

To all beneficiaries enrolled in a Prepaid Health Plan (PHP): for questions about benefits and services available on or after implementation, please contact your PHP.

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This clinical coverage policy has an effective date of December 1, 2020; however, until the end of the public health emergency, the temporary coverage and reimbursement flexibilities enabled by NC Medicaid through a series of [COVID-19 Special Medicaid Bulletins](#) will remain in effect.

Related Clinical Coverage Policies

Refer to <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/> for the related coverage policies listed below:

8-A, Enhanced Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

8-A-1, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Program

1-H, Telehealth, Virtual Patient Communications and Remote Patient Monitoring

1.0 Description of the Procedure, Product, or Service

Peer Support Services (PSS) are an evidenced-based mental health model of care that provides community-based recovery services directly to a Medicaid-eligible adult beneficiary diagnosed with a mental health or substance use disorder. PSS provides structured, scheduled services that promote recovery, self-determination, self-advocacy, engagement in self-care and wellness and enhancement of community living skills of beneficiaries. PSS services are directly provided by Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPSS) who have self-identified as a person(s) in recovery from a mental health or substance use disorder. PSS can be provided in combination with other approved mental health or substance use services or as an independent service. Due to the high prevalence of beneficiaries with co-occurring disorders (mental health, substance use or physical health disorders) it is a priority that integrated treatment be available to these beneficiaries.

PSS are based on the belief that beneficiaries diagnosed with serious mental health or substance use disorders can and do recover. The focus of the services is on the person, rather than the identified mental health or substance use disorder and emphasizes the acquisition, development, and expansion of rehabilitative skills needed to move forward in recovery. The services promote skills for coping with and managing symptoms while utilizing natural resources and the preservation and enhancement of community living skills.

Peer Support Services (PSS) are provided one-on-one to the beneficiary or in a group setting. Providing one-on-one support builds on the relationship of mutuality between the beneficiary and CPSS; supports the beneficiary in accomplishing self-identified goals; and may further support the beneficiary's engagement in treatment. Peer Support Services provided in a group setting allow the beneficiary the opportunity to engage in structured services with others that share similar recovery challenges or interest; improve or develop recovery skills; and explore community resources to assist the beneficiary in his or her recovery. PSS are based on the beneficiary's needs and coordinated within the context of the beneficiary's Person-Centered Plan. Structured services provided by PSS include:

- a. **Peer mentoring or coaching (one-on-one)** –
to encourage, motivate, and support beneficiary moving forward in recovery. Assist beneficiary with setting self-identified recovery goals, developing recovery action plans, and solving problems directly related to recovery, such as finding housing, developing natural support system, finding new uses of spare time, and improving job skills. Assist with issues that arise in connection with collateral problems such as legal issues or co-existing physical or mental challenges.

- b. **Recovery resource connecting** – connecting a beneficiary to professional and nonprofessional services and resources available in the community that can assist a beneficiary in meeting recovery goals.
- c. **Skill Building Recovery groups** – structured skill development groups that focus on job skills, budgeting and managing credit, relapse prevention, and conflict resolution skills and support recovery.
- d. **Building community** – assist a beneficiary in enhancing his or her social networks that promote and help sustain mental health and substance use disorder recovery. Organization of recovery-oriented services that provide a sense of acceptance and belonging to the community, promote learning of social skills and the opportunity to practice newly learned skills.

1.1 Definitions

1.1.1 Recovery:

Recovery is a process of change through which a beneficiary improves their health and wellness, lives a self-directed life and strives to reach their full potential; to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities.

1.1.2 Self-Determination:

Self- Determination is the right of a beneficiary to direct his or her own services, to make decisions concerning their health and well-being, and to have help to make decisions from whomever they choose.

1.1.3 Self-Advocacy:

Self – Advocacy is the ability to identify and purposefully ask for what one needs.

1.1.4 Health:

Health is learning to overcome, manage or more successfully live with the symptoms and making healthy choices that support one’s physical and emotional wellbeing.

1.1.5 Community:

Community is defined as relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love and hope.

2.0 Eligibility Requirements

2.1 Provisions

2.1.1 General

(The term “General” found throughout this policy applies to all Medicaid and NCHC policies)

- a. An eligible beneficiary shall be enrolled in either:
 - 1. the NC Medicaid Program *(Medicaid is NC Medicaid program, unless context clearly indicates otherwise)*; or

2. the NC Health Choice (*NCHC is NC Health Choice program, unless context clearly indicates otherwise*) Program on the date of service and shall meet the criteria in **Section 3.0 of this policy**.
- b. Provider(s) shall verify each Medicaid or NCHC beneficiary's eligibility each time a service is rendered.
- c. The Medicaid beneficiary may have service restrictions due to their eligibility category that would make them ineligible for this service.
- d. Following is only one of the eligibility and other requirements for participation in the NCHC Program under GS 108A-70.21(a): Children must be between the ages of 6 through 18.

