



Improving the Behavioral Health Workforce



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Current State

Florida is currently confronted with a pressing mental health and behavioral health workforce crisis, with a high demand for qualified practitioners. At present, Chapter 65D-30.0046(3) and (4) of the Florida Administrative Code permits individuals with a bachelor's degree and certification from The Florida Certification Board (FCB) in addition (Certified Addiction Professional) or mental health (Certified Mental Health Professional) to administer behavioral health treatment under the supervision of a qualified professional.

These certified bachelor's degree-level providers can be reimbursed from their local Managing Entity. However, they encounter limitations in receiving reimbursement from Medicaid, despite often rendering services to Medicaid recipients. This leaves a segment of individuals untreated, as these providers cannot receive payment for individual and family therapy services.

It is noteworthy that Medicaid does authorize bachelor's level practitioners and Certified Addiction Professionals to deliver Behavioral Health Group Therapy services, as stipulated in the Medicaid Behavioral Health Therapy Services Coverage Policy.

Desired Outcome

To address the coverage gap, FCB proposes the inclusion of bachelor's-degree level providers holding a Certified Addiction Professional (CAP) or a Certified Mental Health Professional (CMHP) credential as eligible providers of Behavioral Health Individual and Family Therapy services within the Medicaid Behavioral Health Therapy Services Coverage Policy. This addition would expand access to crucial mental health and substance use services and better align Medicaid reimbursement policies with the current landscape of behavioral health care in Florida.

Impact

FCB advocates for the expansion of the behavioral health workforce to address the individual and family therapy requirements of Medicaid recipients. This strategy leverages the existing certified population, comprising 3,500 professionals certified by the FCB. Moreover, FCB proposes to expand the pool of bachelor-level providers eligible to attain the Certified Addiction Professional (CAP) or

Certified Mental Health Professional (CMHP) credentials. This strategy broadens individual and family therapy services available to Medicaid recipients, including the expansion of group therapy services, and enhances access to essential mental health care.

This initiative is poised not only to bolster the quantity of available services and elevate the quality of care provided to individuals grappling with behavioral health conditions, provided by certified behavioral health professionals. Furthermore, this endeavor promises to establish a viable career progression pathway for individuals aspiring to pursue counseling as a profession—an imperative in addressing the increasing demand for mental health services in Florida.

Key Points

- No impact on the current scope of practice; bachelor's level providers already deliver individual, family, and group counseling.
- Immediate workforce expansion and increased client reach through Medicaid reimbursement for certified professionals.

Recommendation

The FCB recommends that the Agency for Health Care Administration amend section 3.2 of the November 2019 Behavioral Health Therapy Services Coverage Policy to add bachelor's degree level Certified Addiction Professionals (CAPs) and Certified Mental Health Professionals (CMHPs) as eligible providers who can deliver individual (including family) and group therapy.

Call to Action

To advocate for this critical change and provide support to Floridians grappling with mental health challenges, FCB urges you to reach out to Governor DeSantis. Your communication can emphasize the necessity of amending section 3.2 of the November 2019 Behavioral Health Therapy Services Coverage Policy to incorporate bachelor's degree level Certified Addiction Professionals (CAPs) and Certified Mental Health Professionals (CMHPs) as eligible providers for individual, family, and group therapy services.

This change not only enhances access to vital mental health care but also ensures financial reimbursement for professionals delivering these essential services. Your engagement can play a pivotal role in effecting positive change and better-supporting individuals in need.