SUBJECT:
The Integration of Education in Partial Hospitalization Programs Operating During the School Day

BULLETIN NUMBER:

ISSUE DATE:

SCOPE:
This bulletin applies to County Mental Health/Mental Retardation (MH/MR) Programs, County Mental Health Providers, Licensed Psychiatric Partial Hospitalization Programs, Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), and MH/MR Case Management Units.

PURPOSE:
The purpose of this bulletin is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of County MH/MR Programs and psychiatric partial hospitalization provider agencies to ensure that children who are enrolled in partial hospitalization programs during the school day have access to appropriate educational services. The bulletin interprets 55 Pa. Code §§ 5210.11, 5210.12, 5210.35, 5210.37. The bulletin also emphasizes the Department’s policy that multi-systemic collaboration and comprehensive service planning is essential for positive outcomes for children who are in need of partial hospitalization services.

BACKGROUND:
Serious examination of educational components of children’s partial hospitalization programs was initiated in 2003 by the Education Law Center, Pennsylvania Protection & Advocacy, the Pennsylvania Community Providers Association, parents, and other stakeholders. The Department of Public Welfare and the Department of Education committed to work jointly and in partnership with these communities to develop policy and practice standards to ensure that children attending partial hospitalization programs have access to education and are afforded the opportunity to learn.

DISCUSSION:
When partial hospitalization programs were developed to serve children, the regulatory design focused on the treatment needs of children placed in those programs. Coordinating these treatment needs with the educational needs of these children can be difficult. Consequently, children who attend partial hospitalization programs may not receive appropriate educational services unless the treatment and educational providers communicate to ensure that children’s needs are met.

Partial hospitalization licensing regulations in 55 Pa. Code Ch. 5210 do not preclude program models that blend or integrate treatment with education. Partial hospitalization programs should begin looking at models that can ensure that treatment and educational standards are met. Providing new approaches and integrated models will lead to better outcomes for treatment and academic progress. Providers of partial hospitalization services and County MH/MR programs should facilitate a process for collaborating with the educational system when permission has been granted by a parent or legal guardian. This collaboration is intended to enable providers and educators to work together to provide integrated, intensive treatment in partial hospitalization settings, and to ensure that children are educated while receiving intensive mental health services.

REGULATION INTERPRETATION:

The Regulation Interpretation is contained in Annex A to this Bulletin.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

This bulletin is effective immediately upon publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

CONTACT PERSON:
ANNEX A

STATEMENT OF POLICY

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

[55 Pa. Code Chapter 5210]

Partial Hospitalization

(Existing regulations are provided in italics for references. Corresponding interpretations that will appear in the bulletin when it is published are in plain text.)

§ 5210.11. Organization and structure.

The partial hospitalization unit shall be as a separate, identifiable organizational unit with its own director, or supervisor, and staffing pattern. When the unit is a portion of a larger organizational structure, the director or supervisor of the unit shall be identified and his responsibilities clearly defined. The organizational structure of the unit shall be described in an organizational chart. A written description of all services provided by the unit shall be on file and available to the Department. The Department shall be notified of any major change in the organizational structure or services.

§ 5211.11(a). Local Education Agencies as Providers of Partial Hospitalization Services – statement of policy.

(a) A local educational agency may become a licensed provider of partial hospitalization services for school-age children upon application if it meets applicable requirements, including but not limited to Article X of the Public Welfare Code, 62 P.S. § 1001 et seq., 55 Pa. Code Ch. 20, and this chapter.

(b) Applicants for new partial hospitalization licenses to serve school-age children are suitable only if they are school-based facilities unless the applicant can justify the need to provide service at some other location. Exceptions will be determined by the Department on a case by case basis.

§ 5210.12(b). Linkages with other parts of the service system.

(b) Partial hospitalization program shall also assure linkages with other appropriate treatment and rehabilitative services including emergency services, outpatient services, and vocational rehabilitation programs. A written statement documenting such linkages shall be maintained on file at the facility.
§ 5210.12(b). Linkages with educational programs – statement of policy.

Partial hospitalization programs serving school-age children should formalize their relationships and linkages with educational services through written agreements with local educational authorities.

§ 5210.35(a)(2),(3). Contents and review of a comprehensive treatment plan.

(a) The treatment plan shall:

(2) Be based upon diagnostic evaluation which includes examination of the medical, psychological, social, cultural, behavioral, familial, educational, vocational and developmental aspects of the patient’s situation.

(3) Set forth treatment objectives and prescribe an integrated program of therapies, activities, experiences and appropriate education designed to meet these objectives.


The comprehensive treatment plan for school-age children should include appropriate educational objectives that are individualized to meet the needs of the child. These objectives should be developed in partnership with the child, if the child is 14 years of age or older; the child’s parent or legal guardian; the agency responsible for providing educational services to the child; and, when applicable, the County CASSP Coordinator or designee and the child’s mental health case manager or care manager.

§ 5210.37. Linkages with educational programs.

Basic education and, in particular, special education are essential and required services for emotionally disturbed children and youth. By law, such education is to be provided by the Department of Education or its agent. The education program may be provided at the same site as the partial hospitalization program, but is considered a separate, though complimentary, program and shall not be included as part of the partial hospitalization program for reimbursement purposes.

§ 5210.37a. Local educational agencies – statement of policy.

A school-age child who received treatment in a partial hospitalization program during the school day must have access to the minimum amount of educational services that the responsible educational agency is required to provide. If such educational services are not provided, the reason must be documented in the child’s record.

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