidelines apply regardless of the funding source for the treatment.
- These guidelines in no way substitute for the consumer/clinician dialogue and consumer respect that is at the core of sound clinical practice.
- These guidelines are not absolute, but practice outside of these guidelines requires justification, documentation, and in some instances, consultation.
- Any specialized technical and interpersonal skills required mandate specific education and supervision for all practitioners.
- Changes in current regimens made for the purpose of conformity with these guidelines should be initiated only after careful consideration of the original reasons for the current treatment.
- These guidelines reflect current interpretations of best practices, and may change as new information and techniques become available.
- Special efforts must be made to respect the unique values, spiritual beliefs, cultural and personal experiences that are at the core of working with all consumers.

Written policies and procedures that describe specific practice guidelines will be attached to this policy.

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

Reviewed: _____

