

135H.3 Nature of care.

1. *a.* A psychiatric medical institution for children shall provide shelter, food, supervision, care, assessment, evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, counseling, rehabilitative services, and related professional-directed services to youth who have a serious emotional disturbance, a substance use disorder, or both, with the intention of reducing or ameliorating the disorder, the symptoms of the disorder, or the effects of the disorder.

b. A psychiatric medical institution for children shall utilize a team of professionals to direct an organized program of diagnostic services, psychiatric services, nursing care, and rehabilitative services to meet the needs of residents in accordance with a medical care plan developed for each resident. The membership of the team of professionals may include but is not limited to an advanced registered nurse practitioner or a physician assistant. Social and rehabilitative services shall be provided under the direction of a qualified mental health professional.

2. If a youth is diagnosed with a biologically based mental illness as defined in [section 514C.22](#) and meets the medical assistance program criteria for admission to a psychiatric medical institution for children, the youth shall be deemed to meet the acuity criteria for medically necessary inpatient benefits under a group policy, contract, or plan providing for third-party payment or prepayment of health, medical, and surgical coverage benefits issued by a carrier, as defined in [section 513B.2](#), that is subject to [section 514C.22](#). Such medically necessary benefits shall not be excluded or denied as care that is substantially custodial in nature under [section 514C.22, subsection 8, paragraph "b"](#).

[89 Acts, ch 283, §4; 2009 Acts, ch 179, §182; 2011 Acts, ch 121, §7; 2011 Acts, ch 131, §151, 153; 2017 Acts, ch 148, §29; 2025 Acts, ch 86, §3](#)

Section amended