

441—78.16(249A) Community mental health centers. Payment will be approved for all reasonable and necessary services provided by a psychiatrist on the staff of a community mental health center. Payment will be approved for services provided by a clinical psychologist, social worker or psychiatric nurse on the staff of the center, subject to the following conditions:

78.16(1) Payment to a community mental health center will be approved for reasonable and necessary services provided to members by a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or psychiatric nurse on the staff of the center under the following conditions:

a. Services must be rendered under the supervision of a board-eligible or board-certified psychiatrist. All services must be performed under the supervision of a board-eligible or board-certified psychiatrist subject to the conditions set forth in 78.16(1) “*b*” with the following exceptions:

- (1) Services by staff psychiatrists, or
- (2) Services rendered by psychologists meeting the requirements of the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology as amended to July 1, 2026, or
- (3) Services provided by a staff member listed in this subrule performing the preliminary diagnostic evaluation of a member for voluntary admission to one of the state mental health institutes.

b. Supervisory process.

(1) Each patient shall have an initial evaluation completed that shall include at least one personal evaluation interview with a mental health professional, as defined under Iowa Code section 228.1. If the evaluation interview results indicate a need for an interview with a board-eligible or board-certified psychiatrist, then such referral shall be made. This must be accomplished before submission of the first claim for services rendered to that patient.

(2) Ongoing review and assessment of patients’ treatment needs, treatment plans, and the appropriateness of services rendered shall be assured through the peer review process in effect for community mental health centers, as directed by 2002 Iowa Acts, chapter 1120, section 13.

78.16(2) The treatment plans for and services rendered to patients of the center shall be evaluated and revised as necessary and appropriate, consistent with the standards of the peer review process described in subparagraph 78.16(1) “*b*”(1).

78.16(3) The peer review process and related activities, as described under subparagraph 78.16(1) “*b*” (1), are not payable as separate services under the Medicaid program. The center shall maintain the results of and information related to the peer review process, and these records shall be subject to audit by the department or its designees, as necessary and appropriate.

78.16(4) Clinical records of medical assistance patients shall be available to the carrier on request. All these records shall be held confidential.

78.16(5) At the time of application for participation in the program the center will be provided with a form on which to list its professional staff. The center shall report acquisitions or losses of professional staff to the carrier within ten days.

78.16(6) Payment to a community mental health center will be approved for day treatment services for persons aged 21 or over if the center is certified by the department for day treatment services, the services are provided on the premises of the community mental health center or satellite office of the community mental health center, and the services meet the standards outlined herein.

a. Community mental health centers providing day treatment services for persons aged 21 or over shall have available a written narrative providing the following day treatment information:

(1) Documented need for day treatment services for persons aged 21 and over in the area served by the program, including studies, needs assessments, and consultations with other health care professionals.

(2) Goals and objectives of the day treatment program for persons aged 21 and over that meet the day treatment program guidelines noted in 78.16(6) “*b*.”

(3) Organization and staffing including how the day treatment program for persons aged 21 and over fits with the rest of the community mental health center, the number of staff, staff credentials, and the staff’s relationship to the program, e.g., employee, contractual, or consultant.

(4) Policies and procedures for the program including admission criteria, patient assessment, treatment plan, discharge plan, postdischarge services, and the scope of services provided.

(5) Any accreditations or other types of approvals from national or state organizations.

(6) The physical facility and any equipment to be utilized.

b. Day treatment services for persons aged 21 and over shall be structured, long-term services designed to assist in restoring, maintaining or increasing levels of functioning, minimizing regression, and preventing hospitalization.

(1) Service components include training in independent functioning skills necessary for self-care, emotional stability and psychosocial interactions and training in medication management.

(2) Services are structured with an emphasis on program variation according to individual need.

(3) Services are provided for a period of three to five hours per day, three or four times per week.

c. Payment will be approved for day treatment services provided by or under the general supervision of a mental health professional. When services are provided by an employee or consultant of the community mental health center who is not a mental health professional, the employee or consultant shall be supervised by a mental health professional who gives professional direction and active guidance to the employee or consultant and who retains responsibility for member care. The supervision shall be timely, regular, and documented. The employee or consultant shall meet the following minimum requirements:

(1) Have a bachelor's degree in a human services related field from an accredited college or university; or

(2) Have an Iowa license to practice as a registered nurse with two years of experience in the delivery of nursing or human services.

d. Persons aged 18 through 20 with chronic mental illness as defined by rule 441—24.1(225A) can receive day treatment services under this subrule or subrule 78.16(7).

