State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services

JENNIFER KENT
DIRECTOR

EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

DATE: July 8, 2015

MHSUDS INFORMATION NOTICE NO.: 15-025

TO: COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM DIRECTORS
COUNTY DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADMINISTRATORS
COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION
CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AGENCIES
COALITION OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ASSOCIATIONS
DRUG MEDI-CAL DIRECT CONTRACT PROVIDERS

SUBJECT: FEDERAL APPROVAL OF CALIFORNIA STATE PLAN AMENDMENT 15-012

This Information Notice communicates that the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) received approval on June 9, 2015, from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) of State Plan Amendment (SPA) 15-012. This SPA authorizes reimbursement for new group counseling sizes in all established modalities within the Drug Medi-Cal (DMC) program. Pursuant to SPA 15-012's approval, reimbursable DMC group counseling sizes may consist of two to twelve persons, so long as one is a Medi-Cal beneficiary.

Background

Passage of Senate Bill (SB) 1045 on July 7, 2014 (Chapter 80, Statutes of 2014), expanded the DMC program's group counseling size limitations to allow between two to twelve individuals in outpatient drug free (ODF) treatment, effective January 1, 2015. Prior to SB 1045's passage, allowable ODF group counseling sizes were from four to ten individuals. DHCS submitted SPA 15-012 to comport ODF group counseling sizes with SB 1045's mandate and ensure federal financial participation for group sizes of two to twelve.

Discussion

DHCS implemented group size expansions for all DMC treatment modalities providing group counseling services to ensure continuity across the DMC program. As such, group counseling in group sizes between two and twelve individuals is now allowable in ODF, Intensive Outpatient Treatment, Residential Treatment, Naltrexone Treatment and Narcotic Treatment Programs, **effective January 1, 2015.**

Instructions for processing DMC group counseling claims previously ineligible for reimbursement are as follows:

- Counties and direct contract providers may submit original group counseling claims for services provided from January 1, 2015, through the date of this Information Notice.
    - Counties and direct contract providers are authorized to use delay reason code “11” when submitting these claims.
    - The delayed claims for group counseling occurring between January 1, 2015 and the date of this information notice may be submitted until December 31, 2015.
- Claims for group counseling provided on or after the date of this information notice must be submitted within the timelines generally applicable to all DMC claims.

Counties or direct contract providers with questions concerning the operational and claim processing details in this Information Notice may direct them to their assigned DHCS’ Fiscal Management and Accountability Branch analyst.

For more information on changes, please click the link below to access the State Plan including approved SPA 15-012:

http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/laws/Documents/15-012_Approved_Package.pdf

Please direct any other questions on this Information Notice to Ms. Alice Trujillo, Chief, Program Policy Unit, Program Support and Grants Management Branch at (916) 327-2693.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Karen Baylor, Ph.D., LMFT, Deputy Director
Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services