2.1.2 Specific

(The term "Specific" found throughout this policy only applies to this policy)

a. **Medicaid**

An applicant may be approved for Medicaid if the applicant meets all eligibility requirements. A beneficiary may become retroactively eligible for Medicaid while receiving covered services.

A retroactively eligible beneficiary is entitled to receive Medicaid covered services and to be reimbursed by the provider for all money paid during the retroactive period except for any third-party payments or cost-sharing amounts. The qualified provider may file for reimbursement with Medicaid for these services.

Medicaid shall cover Peer Support Services for an eligible beneficiary who is 18 years of age and older and meets the criteria in **Section 3.0** of this policy.

b. **NCHC**

NCHC shall cover Peer Support Services for an eligible beneficiary who is 18 years of age until he or she reaches his or her 19th birthday and meets the criteria in **Section 3.0** of this policy.

Retroactive eligibility does not apply to the NCHC program.

2.2 Special Provisions

2.2.1 EPSDT Special Provision: Exception to Policy Limitations for a Medicaid Beneficiary under 21 Years of Age

a. **42 U.S.C. § 1396d(r) [1905(r) of the Social Security Act]**

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) is a federal Medicaid requirement that requires the state Medicaid agency to cover services, products, or procedures for Medicaid beneficiary under 21 years of age if the service is medically necessary health care to correct or ameliorate a defect, physical or mental illness, or a condition [health problem] identified through a screening examination (includes any evaluation by a physician or other licensed practitioner).

This means EPSDT covers most of the medical or remedial care a child needs to improve or maintain his or her health in the best condition possible,

compensate for a health problem, prevent it from worsening, or prevent the development of additional health problems.

Medically necessary services will be provided in the most economic mode, as long as the treatment made available is similarly efficacious to the service requested by the beneficiary's physician, therapist, or other licensed practitioner; the determination process does not delay the delivery of the needed service; and the determination does not limit the beneficiary's right to a free choice of providers.

EPSDT does not require the state Medicaid agency to provide any service, product or procedure:

1. that is unsafe, ineffective, or experimental or investigational.
2. that is not medical in nature or not generally recognized as an accepted method of medical practice or treatment.

Service limitations on scope, amount, duration, frequency, location of service, and other specific criteria described in clinical coverage policies may be exceeded or may not apply as long as the provider's documentation shows that the requested service is medically necessary "to correct or ameliorate a defect, physical or mental illness, or a condition" [health problem]; that is, provider documentation shows how the service, product, or procedure meets all EPSDT criteria, including to correct or improve or maintain the beneficiary's health in the best condition possible, compensate for a health problem, prevent it from worsening, or prevent the development of additional health problems.

b. EPSDT and Prior Approval Requirements

1. If the service, product, or procedure requires prior approval, the fact that the beneficiary is under 21 years of age does **NOT** eliminate the requirement for prior approval.
2. **IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** about EPSDT and prior approval is found in the *NCTracks Provider Claims and Billing Assistance Guide*, and on the EPSDT provider page. The Web addresses are specified below.

NCTracks Provider Claims and Billing Assistance Guide:

<https://www.nctracks.nc.gov/content/public/providers/provider-manuals.html>

EPSDT provider page: <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/>

2.2.2 EPSDT does not apply to NCHC beneficiaries

2.2.3 Health Choice Special Provision for a Health Choice Beneficiary age 6 through 18 years of age

NC Medicaid shall deny the claim for coverage for an NCHC beneficiary who does not meet the criteria within **Section 3.0** of this policy. Only services included under the NCHC State Plan and the NC Medicaid clinical coverage policies, service definitions, or billing codes are covered for an NCHC beneficiary.

3.0 When the Procedure, Product, or Service Is Covered

Note: Refer to Subsection 2.2.1 regarding EPSDT Exception to Policy Limitations for a Medicaid Beneficiary under 21 Years of Age.

3.1 General Criteria Covered

Medicaid and NCHC shall cover the procedure, product, or service related to this policy when medically necessary, and:

- a. the procedure, product, or service is individualized, specific, and consistent with symptoms or confirmed diagnosis of the illness or injury under treatment, and not in excess of the beneficiary's needs;
- b. the procedure, product, or service can be safely furnished, and no equally effective and more conservative or less costly treatment is available statewide; and
- c. the procedure, product, or service is furnished in a manner not primarily intended for the convenience of the beneficiary, the beneficiary's caretaker, or the provider.

3.1.1 Telehealth Services

As outlined in Attachment A, select services within this clinical coverage policy may be provided via telehealth. Services delivered via telehealth must follow the requirements and guidance in clinical coverage Policy 1-H, Telehealth, *Virtual Patient Communications, and Remote Patient Monitoring*, at <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/>.