78.16(7) Payment to a community mental health center will be approved for day treatment services for persons aged 20 or under if the center is certified by the department for day treatment services and the services are provided on the premises of the community mental health center or satellite office of the community mental health center. Exception: Field trips away from the premises are a covered service when the trip is therapeutic and integrated into the day treatment program's description and milieu plan.

Day treatment coverage will be limited to a maximum of 15 hours per week. Day treatment services for persons aged 20 or under shall be outpatient services provided to persons who are not inpatients in a medical institution or residents of a group care facility licensed under 441—Chapter 114.

a. Program documentation. Community mental health centers providing day treatment services for persons aged 20 or under shall have available a written narrative that provides the following day treatment program information:

(1) Documented need for day treatment services for persons aged 20 or under in the area served by the program, including studies, needs assessments, and consultations with other health care professionals.

(2) Goals and objectives of the day treatment program for persons aged 20 or under that meet the guidelines noted in paragraphs "c" through "h" below.

(3) Organization and staffing including how the day treatment program for persons aged 20 or under fits with the rest of the community mental health center, the number of staff, staff credentials, and the staff's relationship to the program, e.g., employee, contractual, or consultant.

(4) Policies and procedures for the program including admission criteria, patient assessment, treatment plan, discharge plan, postdischarge services, and the scope of services provided.

(5) Any accreditations or other types of approvals from national or state organizations.

(6) The physical facility and any equipment to be utilized.

b. Program standards. Medicaid day treatment program services for persons aged 20 and under shall meet the following standards:

(1) Staffing shall:

1. Be sufficient to deliver program services and provide stable, consistent, and cohesive milieu with a staff-to-patient ratio of no less than one staff for each eight participants. Clinical, professional, and paraprofessional staff may be counted in determining the staff-to-patient ratio. Professional or clinical staff are those staff who are either mental health professionals as defined in rule 441—24.1(225A) or persons employed for the purpose of providing offered services under the supervision of a mental health professional. All other staff (administrative, adjunctive, support, nonclinical, clerical, and consulting staff or professional clinical staff) when engaged in administrative or clerical activities shall not be counted

in determining the staff-to-patient ratio or in defining program staffing patterns. Educational staff may be counted in the staff-to-patient ratio.

2. Reflect how program continuity will be provided.
3. Reflect an interdisciplinary team of professionals and paraprofessionals.
4. Include a designated director who is a mental health professional as defined in rule 441—24.1(225A). The director shall be responsible for direct supervision of the individual treatment plans for participants and the ongoing assessment of program effectiveness.
5. Be provided by or under the general supervision of a mental health professional. When services are provided by an employee or consultant of the community mental health center who is not a mental health professional, the employee or consultant shall be supervised by a mental health professional who gives direct professional direction and active guidance to the employee or consultant and who retains responsibility for member care. The supervision shall be timely, regular and documented. The employee or consultant shall have a bachelor's degree in a human services related field from an accredited college or university or have an Iowa license to practice as a registered nurse with two years of experience in the delivery of nursing or human services. Exception: Other certified or licensed staff, such as certified addiction counselors or certified occupational and recreational therapy assistants, are eligible to provide direct services under the general supervision of a mental health professional, but they shall not be included in the staff-to-patient ratio.

(2) There shall be written policies and procedures addressing the following: admission criteria; patient assessment; patient evaluation; treatment plan; discharge plan; community linkage with other psychiatric, mental health, and human service providers; a process to review the quality of care being provided with a quarterly review of the effectiveness of the clinical program; postdischarge services; and the scope of services provided.

(3) The program shall have hours of operation available for a minimum of three consecutive hours per day, three days or evenings per week.

(4) The length of stay in a day treatment program for persons aged 20 or under shall not exceed 180 treatment days per episode of care, unless the rationale for a longer stay is documented in the patient's case record and treatment plan every 30 calendar days after the first 180 treatment days.

(5) Programming shall meet the individual needs of the patient. A description of services provided for patients shall be documented along with a schedule of when service activities are available including the days and hours of program availability.

