



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL COMMAND
2050 WORTH ROAD
FORT SAM HOUSTON, TX 78234-6000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

OTSG/MEDCOM Policy Memo 09--041

MCCS

24 JUN 2009

Expires 24 Jun 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR Commanders, MEDCOM Regional Medical Commands

SUBJECT: Minimum Amount of Direct Patient Care for Behavioral Health (BH) Providers

1. Purpose: To provide guidance on establishing minimal amounts of direct patient care required from behavioral health providers assigned to medical treatment facilities (MTFs).
2. Proponent: The proponent for this policy is the Assistant Chief of Staff, Health Policy and Services, Behavioral Health Proponency Office.
3. Responsibilities:
 - a. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Health Policy and Services, through the Proponency Office for BH, is responsible for the distribution of BH policies and reviewing, updating, and deleting existing policies conflicting with these requirements.
 - b. MTF Commanders and local BH leadership will ensure all BH providers are aware of and are following the procedures outlined below. They will further ensure administrative staff shortages are addressed.
 - c. BH providers are responsible for complying with these procedures.
4. Discussion: BH providers must divide their time between direct patient care and administrative tasks. Excessive administrative burden on BH providers decreases available patient care resources. Decreasing the amount of time providers spend in administrative tasks is crucial to maximizing providers' clinical time and improving increased patient capacity and access to care.
5. Policy:
 - a. The intent of this policy is to increase the amount of time BH providers spend in direct patient care.
 - b. This policy applies to BH care providers assigned to the MTF in roles identified as being primary clinical. It does not apply to:

MCCS

SUBJECT: Minimum Amount of Direct Patient Care for Behavioral Health (BH) Providers

(1) Ancillary or "guest" providers assigned to other units but providing clinical services as a courtesy or to fulfill minimum patient contact requirements for maintaining privileges.

(2) FORSCOM providers performing duties in the MTF in accordance with any agreements established between MEDCOM and FORSCOM units.

(3) MTF clinical staff assigned to positions that are primarily administrative (e.g., department chiefs)

(4) MTF staff assigned to positions primarily involving teaching duties (e.g., directors of training)

(5) Any provider the MTF Commander exempts based on local operational needs.

c. At all times, Commanders will fully leverage existing, non-provider administrative resources to free up provider time. This may include augmenting BH administrative resources with support from other areas within the MTF, aggressively executing hiring actions, and eliminating unnecessary administrative tasks for BH providers.

d. At times and in specific behavioral health clinical settings where access to care standards are not met, in order to maximize provider availability, MTF Commanders will:

(1) Establish minimum amounts of time providers must devote exclusively to direct patient care, based on local clinical and administrative requirements. These amounts may vary from setting to setting within the MTF based on local conditions/missions, input from BH service or department chiefs.

(a) Ensure military providers in department chief positions or above and other executive leadership roles see only the patient load required to ensure clinical skill proficiency.

(b) Military providers in clinical roles: ensure all other military providers are available 218 workdays each year and six hours in clinic each workday. The standard is 6 patient care hours available each day.

(c) Civilian providers in department chief positions or above and other executive leadership roles: ensure department level leaders are to see only the patient load required to ensure clinical skill proficiency.

(d) Civilian (non-contractor) providers in clinical roles: ensure other civilian providers are available 223 workdays each year and 6.5 hours in clinic each workday. The standard is 6 patients seen each day.

(e) Contractor providers in clinical roles: ensure all full-time (1920 hours) contract providers are available 240 workdays each year and seven hours in clinic care each workday.

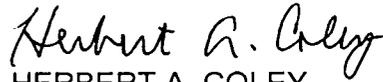
MCCS

SUBJECT: Minimum Amount of Direct Patient Care for Behavioral Health (BH) Providers

(2) Monitor workload databases to ensure compliance with the benchmarks they establish.

e. MTF Commanders remain free to establish minimum levels of patient care required to maintain clinical privileges for all providers working in their facilities. Additional patient care time may be added to this minimum amount in order to meet the requirements of this policy.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


HERBERT A. COLEY
Chief of Staff