

FAQ for Behavioral Health Providers Regarding Prior Authorization for Individual and Family Therapy Codes

Why is this change taking place?

This change is the result of an increase in the utilization of therapy sessions that are not goal- or outcome-driven and haven't led to improved health outcomes for the member.

When is the effective date?

Prior authorization (PA) request changes will be in effect starting July 1, 2017.

Are the 20 sessions for the calendar year?

Yes, the 20 sessions are for a calendar year. On January 1, 2018, all members will start the year with 20 sessions with their provider.

Will this affect Georgia Families and Georgia Families 360SM members?

Yes, this PA change is for all members.

Can I submit a PA request prior to the member reaching the limit?

Yes, but the authorization will only come into effect after 20 sessions are billed.

Is there a limit to the number of sessions approved by the PA request?

The number of sessions authorized is based on the clinical presentation in the request.

Will therapy be approved for a six-month time frame (similar to skills-based services)?

No, approved sessions will not necessarily be approved for a six-month time frame; they will be specific to clinical presentation and medical necessity. If a PA is for a member making progress and requiring less frequent visits, the request may be approved for 10 sessions over a longer period of time.

What form needs to be submitted with my request?

The PA process for outpatient services is now completed through the Georgia Medical Care Foundation Medicaid Management Information System, so no attached forms are necessary. The provider is responsible for completing all sections of the online form with the most current clinical information.

What are alternative treatment modalities if my therapy request is denied?

Denial letters will specify if the request shows a need for the member to step down to a lower level of care. These services could include skills-based programs such as outpatient skill groups or even referrals to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (or other similar community resources). If the clinical presentation shows a need for an increase in the intensity or level of care, this could be accomplished with more frequent individual therapy, increased family therapy, intensive family intervention services or even referral to a partial hospitalization program/intensive outpatient program.