
CHAPTER 42: MULTI-SYSTEMIC THERAPY

SECTION 42.2: MEDICAL NECESSITY**PAGE(S) 3**

MEDICAL NECESSITY**Recipient Qualifications**

To be eligible for MST, a recipient must meet the following criteria:

- Be capable of participating in this therapy
- Be between the ages of 11-17 (Note: A recipient who turns 18 while in therapy may continue until discharge criteria are met.)
- Have serious emotional/behavioral disturbances
- Involved in, or at serious risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system
- At risk of out-of-home placement as a result of one or more of the following behaviors, or returning from out-of-home placement where one or more of these behaviors was the focus of treatment:
 - Anti-social behavior;
 - Aggressive/violent behavior;
 - Substance-abusing behavior.

Within 60 days of admission to the program, an individual must have on file a psychiatric, psychological or psychosocial assessment performed by a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist or licensed clinical social worker. This evaluation cannot be more than 12 months prior to receiving MST services.

Individuals receiving MST services must meet the following criteria to continue treatment:

- Treatment does not require a more intensive level of care;
- The treatment plan has been developed, implemented, and updated based on the youth's clinical condition and response to treatment, as well as the strengths of the family, with realistic goals and objectives clearly stated;
- Progress is clearly evident in objective terms, but goals of treatment have not yet been achieved, or adjustments in the treatment plan to address the lack of progress are evident; and
- The family is actively involved in treatment, or there are active, persistent efforts being made which are expected to lead to an engagement in treatment.

CHAPTER 42: MULTI-SYSTEMIC THERAPY

SECTION 42.2: MEDICAL NECESSITY**PAGE(S) 3**

Criteria for Referral of Multiple Youth per Family

The MST team may open separate cases on youth within the same family as long as each youth meets the criteria for inclusion in MST. Services are provided and billed specific to the individual. However, with some services, such as family counseling, it is not reasonable to expect a family to attend double counseling sessions. In this case, only one claim for one recipient may be submitted.

Exclusionary Criteria

MST program staff and referral agency staff should have a clear protocol to follow regarding the identification and disposition of inappropriate referrals. Recipients who meet the following criteria may not clinically be appropriate for MST Services:

- Criteria for out of home placement are met due to suicidal, homicidal or psychotic behavior;
- Living independently or the primary care giver cannot be identified despite extensive efforts to locate all extended family, adult friends and other potential surrogate care givers;
- The referral problem is limited to a serious sexual misbehavior; or
- The primary diagnosis is a pervasive developmental disorder.

Recipients who are inmates of a public institution which is under the jurisdiction or responsibility of a governmental unit are not eligible for MST. This includes juveniles confined involuntarily for any length of time in State or Federal prisons, jails, detention facilities or other penal facilities while awaiting criminal proceedings, penal dispositions, or other involuntary detainment determinations (i.e. juveniles being held involuntarily in a detention center awaiting trial; involuntarily residing at a wilderness camp under governmental control or involuntarily residing in a half-way house under governmental control).

Discharge Criteria

Listed below describes when a recipient no longer meets the medical necessity criteria and resulting in the recipient's discharge.

- The treatment plan goals and objectives have been substantially met;
- The criteria for higher or lower level of care are met;
- The recipient, family, guardian and/or custodian are not engaging in treatment or are not following program rules and regulations despite attempts to address this behavior;

CHAPTER 42: MULTI-SYSTEMIC THERAPY

SECTION 42.2: MEDICAL NECESSITY

PAGE(S) 3

- The consent for treatment has been withdrawn; or
- The recipient and/or family have not benefited from MST despite documented efforts to engage and there is no reasonable expectation of progress at this level of care with continued treatment.

The determination to discharge a youth from MST should always be based upon measurable behavior change rather than arbitrary and predetermined criteria, such as length of treatment. However, discharge from MST must occur when few of the overarching goals have been met, and despite consistent and repeated efforts by the therapist and supervisor to overcome the barriers to further success: the treatment has reached a point of diminishing returns for the additional time invested.

Runaway Policy

If the recipient runs away, the family may be engaged in treatment for up to 14 days. For additional days, the provider must seek approval from the Bureau. To request continuation of services after 14 days, the Bureau must be notified by telephone, email, or mail. The request must accompany service logs documenting progress towards re-engaging with the recipient. If the request is granted and the youth has not returned home by the 30th day, the recipient must be discharged.

NOTE: To re-enter MST after discharge criteria have been previously met, the youth must meet the admission criteria and be treated as a new admission. If admission criteria are not met, the youth should be referred to an appropriate higher or lower level of services.