3.1.2 Telephonic Services

As outlined in Attachment A, select services within this clinical coverage policy may be provided via the telephonic, audio-only communication method. Telephonic services may be transmitted between a beneficiary and provider in a manner that is consistent with the CPT and HCPCS code definition for those services.

Refer to subsection 3.2.5.1 for **Telephonic-Specific Criteria**; and subsection 7.1 for **Compliance** requirements.

3.2 Specific Criteria Covered

3.2.1 Specific criteria covered by both Medicaid and NCHC

Medicaid and NCHC shall cover Peer Support Services when ALL following criteria are met:

- a. The beneficiary has a mental health or substance use diagnosis as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition (DSM-5) or any subsequent editions of this reference material, other than a sole diagnosis of intellectual and developmental disability;
- b. The beneficiary meets the Level of Care criteria for Locus Level 1 or the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Level 1 criteria;
- c. There is no evidence to support that alternative interventions would be equally or more effective based on North Carolina community practice standards; and
- d. The beneficiary has documented identified needs, in at least ONE or more of the following areas (related to diagnosis):

1. Acquisition of skills needed to manage symptoms and utilize community resources;
2. Assistance needed to develop self-advocacy skills to achieve decreased dependency on the mental health system;
3. Assistance and support needed to prepare for a successful work experience;
4. Peer modeling needed to take increased responsibilities for his or her own recovery; or
5. Peer supports needed to develop or maintain daily living skills.

3.2.2 Admission Criteria

A comprehensive clinical assessment (CCA), that demonstrates medical necessity must be completed by a licensed clinician prior to the provision of this service. If a substantially equivalent assessment is available, reflects the current level of functioning, and contains all the required elements as outlined in community practice standards as well as in all applicable federal and state requirements, it may be used as part of the current CCA. Relevant clinical information must be obtained and documented in the beneficiary's Person-Centered Plan (PCP).

3.2.3 Continued Stay Criteria

The beneficiary meets criteria for continued stay if any ONE of the following applies:

- a. The desired outcome or level of functioning has not been restored, improved, or sustained over the time frame documented in the beneficiary's PCP;
- b. The beneficiary continues to be at risk for relapse based on current clinical assessment, and history, or the tenuous nature of the functional gains; or
- c. Continuation of service is supported by documentation of beneficiary's progress toward goals within the beneficiary's PCP.

3.2.4 Transition and Discharge Criteria

The beneficiary meets the criteria for discharge if any ONE of the following applies:

- a. The beneficiary's level of functioning has improved with respect to the goals outlined in the PCP, inclusive of a transition plan to step down to a lower level of care;
- b. The beneficiary has achieved positive life outcomes that support stable and ongoing recovery and is no longer in need of Peer Support Services; The beneficiary is not making progress or is regressing, and all reasonable strategies and interventions have been exhausted, indicating a need for more intensive services; or
- c. The beneficiary chooses to withdraw from Peer Support Services or the legally responsible person(s) chooses to withdraw the beneficiary from services.

3.2.5 Medicaid and NCHC Additional Criteria Covered

3.2.5.1 Telephonic-Specific Criteria:

- a. Providers shall ensure that services can be safely and effectively delivered using telephonic, audio-only communication;
- b. Providers shall consider a beneficiary's behavioral, physical and cognitive abilities to participate in services provided using telephonic, audio-only communication;
- c. The beneficiary's safety must be carefully considered for the complexity of the services provided;
- d. In situations where a caregiver or facilitator is necessary to assist with the delivery of services via telehealth, their ability to assist and their safety should also be considered;
- e. Delivery of services using telephonic, audio-only communication must conform to professional standards of care including but not limited to ethical practice, scope of practice, and other relevant federal, state and institutional policies and requirements including Practice Act and Licensing Board rules;
- f. Providers shall obtain and document verbal or written consent. In extenuating circumstances when consent is unable to be obtained, this should be documented;
- g. Providers shall verify the beneficiary's identity using two points of identification before initiating a telephonic, audio-only encounter; and,
- h. Providers shall ensure that beneficiary privacy and confidentiality is protected.

4.0 When the Procedure, Product, or Service Is Not Covered

Note: Refer to Subsection 2.2.1 regarding EPSDT Exception to Policy Limitations for a Medicaid Beneficiary under 21 Years of Age.

4.1 General Criteria Not Covered

Medicaid and NCHC shall not cover the procedure, product, or service related to this policy when:

- a. the beneficiary does not meet the eligibility requirements listed in **Section 2.0**;
- b. the beneficiary does not meet the criteria listed in **Section 3.0**;
- c. the procedure, product, or service duplicates another provider's procedure, product, or service; or
- d. the procedure, product, or service is experimental, investigational, or part of a clinical trial.

