



**Connecticut Department of Social Services  
Medical Assistance Program  
Provider Bulletin**

**PB 2007-78**

**Policy Transmittal 2007-13  
January 2008**

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Starkowski".

Michael P. Starkowski  
Commissioner

January 1, 2008  
Effective Date

**TO: Freestanding Mental Health Clinics**  
**SUBJECT: Change in Frequency Allowed for Psychiatric Diagnostic Interview Examinations**

Please be advised that the Department has revised the limitations applicable to psychiatric diagnostic interview examinations performed in Mental Health Clinics under both the Behavioral Health Partnership and the Connecticut Medical Assistance Program. The current restriction of one evaluation per year per patient has been eliminated.

Effective January 1, 2008, the Department will limit reimbursement to no more than one (1) psychiatric evaluation per performing provider per episode of care for the same client. This means that a mental health clinic will be able to be reimbursed for more than one diagnostic interview for an episode of care as long as each interview is medically necessary and is performed by a different professional or allied health professional performing within the scope of their practice.

A diagnostic interview is billed using Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) code 90801 or 90802. The CPT guidelines clarify that a "Psychiatric diagnostic interview examination includes a history, mental status, and a disposition, and may include communication with family or other sources, ordering and medical interpretation of laboratory or other medical diagnostic studies." Risk and strength assessments as well as brief screenings for problems such as substance abuse, trauma history and cognitive functioning are routinely components of an interview and are not separately reimbursable as full diagnostic interviews.

Additional diagnostic interview examinations are not considered medically necessary when routinely performed as part of the admission or ongoing care process at a clinic. An additional diagnostic interview examination may be medically necessary during a single episode of care when it is necessary to have a psychologist perform an interview to initiate or determine the need for psychological testing. An additional diagnostic interview examination may also be

medically necessary during a single episode of care when a client's presentation requires that a physician or a psychiatric advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) evaluate the need for medication for a client who is in the care of a non-medical practitioner.

An episode of care is considered to be terminated if the client has been discharged by the clinic or if there has been an extended cessation in treatment defined as four months from the last time the patient was treated at the clinic.

The clinic will be able to be reimbursed for medically necessary diagnostic interview examinations regardless of whether they are performed on the same date or different dates.

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**Responsible Unit:** DSS, Medical Care Administration, Medical Policy Unit, Timothy Bowles, Lead Planning Analyst, at 860-424-4984.

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