NWF Health Network
Policy & Procedure

Series: 300: Medical and Behavioral Health Care

Policy Name: Higher Level of Care Staffing

Policy Number: 309

Origination Date: 9/1/2008 **Revised:** Board Meeting of 09/10/2026

Regulation: Ch. 39, F.S.

Florida Medicaid: Community Behavioral Health Services Coverage and Limitations Handbook

Referenced Documents:300-309 x 1, Behavioral Health Multidisciplinary Team Meeting Note 300-309 x 2, Higher Level of Care Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) Staffing Participants and Outcome

Policy

It is the policy of NWF Health Network (NWFHN), to utilize the Higher Level of Care Multi-Disciplinary Team in accordance with Florida Medicaid to assess children with mental health and/or substance abuse needs for different levels of therapeutic intervention.

Procedure

A. NWFHN will provide coordination and act as liaison in obtaining authorization for therapeutic services, to include specialized therapeutic foster care and therapeutic group care, from the child's Medicaid Managed Assistance (MMA) plan.

B. A Higher Level of Care Multi-Disciplinary Team (HLOC MDT) case staffing are required and held prior to placement in order to ensure that all behavioral health treatment options are addressed and considered, including less-restrictive alternatives that may offer comparable benefit for the following levels of care:

   1. Specialized Therapeutic Foster Care (STFC) Level I
   2. STFC Level II
   3. Therapeutic Group Care (TGC)/Specialized Therapeutic Group Home (STGH)
   4. Statewide Inpatient Psychiatric Program (SIPP) / Residential Treatment Center (RTC)
   5. Behavioral Qualified Residential Treatment Provider (BQRTP)
   6. Substance Abuse Inpatient Residential Programs
   7. In-state/Out-of-State Residential Programs

C. The HLOC MDT will be chaired by the NWFHN Utilization Management Specialist (Behavioral Health MDT Facilitator).

   1. The core members of the MDT should include:

      a. Utilization Management Specialist or designee;

      b. Child Welfare Case Manager or Targeted Case Manager (community children only);

c. Clinical representatives familiar with the current clinical treatment and condition of the child and caregivers;

d. NWFHN Intake/Placement staff;

2. Included in the MDT process are other child advocates within the community including parents, foster parents, guardian ad litem, attorneys, providers, school, etc.

3. Documents required for the HLOC MDT Therapeutic Packet include, but are not limited to:

a. HLOC MDT staffing form;

b. Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment (CBHA) (if available);

c. Treatment Plan and Progress Notes;

d. School Individual Educational Plans (IEP) (if applicable);

e. Incident reports;

f. Baker Act Discharge Summaries (if applicable).

g. Current Treatment Records (If applicable).

4. The HLOC MDT staffing form will contain the child's current information, including diagnosis, medications, intensity and frequency of maladaptive behaviors, reason for removal and permanency plan, documentation of other services attempted, and discharge plan (See *Staffing Form*).

5. A child's medical needs will also be addressed by the HLOC MDT whenever there are concerns to be addressed or the issues impact treatment.

D. Medical necessity criteria for decision making for the various levels of therapeutic care are currently specified in the Medicaid Handbook.

1. The Utilization Management Specialist (BH MDT Specialist) will ensure that medical necessity criteria are established.

2. Documentation of the results of the HLOC MDT will be documented.

3. NWFHN will monitor to ensure that necessary services are subsequently provided.

E. The HLOC MDT Outcome Form includes a confidentiality statement and records attendance, outcome, recommendations, committee member's approval/ dissent, and any additional comments attendees may want to document (See *Staffing Outcome Form*).

F. The Utilization Management Specialist (BH MDT Specialist) or designee will also be responsible for:

1. Coordination and notification of the HLOC MDT staffing schedules, including notification to all parties of HLOC MDT cancellation and subsequent rescheduling.

2. Maintenance of a centralized log ("Specialized Level of Care Log") to track referrals to the HLOC MDT, outcomes, level of care, provider, therapist, and case manager.

G. Placement in a home licensed as a specialized therapeutic foster home is intended for children eligible for specialized therapeutic foster care services.

1. Any exception to that requirement must be approved in writing by the Higher Level of Care Multi-Disciplinary Team and must comply with NWFHN's policy related to foster home waivers.

2. The HLOC MDT staffing form will be used as documentation.