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**SAPC BULLETIN NO. 17-06-START**

June 30, 2017

**TO:** Los Angeles County Substance Use Disorder  
Contracted Treatment Providers

**FROM:** Wesley L. Ford, M.A., M.P.H., Director  
Substance Abuse Prevention and Control



**SUBJECT: MEDICAL NECESSITY DETERMINATION**

This bulletin supersedes SAPC Bulletin #13-01 and should be used by providers to determine medical necessity for all Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC) funded substance use disorder treatment programs. Under the System Transformation to Advance Recovery and Treatment – Organized Delivery System (START-ODS), all patients seeking treatment must meet the following medical necessity criteria:

**1. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) diagnosis**

- Adults (age 21+)
  - Meet criteria for at least one diagnosis from the current DSM for Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders, with the exception of Tobacco-Related Disorders and Non-Substance-Related Disorders.
- Young Adults (age 18 – 20) and Youth (age 12 – 17)
  - Either meet criteria for the DSM criteria specified for adults;  
OR
  - Be determined to be at-risk for developing a SUD (see *Definition of At-Risk for Individuals up to Age 21* section of the SAPC Provider Manual for additional details).

**2. American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) treatment criteria for services**

- Patients must meet the ASAM treatment criteria for services, including the ASAM adolescent treatment criteria, when applicable.

Additionally, medical necessity may now be established by Licensed Practitioners of the Healing Arts (LPHA). Under the new program requirements established by the START-ODS, these include the following staff:

- Physician
- Nurse Practitioner
- Physician Assistant
- Registered Nurse
- Registered Pharmacist
- Licensed Clinical Psychologist
- Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
- Licensed-Eligible Practitioner: Working under the supervision of a licensed clinician

### ***Process for Determining Medical Necessity***

#### **Verification of Medical Necessity**

Medical necessity must be verified by an LPHA via a face-to-face or telehealth review with the individual conducting the assessment (e.g., SUD counselor). The review must at a minimum involve the signature of the LPHA verifying and signing off on medical necessity and the signature of the SUD counselor or other LPHA who conducted the assessment.

#### **Timeliness of Medical Necessity Determination**

The LPHA must determine medical necessity within fifteen (15) calendar days of the treatment admission date, and must document the basis for the diagnosis and medical necessity within the individual patient records.

Providers should refer to the SAPC Provider Manual for more information on the criteria needed to establish medical necessity. Please see the following link for the Provider Manual:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc/NetworkProviders.htm>.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact (626) 299-4193.

WLF:dd