4.2 Specific Criteria Not Covered

4.2.1 Specific Criteria Not Covered by both Medicaid and NCHC

Medicaid and NCHC shall not cover the following activities of Peer Support Services:

- a. Transportation for the beneficiary or family members;
- b. Habilitation activities;
- c. Time spent performing, attending or participating in recreational activities
- d. unless tied to specific planned social skill assistance;
- e. Clinical and administrative supervision of the Peer Support Specialist which is covered as an indirect cost and part of the rate;
- f. Covered services that have not been rendered;
- g. Childcare services or services provided as a substitute for the parent or
- h. other beneficiaries responsible for providing care and supervision;
- i. Services provided to teach academic subjects or as a substitute for education
- j. personnel;
- k. Interventions not identified in the beneficiary's Person-Centered Plan;
 - l. Services provided without prior authorization;
- m. Services provided to children, spouse, parents or siblings of the
- n. beneficiary under treatment or others in the beneficiary's life to address
- o. problems not directly related to the beneficiary's needs and not listed on the
- p. Person-Centered Plan; and
- q. Payment for room and board.

4.2.2 Medicaid Additional Criteria Not Covered

None Apply.

4.2.3 NCHC Additional Criteria Not Covered

- a. NCGS § 108A-70.21(b) "Except as otherwise provided for eligibility, fees, deductibles, copayments, and other cost sharing charges, health benefits coverage provided to children eligible under the Program shall be equivalent to coverage provided for dependents under [the] North Carolina Medicaid Program except for the following:
 1. No services for long-term care.
 2. No nonemergency medical transportation.
 3. No EPSDT.
 4. Dental services shall be provided on a restricted basis in accordance with criteria adopted by the Department to implement this subsection."

Note: Subsection 4.2.3(b) applies to NCHC only.

5.0 Requirements for and Limitations on Coverage

Note: Refer to Subsection 2.2.1 regarding EPSDT Exception to Policy Limitations for a Medicaid Beneficiary under 21 Years of Age.

5.1 Prior Approval

Medicaid and NCHC shall require prior approval for Peer Support Services beyond the unmanaged unit limitation. Coverage of Peer Support Services is limited to twenty-four (24) unmanaged units once per episode of care per state fiscal year. Refer to **Subsection 5.3** for additional limitations.

A service order must be signed prior to or on the first day PSS are rendered. Refer to **Subsection 5.4** of this policy.

Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHP) or Prepaid Health Plans (PHP) can offer less restrictive limitations for unmanaged units but cannot impose more restrictive limitations than the NC Medicaid Policy. All units beyond Medicaid limitations or limitations imposed by the PIHPs or PHPs require prior approval.

PIHPs or PHPs that offer less restrictive limitations on unmanaged units than that of the NC Medicaid policy shall provide assurance that there are mechanisms in place to prevent over-billing for services.

Providers shall seek prior approval if they are uncertain that the beneficiary has reached the unmanaged unit limit for the fiscal year.

Providers shall seek prior approval if beneficiary is engaged in other behavioral health or substance use services. Providers shall collaborate with beneficiary's existing provider to develop an integrated plan of care.

Prior authorization is not a guarantee of claim payment.

5.2 Prior Approval Requirements

5.2.1 General

The provider(s) shall submit to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Utilization Review Contractor the following:

- a. the prior approval request; and
- b. all health records and any other records that support the beneficiary has met the specific criteria in **Subsection 3.2** of this policy.

5.2.2 Specific

Utilization management of covered services is a part of the assurance of medically necessary service provision. Authorization, which is an aspect of utilization management, validates approval to provide a medically necessary covered service to an eligible beneficiary.

Initial Authorization

Services are based upon a finding of medical necessity, must be directly related to the beneficiary's diagnostic and clinical needs, and are expected to achieve the specific rehabilitative goals detailed in the beneficiary's Person-Centered Plan (PCP). Medical necessity is determined by North Carolina community practice

standards, as verified by the DHHS Utilization Management Review Contractor or the Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority who evaluate the request to determine if medical necessity supports intensive services. Medically necessary services are authorized in the most cost-effective modes, if the treatment that is made available is similarly efficacious as services requested by the beneficiary's physician, therapist, or another licensed practitioner. The medically necessary service must be recognized as an accepted method of medical practice or treatment.

To request an initial authorization, the CCA, service order for medical necessity, PCP, and the required NC Medicaid authorization request form must be submitted to the DHHS approved Utilization Management Review Contractor or the Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority. Medicaid may cover up to 270 units of service (individual and group) for 90 days for the initial authorization period, if medically necessary. Refer to **Subsection 5.4** for Service Order requirements.

Reauthorization

Reauthorization requests must be submitted to the Utilization Management Review Contractor or the Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority 10-days prior to the end date of the beneficiary's active authorization. Medicaid may cover up to 270 units of service (individual and group) for 90 days for subsequent reauthorization periods, if medical necessary. Reauthorization is based on medical necessity documented in the PCP, the authorization request form, and supporting documentation. The duration and frequency at which PSS is provided must be based on medical necessity and progress made by the beneficiary toward goals outlined in the PCP.

