



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



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

DATE: May 5, 2017

MHSUDS INFORMATION NOTICE NO.: 17-016

TO: COUNTY ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS
COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH BOARDS
LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS
GROUP HOME PROVIDERS

SUBJECT: STATEWIDE CRITERIA FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM
APPROVAL OF SHORT-TERM RESIDENTIAL THERAPEUTIC
PROGRAM

REFERENCES: [DMH Information Notice No. 98-02](#), dated April 28, 1998.

EXPIRES: Retain until rescinded

This Information Notice establishes the requirements and procedures for Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs) to obtain mental health program approval, and is effective immediately. Section 131(b) of Assembly Bill 1997 (Stone, Chapter 612, Statutes of 2016) authorizes the Department of Health Care Services (the Department), to adopt regulations by way of information notice regarding the mental health program approval standards applicable to STRTPs. In addition, the intent of this Information Notice is to distribute the Draft Interim STRTP Regulations for which the department will be accepting comments for thirty (30) calendar days from the date of this information notice.

Organizations who wish to obtain mental health program approval shall use the enclosed application form. To become approved, STRTPs shall meet the requirements of the STRTP Interim Regulations, including becoming certified to participate in Medi-Cal.

The Department or delegated county Mental Health Plan (MHP) will certify STRTPs to participate in Medi-Cal pursuant to the same process used for other organizational providers, which includes an initial onsite review and triennial onsite reviews. However, to avoid duplication for STRTPs the Medi-Cal certification requirements have been

added to the interim STRTP mental health program approval protocol to allow for these two processes to be conducted during one onsite review.

The following is an overview of the application process for mental health program approvals and related information. For detailed information, please reference the attachments.

Application Process for Initial Mental Health Program Approval

An STRTP has 12 months from the date of licensure by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to obtain the mental health program approval and accompanying Medi-Cal Certification.

An applicant shall mail a completed "Application for Mental Health Program Approval" (Enclosure 2) via certified mail to the Department and to the applicable MHP. Within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the application, the Department, or applicable MHP, will issue a written notice to the applicant indicating whether its application is complete or whether additional information is required to complete the application. If missing or additional information is required, the applicant shall provide that information within thirty (30) calendar days of the date the Department or MHP issued the notice.

After the application is complete, if the Department or the applicable MHP has determined that the application and supporting documentation demonstrate that the applicant meets the requirements, the Department or the MHP will conduct an onsite review to verify that the applicant meets the interim STRTP mental health program approval requirements.

If the Department or the applicable MHP determines that the submitted information demonstrates that the applicant does not meet the requirements, the Department or the MHP may deny the application for mental health program approval without conducting an onsite review. A written notification will be issued, with an explanation of the reasons for denial.

From January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017, the Department, or the applicable MHP, shall approve or deny a mental health program approval request within ninety (90) days of receipt. In cases where the Department or the MHP has denied an application for mental health program approval, the applicant shall have the right to request a review of the denial.

Provisional Approvals

From January 1, 2017 until December 31, 2017, for applicants that are group homes currently certified for Rate Classification Levels (RCL) 13 or 14, the Department or the applicable MHP may issue provisional approvals without conducting an onsite review if the submitted application and supporting documentation demonstrates that the applicant meets the interim STRTP mental health program approval requirements. The provisional approval period shall not exceed 180 calendar days. The Department or the MHP shall conduct an onsite review prior to issuing a subsequent (non-provisional) mental health program approval.

For a new STRTP, where no children are admitted to the facility at the time of the initial onsite review, the Department or the applicable MHP may issue a provisional approval for a period of up to 120 calendar days, if the submitted application, supporting documentation, and initial onsite review demonstrates that the applicant meets the interim STRTP mental health program approval requirements. The Department or the MHP will conduct a subsequent onsite review after the applicant begins to admit children.

Duration of Mental Health Program Approval

The mental health program approval is effective for one year from the date of issuance and must be renewed on an annual basis. The Medi-Cal certification must be renewed on a triennial basis.

Required Annual Mental Health Program Approval

The Department or the applicable MHP will conduct a yearly onsite review of each STRTP with an approved mental health program to determine whether the STRTPs continue to meet all of the requirements. If an STRTP continues to meet the requirements for mental health program approval, the mental health program approval will be renewed.

The Department or the MHP will notify STRTPs in writing of the renewal or non-renewal of their mental health program approval, with an explanation of the reasons for non-renewal, within sixty (60) calendar days of the onsite review. An STRTP that receives notice of non-renewal will have the right to request a review of the denial.

The Department or the MHP will notify CDSS of the renewal or non-renewal of the mental health program approval of each STRTP in writing to: Dorette Pierce at Dorette.Pierce@dss.ca.gov.

The current mental health program approval will remain in effect pending the issuance of a mental health program approval renewal or the notification of non-renewal.

Enclosures

The following documents are enclosed:

1. Interim Mental Health Program Approval Protocol for STRTPs (*including Medi-Cal Certification requirements*)
2. Application for STRTP Mental Health Program Approval
3. Draft Interim STRTP Regulations

The department intends to make these enclosures available online.

Thirty (30)-day Comment Period

The department is currently accepting comments on the Draft Interim STRTP Regulations, which are included as Enclosure 3.

- Sections 3-19 of the draft interim regulations are set forth in the Interim Mental Health Program Approval Program for STRTPs as Sections 1-17 with Section 2 “Definitions and Terms” included for convenience at the end of the protocol.
- Although stakeholder comments have been received for Sections 2-19 and Section 33 of the Interim STRTP Regulations, the Department will accept comments on the entire Interim STRTP Regulations document.

Please submit your input no later than thirty (30) calendar days from the date of this letter to: Lanette.Castleman@dhcs.ca.gov.

If you have any questions regarding this information notice, please contact the Mental Health Services Division, Licensing and Certification STRTP Unit at (916) 323-1864.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

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