

North Sound Behavioral Health Organization

Section 1500 – Clinical: Second Opinions

Authorizing Source: DBHR/North Sound BHO Contracts; WAC 388-877-0680

Cancels:

See Also: North Sound BHO Policies: #1510; #1522

Providers must comply with this policy & may develop individualized implementation guidelines as needed

Responsible Staff: Deputy Director

Approved by: Executive Director

Date: 12/19/2016

Signature:

POLICY #1520.00

SUBJECT: SECOND OPINIONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for requesting and providing a second opinion to an individual enrolled in Medicaid funded outpatient behavioral health services, regarding some aspect of behavioral health services that he/she is receiving from a North Sound Behavioral Health Organization (North Sound BHO) contracted Behavioral Health Agency (BHA).

POLICY

At any time during the course of behavioral health services, the principals to the services (e.g., individual, custodial parents of children under the age of 13 years, others with legal custody, a North Sound BHO contracted BHA, or a Behavioral Health Care Clinician) may submit a request for a second opinion regarding any clinical decision to North Sound BHO either verbally or in writing.

If other parties (family member[s], medical health provider) desire a second opinion, the request is made through the BHA. North Sound BHO contracted BHAs and Ombuds are available to assist individuals, custodial parents and legal guardians in accessing a timely second opinion.

Second opinions may be requested for many reasons, including situations in which:

1. There is a question regarding medical necessity;
2. There is a question regarding the reasonableness or necessity of recommended interventions and/or medications;
3. There is a question regarding a diagnosis or plan of care;
4. The clinical indications for a diagnosis are not clear or a diagnosis is in doubt due to conflicting test results; or
5. The service interventions in progress are not improving the condition of the individual within an appropriate period of time given the diagnosis and plan of care.

An individual is entitled to one (1) second opinion, per issue, per year.

The North Sound BHO informs individuals that they must not “no show” for their second opinion appointments. The North Sound BHO recognizes second opinion appointments use valuable resources. If an individual does miss his/her second opinion appointment, the North Sound BHO and the BHA will work together with the individual to meet his/her needs, but may need to set limits on continuing to schedule further appointments.

If an individual is not satisfied with a second opinion outcome, any additional opinion requests on the same issue, in the same year, must be submitted to North Sound BHO’s Medical Director to determine if an additional opinion is clinically appropriate. Unless approved by North Sound BHO’s Medical Director, an individual will not be entitled to a subsequent opinion until 12 months have passed since the second (most recent) opinion was rendered.

If an individual is not satisfied with the North Sound BHO's Medical Director's decision, the individual may file a grievance.

If an individual's clinical file contains more than one (1) clinical assessment about the issue in question, the most recent document will be considered a second opinion if:

1. It was conducted by a behavioral health provider in the same job class as the professional ("Same job class" means professionals who have the same or higher required credentials to perform the same functions); and
2. Both opinions were completed within the last 12 months.

Second opinions may only be rendered by professionals qualified to review and treat the behavioral health disorder in question.

Requests for referrals to BHAs outside North Sound BHO's network for second opinions will be considered only in the event the services requested are not available within the contracted network of BHAs.

The BHA providing the second opinion must be currently contracted with a State of Washington BHO to provide behavioral health services to individuals.

Disclosure: A consultative second opinion may not result in an individual's desired outcome. When the North Sound BHO Quality Specialist is preparing to schedule the second opinion, he/she will inform the individual the second opinion report will be given to the BHA which rendered the first opinion unless the individual specifically requests otherwise. However, a request by the individual not to share the second opinion with the first BHA limits North Sound BHO's ability to fully facilitate the process and consequently, may impact the desired outcome of the second opinion.

Types of Second Opinions:

1. Internal: The second opinion consultation is scheduled with, and completed by, a professional employed at the same BHA where the original opinion was rendered.
2. External: The second opinion consultation is scheduled with, and completed by, a professional employed at a BHA other than the one where the original was rendered.

PROCEDURES

Notifying Individuals of Second Opinion Rights

North Sound BHO's contracted BHAs are responsible for informing individuals of their right to a second opinion at the time of the initial assessment (through provision of the State of Washington Medicaid Benefit Booklet) and any time the individual expresses dissatisfaction with a particular clinical decision.

Requesting an Internal Second Opinion

1. With agreement from the individual, a BHA may arrange an internal second opinion for an individual.
2. When the decision is made to proceed with the BHA arrangement of the second opinion, the BHA must notify the North Sound BHO Quality Specialist of the individual's name, the individual's ProviderOne number and the reason for the second opinion per the individual.
3. North Sound BHO Quality Specialist will log the request on the Second Opinion Log.
4. The BHA will notify North Sound BHO Quality Specialist with the date, time and the second opinion consultant's name when the second opinion appointment is scheduled.
5. The BHA will send a copy of the second opinion report to North Sound BHO Quality Specialist who will record it in the individual's second opinion electronic file.
6. All second opinions shall be offered to occur as expeditiously as the individual's behavioral health disorder requires and no later than 30 calendar days from the date of the request unless the individual requests to postpone the second opinion to a date later than 30 days.

Requesting an External Second Opinion:

1. Upon receipt of external second opinion requests, or internal requests that the BHA has not been made aware of, the BHA, Ombuds or North Sound BHO will notify the North Sound BHO Quality Specialist who will review the request and arrange the second opinion consultation.
2. All second opinions shall be offered to occur as expeditiously as the individual's behavioral health disorder requires and no later than 30 calendar days from the date of the request unless the individual requests to postpone the second opinion to a date later than 30 days.

Second Opinion Outcomes & Dispositions

1. When the BHA giving the second opinion renders the report, they will contact the first BHA discuss the rationale of the second opinion unless the individual specifically requests otherwise.
2. After the second opinion report is rendered and distributed to all parties, there are different ways to proceed with any recommended services that are available within North Sound BHO's network of contracted BHAs and are medically necessary:*
 - a. The original BHA decides to follow the second opinion recommendation(s) and the individual continues with that BHA;
 - b. The individual requests a transfer to another BHA.
3. If, after discussion of the second opinion, the individual wishes to continue services with the first BHA, but the first BHA does not agree with the second opinion recommendation(s), the individual may still file a BHA or North Sound BHO level grievance.
4. If the medically necessary, covered service is unavailable within North Sound BHO's network of BHAs and an equivalent service or package of services does not meet the needs of the individual, then that service will be arranged (with the individual's agreement) by the original BHA.

**The fact the BHA furnishing the second opinion recommends a particular service, does not necessarily mean the recommended intervention is medically necessary or a North Sound BHO covered service. In addition, there are some North Sound BHO services that have additional procedures to follow after a recommendation before the service is made.*

Documentation & Distribution of Second Opinion Outcomes

All second opinions will be documented in a consultation report, which the BHA providing the second opinion shall make available to the individual, North Sound BHO and the BHA which provided the original opinion.

1. The BHA providing the second opinion consultation shall mail the individual a copy of the report or arrange an alternative method of conveying the report information to the individual within five (5) business days of the consultation.
2. The BHA providing the second opinion consultation shall mail a copy of the report to North Sound BHO within five (5) business days of the consultation.
3. North Sound BHO will make arrangements for a copy of the report to go to the original BHA within two (2) business days of receiving the report unless the individual specifically requests the original BHA does not receive a copy.

ATTACHMENTS

None