Additional units may be authorized as clinically appropriate. If medical necessity dictates the need for increased service duration and frequency, clinical consideration must be given to interventions with a more intense clinical component.

Note: Any denial, reduction, suspension, or termination of PSS requires beneficiary or legally responsible person(s) of the beneficiary be notified of their appeal rights.

5.3 Additional Limitations or Requirements

- a. A beneficiary can receive PSS from only one provider organization during an active authorization period. The beneficiary may choose a new provider at any time, which will initiate a new service authorization request and a new authorization period.
- b. Family members or legally responsible person(s) of the beneficiary are not eligible to provide this service to the beneficiary.
- c. A beneficiary with a sole diagnosis of Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities is not eligible for PSS funded by Medicaid.
- d. Peer Support must not be provided during the same authorization period as Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT), as a peer support specialist is a requirement of that team.
- e. Peer Support must not be provided during the same authorization period as Community Support Team (CST), as a peer support specialist may be a component of

the service and a beneficiary who is in need of CST and peer support will be offered CST providers who have peers on the team.

- f. PSS must not be provided during the same time of day when a beneficiary is receiving Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Program (SAIOP) or Substance Abuse Comprehensive Outpatient Treatment (SACOT), Partial Hospitalization, Psychosocial Rehabilitation, Respite, or Individual Support services.
- g. PSS must not be duplicative of other Medicaid services the beneficiary is receiving.
- h. Transportation of a beneficiary is not covered as a component for this policy. Any provision of services provided to a beneficiary during travel must be indicated in the PCP prior to the travel and must have corresponding documentation supporting intervention provided. This limitation does not impact a beneficiary's ability to access non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT).

Note: PSS is not a "first responder" service. As documented in the beneficiary's PCP Comprehensive Prevention and Intervention Crisis Plan, the PSS provider shall coordinate with other service providers to ensure "first responder" coverage and crisis response.

5.4 Service Orders

Service orders are a mechanism to demonstrate medical necessity for a service and are based upon an assessment of the beneficiary's needs. A service order must be signed by a physician or other licensed clinician per his or her scope of practice, prior to or on the first day service is rendered.

ALL the following apply to a service order:

- a. Backdating of the service order is not allowed;
- b. Each service order must be signed and dated by the authorizing professional and must indicate the date on which the service was ordered;
- c. A service order must be in place prior to or on the first day that the service is initially
- d. provided to bill Medicaid for the service. Even if the beneficiary is retroactively eligible for Medicaid the provider shall not bill Medicaid without a valid service order; and
- e. Service orders are valid for one calendar year. Medical necessity must be reviewed,
- f. and service must be ordered at least annually, based on the date of the original PCP
- g. service order.

5.5 Documentation Requirements

The service record documents the nature and course of a beneficiary's progress in treatment. To bill Medicaid, providers must ensure that their documentation is consistent with the requirements contained in this policy. The staff member who provides the service is responsible for documenting the services billed to and reimbursed by Medicaid. The staff person who provides the service shall sign and date the written entry. The signature must include credentials for the staff member who provided the service. The

PCP and a documented discharge plan must be discussed with the beneficiary and documented in the service record.

5.5.1 Contents of a Service Note

For this service, a full service note for each contact or intervention for each date of service, written and signed by the person who provided the service is required. More than one intervention, activity, or goal may be reported in one service note, if applicable. A service note must document ALL following elements:

- a. Beneficiary's name;
- b. Medicaid identification number;
- c. Date of the service provision;
- d. Name of service provided;
- e. Type of contact (in person, telehealth or telephonic, audio-only communication);
- f. Place of service;
- g. Purpose of contact as it relates to the PCP goals;
- h. Description of the intervention provided. Documentation of the intervention must accurately reflect treatment for the duration of time indicated;
- i. Duration of service, amount of time spent performing the intervention;
- j. Assessment of the effectiveness of the intervention and the beneficiary's progress towards the beneficiary's goals; and
- k. Date and signature and credentials or job title of the staff member who provided the service.

6.0 Provider(s) Eligible to Bill for the Procedure, Product, or Service

To be eligible to bill for the procedure, product, or service related to this policy, the provider(s) shall:

- a. meet Medicaid or NCHC qualifications for participation;
- b. have a current and signed Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Provider Administrative Participation Agreement; and
- c. bill only for procedures, products, and services that are within the scope of their clinical practice, as defined by the appropriate licensing entity.

