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## North Sound Mental Health Administration

### Section 1500 – Clinical: Choice or Change of Mental Health Care Provider (MHCP)

Authorizing Source: WAC 388-865-0345; NSMHA

Cancels:

See Also:

Providers must have a “policy consistent with” this policy

Responsible Staff: Quality Manager

Approved by: Executive Director

Date: 3/4/2009

Signature:

## **POLICY #1511.00**

### **SUBJECT: CHOICE OR CHANGE OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDER (MHCP)**

#### **PURPOSE**

To ensure that each individual receiving outpatient mental health services, funded by North Sound Mental Health Administration (NSMHA), has an MHCP (also known as a primary clinician) who is responsible to carry out the individualized service plan (ISP).

#### **POLICY**

At the beginning of services as well as during ongoing services, NSMHA and Community Mental Health Agencies (CMHAs) shall allow individuals, parents of individuals under the age of thirteen and guardians of individuals of all ages to select a primary clinician from the available CMHA staff within the NSMHA network. If the individual does not make a choice, the CMHA must assign a primary clinician no later than 15 working days following the request for mental health services or within timeframes specified below for changes in clinician. NSMHA encourages CMHAs to assign individuals to primary clinicians who are anticipated to provide services to the individual throughout the authorization period.

The individual may change primary clinicians in the first 90 days of enrollment and once during a twelve-month period for any reason. Any additional change of a primary clinician during a twelve-month period may be made with documented justification at the individual’s request by:

- a) Notifying the CMHA of his/her request for a change; and
- b) Identifying the reason for the desired change.

An individual whose request to change primary clinicians is denied or whose request for a specific primary clinician is not honored may pursue a complaint or grievance with the CMHA or NSMHA, or request an administrative hearing. Individuals may contact Ombuds services for assistance with the complaint or grievance process.

Should a change in primary clinician result from a CMHA or clinician decision (e.g., clinician resigning or taking a leave of absence, clinician being reassigned), the CMHA shall ensure that the individual and treatment team (which may include family members, other natural supports and/or other system staff) are informed of the change.

NSMHA requires that children and their parents/caregivers/families are served at the same CMHA whenever possible, if the family so chooses, and that adolescent individuals reaching the age of majority are provided continuity of care without service disruptions or mandatory changes in CMHA or primary clinician.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **Individual seeking change in primary clinician**

1. When an individual requests to change primary clinician, she/he is asked to communicate this desire to the primary clinician or the primary clinician's supervisor. Individuals may request a specific clinician during this process.
2. The individual will be notified within 10 days of the name of the new primary clinician or why a new primary clinician or requested clinician is not being assigned.
3. The current primary clinician's supervisor or designee will arrange for the first appointment with the new primary clinician.
4. If the individual's change in primary clinician is due to a complaint or grievance, this will be noted in the agency's complaint and grievance system.
5. Changes in primary clinician will be entered into the Management Information System (MIS) within 10 days of the change.

### **Primary clinician resigns or is on a leave of absence**

1. If a primary clinician resigns or will be going on a leave of absence, the primary clinician, supervisor or designee will ensure that the individual is aware of the new primary clinician before that clinician's departure. In the event that the new primary clinician is not known, the supervisor or designee will serve in the primary clinician role until a replacement is found. Individuals may request a specific clinician during this process.
2. If a primary clinician will be on an extended leave from the office (greater than 10 business days), that clinician will notify individuals assessed at Level 3 or above (in accordance with Child and Adolescent Level of Care Utilization System or Level of Care Utilization System document) and all members of their treatment teams. If that clinician is the only member from the agency serving the individual, he/she will also offer a meeting to all other team members. If an individual has another agency staff on his/her treatment team, a meeting offer is not required.
3. During the primary clinician's absence any member of the treatment team can ask for a team meeting if he/she feels it is necessary.
4. Changes in primary clinician will be entered into the MIS within 10 days of the change.

### **Agency decides to reassign primary clinician**

1. If a change in primary clinician is not by the individual's choice, the individual will be notified within 10 days by the primary clinician, supervisor or designee as to whom the new primary clinician will be. Individuals may request a specific clinician during this process.
2. The current primary clinician, supervisor or designee will arrange for the first appointment with the new primary clinician.
3. In the event that the new primary clinician is not known, the supervisor or designee will serve in the primary clinician role until a replacement is found.
4. Changes in primary clinician will be entered into the MIS within 10 days of the change.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None