(6) There shall be a written plan for accessing emergency services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

(7) The program shall maintain a community liaison with other psychiatric, mental health, and human service providers. Formal relationships shall exist with hospitals providing inpatient programs to facilitate referral, communication, and discharge planning. Relationships shall also exist with appropriate school districts and educational cooperatives. Relationships with other entities such as physicians, hospitals, private practitioners, halfway houses, the department, juvenile justice system, community support groups, and child advocacy groups are encouraged. The provider's program description will describe how community links will be established and maintained.

(8) Psychotherapeutic treatment services and psychosocial rehabilitation services shall be available. A description of the services shall accompany the application for certification.

(9) The program shall maintain a distinct clinical record for each patient admitted. Documentation, at a minimum, shall include: the specific services rendered, the date and actual time services were rendered, who rendered the services, the setting in which the services were rendered, the amount of time it took to deliver the services, the relationship of the services to the treatment regimen described in the plan of care, and updates describing the patient's progress.

c. Program services. Day treatment services for persons aged 20 or under shall be a time-limited, goal-oriented active treatment program that offers therapeutically intensive, coordinated, structured clinical services within a stable therapeutic milieu. Time-limited means that the patient is not expected to need services indefinitely or lifelong, and that the primary goal of the program is to improve the behavioral functioning or emotional adjustment of the patient in order that the service is no longer necessary. Day treatment services shall be provided within the least restrictive therapeutically appropriate context and shall

be community-based and family focused. The overall expected outcome is clinically adaptive behavior on the part of the patient and the family.

At a minimum, day treatment services will be expected to improve the patient's condition, restore the condition to the level of functioning prior to onset of illness, control symptoms, or establish and maintain a functional level to avoid further deterioration or hospitalization. Services are expected to be age-appropriate forms of psychosocial rehabilitation activities, psychotherapeutic services, social skills training, or training in basic care activities to establish, retain or encourage age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate psychosocial, educational, and emotional adjustment.

Day treatment programs shall use an integrated, comprehensive and complementary schedule of therapeutic activities and shall have the capacity to treat a wide array of clinical conditions.

The following services shall be available as components of the day treatment program. These services are not separately billable to Medicaid, as day treatment reimbursement includes reimbursement for all day treatment components.

(1) Psychotherapeutic treatment services, including individual, group, and family therapy.

(2) Psychosocial rehabilitation services. Active treatment examples include but are not limited to individual and group therapy, medication evaluation and management, expressive therapies, and theme groups such as communication skills, assertiveness training, other forms of community skills training, stress management, chemical dependency counseling, education, and prevention, symptom recognition and reduction, problem solving, relaxation techniques, and victimization (sexual, emotional, or physical abuse issues).

Other program components may be provided, such as personal hygiene, recreation, community awareness, arts and crafts, and social activities designed to improve interpersonal skills and family mental health. Although these other services may be provided, they are not the primary focus of treatment.

(3) Evaluation services to determine need for day treatment prior to program admission. For persons for whom clarification is needed to determine whether day treatment is an appropriate therapy approach, or for persons who do not clearly meet admission criteria, an evaluation service may be performed. Evaluation services shall be individual and family evaluation activities made available to courts, schools, other agencies, and individuals upon request, who assess, plan, and link individuals with appropriate services. This service must be completed by a mental health professional. An evaluation from another source performed within the previous 12 months or sooner if there has not been a change may be substituted. Medicaid will not make separate payment for these services under the day treatment program.

(4) Assessment services. All day treatment patients will receive a formal, comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment of day treatment needs including, if applicable, a diagnostic impression based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders as amended to July 1, 2026. An assessment from another source performed within the previous 12 months may be used if the symptomatology is the same as 12 months ago. If not, parts of the assessment that reflect current functioning may be used as an update. Using the assessment, a comprehensive summation will be produced, including the findings of all assessments performed. The summary will be used in forming a treatment plan including treatment goals. Indicators for discharge planning, including recommended follow-up goals and provision for future services, should also be considered, and consistently monitored.

(5) The day treatment program may include an educational component as an additional service. The patient's educational needs shall be served without conflict from the day treatment program. Hours in which the patient is involved in the educational component of the day treatment program are not included in the day treatment hours billable to Medicaid.

d. Admission criteria. Admission criteria for day treatment services for persons aged 20 or under shall reflect the following clinical indicators:

(1) The patient is at risk for exclusion from normative community activities or residence.

(2) The patient exhibits psychiatric symptoms, disturbances of conduct, decompensating conditions affecting mental health, severe developmental delays, psychological symptoms, or chemical dependency issues sufficiently severe to bring about significant or profound impairment in day-to-day educational, social, vocational, or interpersonal functioning.

