

North Sound Behavioral Health Organization

Section 1500 – Clinical:

Mental Health Professional (MHP) Requirements & Exception Requests

Authorizing Source: DBHR/North Sound BHO Contracts; WAC 388-865-0236 and RCW 71.24.260

See Also:

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

Approved by: Executive Director

Date: 12/19/2016

Responsible Staff: Deputy Director

Signature:

POLICY #1516.00

SUBJECT: MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL (MHP) REQUIREMENTS & EXCEPTION REQUESTS

PURPOSE

To delineate the requirements for clinicians to hold the status of a Mental Health Professional (MHP) and to describe the mechanisms put forth by the Washington State's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) under which clinicians may apply for and North Sound Behavioral Health Organization (North Sound BHO) may request MHP exceptions.

POLICY

Mental Health Professional (MHP) – Under Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 388-865-0238, an "MHP" is:

1. A psychiatrist, psychologist, psychiatric nurse, or social worker as defined in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 71.05 and 71.34;
2. A clinician who is licensed by the State of Washington Department of Health (DOH) as a mental health counselor, mental health counselor associate, marriage and family therapist, marriage and family therapist associate;
3. A clinician with a master's degree or further advanced degree in counseling or one of the behavioral sciences from an accredited college or university. Such person shall have, in addition, at least two (2) years of experience in direct treatment of persons with mental illness or emotional disturbance, such experience gained under the supervision of an MHP; or
4. A person who meets the waiver criteria of RCW 71.24.260, which was granted prior to 1986;
5. A person who had an approved waiver to perform the duties of an MHP that was requested by the Regional Support Network and granted by the Mental Health Division prior to July 1, 2001; or
6. A person who has been granted a time-limited exception of the minimum requirements of an MHP by DBHR, as detailed below.

If a clinician does not meet the definition of an MHP but the Behavioral Health Agency (BHA) needs the clinician to function in the role of an MHP, there is an option that allows this for which the clinician may qualify which is a MHP time-limited exception.

MHP Time-Limited Exception

A time-limited exception of the requirements of an MHP may be requested for a clinician with less than a master's degree level of training when there is a demonstrated need and it is established the clinician is qualified to perform the required functions based on verification of required education and training, including:

1. Bachelor of Arts or Sciences (BA or BS) degree from an accredited college or university; and,
2. Course work or training in making diagnoses, assessments and developing treatment plans; and
3. Documentation of at least two (2) years of direct treatment to persons with mental health disorders under the supervision of an MHP; and
4. A plan of action to become qualified as an MHP no later than two (2) years from the date of exception. Application for renewal is allowed.

PROCEDURE

Applying for a Time-Limited Exception

BHAs must complete the attached MHP Exception Request Form and include the following information:

1. Name, address and phone number of the BHA making request for the clinician;
2. Name of clinician (person for whom exception is being requested);
3. Affirmation the BHA is contracted with North Sound BHO;
4. Description of functions the clinician will be performing;
5. Statement of need for the exception;
6. Attachments of documentation to verify the following qualifications:
 - a. BA or BS degree from an accredited college or university (must reflect degree, year, and institution);
 - b. Course work or training in diagnoses, assessments, and developing treatment plans; and,
 - c. Signed documentation of at least two (2) years of direct treatment of persons with a mental health disorder under the supervision of an MHP.
7. A plan of action to ensure the clinician will become qualified as an MHP no later than two (2) years from the date of the exception approval;
8. Signed and dated assurance that periodic evaluations of the clinician's job performance are conducted.

In addition to the above information provided by the clinician, North Sound BHO will augment the application with the following before submitting it to DBHR:

1. Statement, based on verification of required education and training, the clinician is qualified, based on the clinician meeting the requirements listed above in items 6a–c;
2. Dated signature reflecting North Sound BHO approval.

The completed request form is faxed to North Sound BHO at 360-416-7017. Fax is to be titled: **MHP Exception Request.**

ATTACHMENTS

None