Excellence in Mental Health Act Medicaid Pilot Program

Updated November 2015

The Excellence in Mental Health Act demonstration program is the most significant investment in the community behavioral health system in decades. Passed by Congress as part of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act (H.R. 4302), this legislation will increase access to community mental health and substance use treatment services while improving Medicaid reimbursement for these services.

What does this mean?

For the first time, behavioral health clinics will have a federal definition, with defined quality standards, and reimbursement that reflects the actual cost of care.

- Creates criteria for “Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics” as entities designed to serve individuals with serious mental illnesses and substance use disorders that provide intensive, person-centered, multidisciplinary, evidence-based screening, assessment, diagnostics, treatment, prevention, and wellness services, including 24/7 crisis response. The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services is directed to establish a process for selecting states to participate in a 2-year pilot program.

- Provides $25,000,000 that will be available to states as planning grants to develop applications to participate in the 2-year pilot. Only states that have received a planning grant will be eligible to apply to participate in the pilot.

- Stipulates that eight (8) states will be selected to participate in the 2-year pilot program. Participating states will receive 90% FMAP (federal matching funds for Medicaid) for all of the required services provided by the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics.

- Requires participating states to develop a Prospective Payment System for reimbursing Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics for required services provided by these entities.

May 2015

Guidance released on CCBHC certification and Prospective Payment System

Oct. 23, 2015

State planning grants awarded

Jan. 1, 2017

Participating states selected
Why is this important now?

Community behavioral health organizations help the eight million Americans they serve — children and adults with serious mental illnesses and addictions — recover and lead productive lives in their communities. These healthcare organizations are on the front lines of improving health outcomes, providing crisis response and suicide prevention; alcohol and drug abuse treatment; comprehensive outpatient mental health services; and helping special populations like veterans and children. And, they stand ready to do more.

Unfortunately, after decades of budget cuts, our nation’s community behavioral health centers struggle to expand their services and aid all Americans in need of help. Far too many people lack access to the evidence-based treatments, robust support services, and community partnerships proven to produce better health outcomes. As a result, people with mental illnesses and addictions often end up with inadequate care provided in emergency rooms or jails, while federal and state governments face extra costs in schools, on the roads, and in courtrooms.

The Excellence Act will help as many as **750,000 uninsured and low-income Americans** with the most serious and persistent mental health conditions, including **100,000 returning veterans** from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Questions? Contact Chuck Ingoglia at chucki@thenationalcouncil.org

The Excellence in Mental Health Act was supported by:

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- the National Guard Association,
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