(3) Documentation is provided that the traditional outpatient setting has been considered and has been determined not to be appropriate.

(4) The patient's principal caretaker (family, guardian, foster family or custodian) must be able and willing to provide the support and monitoring of the patient, to enable adequate control of the patient's behavior, and must be involved in the patient's treatment. Persons aged 20 or under who have reached the age of majority, either by age or emancipation, are exempt from family therapy involvement.

(5) The patient has the capacity to benefit from the interventions provided.

e. Individual treatment plan. Each patient receiving day treatment services shall have a treatment plan prepared. A preliminary treatment plan should be formulated within 3 days of participation after admission, and replaced within 30 calendar days by a comprehensive, formalized plan utilizing the comprehensive assessment. This individual treatment plan should reflect the patient's strengths and weaknesses and identify areas of therapeutic focus. The treatment goals that are general statements of member outcomes shall be related to identified strengths, weaknesses, and clinical needs with time-limited, measurable objectives. Objectives shall be related to the goal and have specific anticipated outcomes. Methods that will be used to pursue the objectives shall be stated. The plan should be reviewed and revised as needed, but shall be reviewed at least every 30 calendar days. The treatment plan shall be developed or approved by a board-eligible or board-certified psychiatrist, a staff psychiatrist, physician, or a psychologist registered on the "National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology" as amended to July 1, 2026. Approval will be evidenced by a signature of the physician or health service provider.

f. Discharge criteria. Discharge criteria for the day treatment program for persons aged 20 or under shall incorporate at least the following indicators:

(1) In the case of patient improvement:

1. The patient's clinical condition has improved as shown by symptom relief, behavioral control, or indication of mastery of skills at the patient's developmental level. Reduced interference with and increased responsibility with social, vocational, interpersonal, or educational goals occurs sufficient to warrant a treatment program of less supervision, support, and therapeutic intervention.

2. Treatment goals in the individualized treatment plan have been achieved.

3. An aftercare plan has been developed that is appropriate to the patient's needs and agreed to by the patient and family, custodian, or guardian.

(2) If the patient does not improve:

1. The patient's clinical condition has deteriorated to the extent that the safety and security of inpatient or residential care is necessary.

2. Patient, family, or custodian noncompliance with treatment or with program rules exists.

g. Coordination of services. Programming services shall be provided in accordance with the individual treatment plan developed by appropriate day treatment staff, in collaboration with the patient and appropriate caretaker figure (parent, guardian, or principal caretaker), and under the supervision of the program director, coordinator, or supervisor.

(1) The program for each patient will be coordinated by primary care staff of the community mental health center. A coordinated, consistent array of scheduled therapeutic services and activities shall comprise the day treatment program. These may include counseling or psychotherapy, theme groups, social skills development, behavior management, and other adjunctive therapies. At least 50 percent of scheduled therapeutic program hours exclusive of educational hours for each patient shall consist of active treatment that specifically addresses the targeted problems of the population served. Active treatment shall be defined as treatment in which the program staff assume significant responsibility and often intervene.

(2) Family, guardian, or principal caretaker shall be involved with the program through family therapy sessions or scheduled family components of the program. They will be encouraged to adopt an active role in treatment. Medicaid will not make separate payment for family therapy services. Persons aged 20 or under who have reached the age of majority, either by age or emancipation, are exempt from family therapy involvement.

(3) Therapeutic activities will be scheduled according to the needs of the patients, both individually and as a group.

(4) Scheduled therapeutic activities, which may include other program components as described above, shall be provided at least 3 hours per week up to a maximum of 15 hours per week.

h. Stable milieu. The program shall formally seek to provide a stable, consistent, and cohesive therapeutic milieu. In part this will be encouraged by scheduling attendance such that a stable core of patients exists as much as possible. The milieu will consider the developmental and social stage of the participants such that no patient will be significantly involved with other patients who are likely to contribute to retardation or deterioration of the patient's social and emotional functioning. To help establish a sense of program identity, the array of therapeutic interventions shall be specifically identified as the day treatment program. Program planning meetings shall be held at least quarterly to evaluate the effectiveness of the clinical program. In the program description, the provider shall state how milieu stability will be provided.

i. Chronic mental illness. Persons aged 18 through 20 with chronic mental illness as defined by rule 441—24.1(225A) can receive day treatment services under this subrule or subrule 78.16(6).

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