6.1 Provider Qualifications and Occupational Licensing Entity Regulations

Peer Support Services must be delivered by practitioners employed by organizations that:

- a. meet the provider qualification policies, procedures, and standards established by the NC Medicaid;
- b. meet the requirements of 10A NCAC 27G;
- c. demonstrate that they meet these standards by being credentialed and contracted by a Prepaid Health Plan or Prepaid Inpatient Health Plan, or the Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority;
- d. within one calendar year of enrollment as a provider with NC Medicaid, achieve national accreditation with at least one of the designated accrediting agencies; and

- e. become established as a legally constituted entity capable of meeting all the requirements of the Provider Certification Medicaid Enrollment Agreement, Medicaid Bulletins and service implementation standards.

6.2 Provider Certifications

PSS must be provided by a Peer Support Specialist certified by North Carolina's Peer Support Specialist Program.

6.2.1 Staff Requirements

The Peer Support Services (PSS) program is provided by qualified providers with the capacity and adequate workforce to offer this service to eligible Medicaid beneficiaries. PSS must be available during times that meet the needs of the beneficiary which may include evening, weekends, or both. The PSS program must be under the direction of a full-time Qualified Professional (QP) who meets the requirements according to 10A NCAC 27G .0104 (19).

The PSS program must have designated competent mental health or substance use professionals to provide supervision to CPSS during the times of service provision.

The maximum program staff ratios are as follows: QP-to-CPSS is 1:8; CPSS-to-beneficiary is 1:15; and group ratio for CPSS Group Facilitator-to-beneficiaries is 1:12.

The PSS program must follow the NC Peer Support Specialist Code of Ethics and Values and principles when rendering PSS services. All ethical issues must be governed by the administrators of the Peer Support Specialist Registry and policies and procedures established by the hiring provider agency.

CPSS shall not work outside the scope of their certification or core competencies. CPSS shall only provide services to a beneficiary with similar lived experiences.

The following charts provide required services of the PSS Program Supervisor and core competencies of relationship building and peer support interaction for the CPSS (according to NC's Certified Peer Support Specialist Program).

Peer Support Services Program Supervisor

- Trained in quality supervisory skills.
- Possesses knowledge of the CPSS role and work, as well as, understand the principles and philosophy of recovery and the code of ethics of the NC Peer Support Specialist Certification Program.
- Understand and support the role of the CPSS.
- Understand and promote the beneficiary's recovery.
- Advocate for the CPSS and PSS across the organization and in the community.
- Promote both the professional and personal growth of the CPSS within established human resource standards.
- Coordinate assessments needed for the beneficiary. If appropriately licensed, the QP may conduct the assessments.
- Collaborate with beneficiary(s) and CPSS to develop recovery-oriented person-centered plan for the beneficiary that demonstrates consideration for integrated care.
- Conduct at least one in-person, telehealth, or telephonic, audio-only communication contact with the beneficiary within 90 days of PSS being initiated and no less that every 90 days thereafter to monitor the beneficiary's progress and effectiveness of the program; and to review with the beneficiary the goals of their PCP and document progress.
- Plan work assignments, monitors, reviews and evaluates work performance of program staff and facilitates staff meetings and conduct routine reviews of service notes for quality assurance.
- Provide administrative and supportive supervision to program staff individually at least once per month or more if needed. Provision of supervision must be based on the experience of the individual staff.
- Collaborate with program staff to assess strengths and areas of growth and develop an individual supervision plan.
- Collaborate and foster collegial roles with program staff.
- Determine team caseload size based on the level of acuity and needs of the beneficiary(s).
- Facilitate or co-facilitate skill building recovery groups based on the needs or request of beneficiaries.
- Ensure referrals for community resources requested by beneficiary(s) are completed.

Certified Peer Support Specialist

- Knowledge of peer support principles, values and ethics.
- Ability to share lived experience to support, encourage and enhance a beneficiary's treatment and recovery.
- Possess recovery-oriented skills and knowledge to provide peer support services.
- Ability to collaborate with the program QP to assess their own strengths and areas of growth and develop a supervision plan.
- Ability to collaborate with a beneficiary to explore and identify barriers to accessing community resources or treatment providers.
- Ability to model and mentor recovery values, attitudes, beliefs, and personal actions to encourage wellness and resilience for beneficiaries served and to promote a recovery environment in the community, residence, and workplace.
- Ability to explore with a beneficiary served, the importance and creation of a wellness identity through open sharing and challenging viewpoints.
- Ability to promote a beneficiary's opportunity for personal growth by identifying teachable moments for building relationship skills to empower the beneficiary and enhance personal responsibility.
- Ability to model and share decisions-making tools to enhance a beneficiary's healthy decision-making process.
- Ability to provide examples of healthy social interactions and facilitate familiarity with, and connection to, the local community.
- Ability to recognize and appropriately respond to conditions that constitute an emergency to include both physical and behavioral health crisis utilizing the emergency response procedure of employer.
- Ability to provide support to the beneficiary in navigating systems (medical, social services, or legal).
- Ability to promote self-advocacy by facilitating each beneficiary's learning about his or her human and legal rights and supporting the beneficiary while exercising those rights to support the empowerment of the beneficiary.

6.2.2 Training Requirements

To provide effective peer support services, all PSS program staff shall possess the knowledge and competencies of peer support principles, values and ethics and participate in additional trainings required to provide the service. Required trainings for PSS program staff are as follows:

| Timeframe | Training Required | Who | Total Minimum Hours Required |
|---|--|--|------------------------------|
| Within 30 calendar days of hire to provide service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 hours of Peer Support Services Policy components review 1 hour of Documentation Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff | 4 hours |
| Within 90 calendar days of hire to provide service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 hours of Peer Support Supervisor Training 12 hours of Person-Centered Thinking 3 hours of PCP Instructional Elements with Comprehensive Prevention and Intervention Crisis Plan Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Support Services Program Supervisor | 18 hours |
| Annually | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff | 10 hours |

Peer support program staff shall complete initial requirements of training identified above within identified timeframes. The initial training requirements may be waived by the hiring agency if the employee can produce documentation certifying that training was completed no more than 24-months prior to hire date.

Peer support program staff shall participate in additional hours of peer support related training that is appropriate for the population being served. Additional training options for all PSS program staff include:

- Trauma Informed Care
- Wellness and Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)
- Whole Health Action Management (WHAM)
- Basic Mental Health and Substance Use 101
- Mental Health First Aid
- Housing First, Permanent Supportive Housing, Tenancy Support Training

6.3 Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes for this service are specific to recommendations resulting from clinical assessments and meeting the identified goals in the beneficiary's PCP.

Expected outcomes:

- a. increased engagement in self-directed recovery process;
- b. increased natural and social support networks;
- c. increased ability to engage in community activities;
- d. increased ability to live independently as possible and use recovery skills to maintain a stable living arrangement;
- e. higher levels of empowerment and hopefulness in recovery;
- f. improved emotional, behavioral and physical health;
- g. improved quality of life;
- h. improved vocational skills;
- i. decreased substance use;
- j. decreased frequency or intensity of crisis episodes; or
- k. decreased use of crisis services or hospitalizations.

7.0 Additional Requirements

Note: Refer to Subsection 2.2.1 regarding EPSDT Exception to Policy Limitations for a Medicaid Beneficiary under 21 Years of Age.

7.1 Compliance

Provider(s) shall comply with the following in effect at the time the service is rendered:

- a. All applicable agreements, federal, state and local laws and regulations including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and record retention requirements; and
- b. All NC Medicaid's clinical (medical) coverage policies, guidelines, policies, provider manuals, implementation updates, and bulletins published by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), DHHS, DHHS division(s) or fiscal contractor(s).

8.0 Policy Implementation and History

Original Effective Date: November 01, 2019

History:

| Date | Section or Subsection Amended | Change |
|------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 11/01/2019 | All Sections and Attachment(s) | New policy implementing Peer Support Services. |
| 11/01/2019 | Attachment A | Added, “Unless directed otherwise, Institutional Claims must be billed according to the National Uniform Billing Guidelines. All claims must comply with National Coding Guidelines”. |
| 12/12/2019 | Table of Contents | Updated policy template language, “To all beneficiaries enrolled in a Prepaid Health Plan (PHP): for questions about benefits and services available on or after implementation, please contact your PHP.” |
| 12/01/2020 | Related Clinical Coverage Policies | 1-H, Telehealth, Virtual Patient Communications, and Remote Patient Monitoring |
| 12/01/2020 | Subsection 3.1.1 | Added new subsection 3.1.1 Telehealth Services. |
| 12/01/2020 | Subsection 3.1.2 | Added new subsection 3.1.2 Telephonic Services |
| 12/01/2020 | Subsection 3.2.5.1 | Added new subsection 3.2.5.1 Telephonic Specific-Criteria |
| 12/01/2020 | Subsection 5.5.1 | Updated policy language. Deleted: “face-to face, phone”. Added: “in person, telehealth or telephonic, audio-only communication”. |
| 12/01/2020 | Subsection 6.2.1 | Updated policy language. Deleted: “face-to-face” and “telephone”. Added: “in-person, telehealth or telephonic, audio-only communication”. |
| 12/01/2020 | Attachment A, letter C | Added columns to service codes indicating if the services were eligible for telehealth and telephonic, audio-only communication. Added “Note: Telehealth and telephonic, audio-only communication eligible services may be provided to both new and established patients by the eligible providers listed within this policy.” |
| 12/01/2020 | Attachment A, Letter D | Added the following language for telehealth services: Telehealth Claims: Modifier GT must be appended to the CPT or HCPCS code to indicate that a service has been provided via interactive audio-visual communication. This modifier is not appropriate for services provided via telephonic, audio-only communication. Telephonic Claims: Modifier KX must be appended to the CPT or HCPCS code to indicate that a service has been provided via telephonic, audio-only communication. |

| Date | Section or Subsection Amended | Change |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 12/01/2020 | Attachment A, Letter F | Deleted: “telephone” and “face-to-face”. Added: “telehealth or telephonic, audio-only” and “in-person”. Added language: Telehealth and telephonic, audio-only communication claims should be filed with the provider’s usual place of service code(s). |
| 12/01/2020 | Added beginning of Policy | Added the language “This clinical coverage policy has an effective date of November 15, 2020; however, until the end of the public health emergency, the temporary coverage and reimbursement flexibilities enabled by NC Medicaid through a series of COVID-19 Special Medicaid Bulletins will remain in effect.” |

Attachment A: Claims-Related Information

Provider(s) shall comply with the, *NCTracks Provider Claims and Billing Assistance Guide*, Medicaid bulletins, fee schedules, NC Medicaid's clinical coverage policies and any other relevant documents for specific coverage and reimbursement for Medicaid and NCHC:

A. Claim Type

Professional (CMS-1500/837P transaction)

Institutional (UB-04/837I transaction)

Unless directed otherwise, Institutional Claims must be billed according to the National Uniform Billing Guidelines. All claims must comply with National Coding Guidelines.

B. International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revisions, Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM) and Procedural Coding System (PCS)

Provider(s) shall report the ICD-10-CM and Procedural Coding System (PCS) to the highest level of specificity that supports medical necessity. Provider(s) shall use the current ICD-10 edition and any subsequent editions in effect at the time of service. Provider(s) shall refer to the applicable edition for code description, as it is no longer documented in the policy.

C. Code(s)

Provider(s) shall report the most specific billing code that accurately and completely describes the procedure, product or service provided. Provider(s) shall use the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT), Health Care Procedure Coding System (HCPCS), and UB-04 Data Specifications Manual (for a complete listing of valid revenue codes) and any subsequent editions in effect at the time of service. Provider(s) shall refer to the applicable edition for the code description, as it is no longer documented in the policy.

If no such specific CPT or HCPCS code exists, then the provider(s) shall report the procedure, product or service using the appropriate unlisted procedure or service code.

| HCPCS Code(s) | Billing Unit | Telehealth Eligible | Telephonic Eligible |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| H0038 | 1 unit = 15 - minutes | Yes | Yes |
| H0038 HQ | 1 unit = 15 - minutes | No | No |

Note: Telehealth eligible services may be provided to both new and established patients by the eligible providers listed within this policy.

Unlisted Procedure or Service

CPT: The provider(s) shall refer to and comply with the Instructions for Use of the CPT Codebook, Unlisted Procedure or Service, and Special Report as documented in the current CPT in effect at the time of service.

HCPCS: The provider(s) shall refer to and comply with the Instructions For Use of HCPCS National Level II codes, Unlisted Procedure or Service and Special Report as documented in the current HCPCS edition in effect at the time of service.

D. Modifiers

Provider(s) shall follow applicable modifier guidelines.

Non-Telehealth Claims: Provider(s) shall follow applicable modifier guidelines.

Telehealth Claims: Modifier GT must be appended to the CPT or HCPCS code to indicate that a service has been provided via interactive audio-visual communication. This modifier is not appropriate for services provided via telephonic, audio-only communication.

Telephonic Claims: Modifier KX must be appended to the CPT or HCPCS code to indicate that a service has been provided via telephonic, audio-only communication.

E. Billing Units

Provider(s) shall report the appropriate code(s) used which determines the billing unit(s).

Units are billed in 15-increments.

PHPs, PIHPs and provider agencies shall monitor utilization of service by conducting record reviews and internal audits of units of service billed. PHPs and PIHPs shall assess their PSS network providers' adherence to service guidelines to assure quality services for beneficiaries.

F. Place of Service

PSS is a direct periodic service provided in a range of community settings. It may be provided in the beneficiary's place of residence, community, in an emergency department, or in an office setting. It may not be provided in the residence of PSS staff.

The intent of the service is to be community-based rather than office-based. Service may be provided via telehealth or telephonic, audio-only communication. Telehealth or telephonic, audio-only communication time is supplemental rather than a replacement of in-person contacts and is limited to twenty (20) percent or less of total service time provided per beneficiary per fiscal year. Documentation of service rendered via telehealth or telephonic, audio-only communication with the beneficiary or collateral contacts (assisting beneficiary with rehabilitation goals) must be documented according to Subsection 5.5 of this policy.

Telehealth and telephonic, audio-only communication claims should be filed with the provider's usual place of service code(s).

G. Co-payments

For Medicaid refer to Medicaid State Plan:

<https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/get-involved/nc-health-choice-state-plan>

For NCHC refer to NCHC State Plan:

<https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/get-involved/nc-health-choice-state-plan>

H. Reimbursement

Provider(s) shall bill their usual and customary charges.

For a schedule of rates, refer to: <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov//>