

Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) Training Questions and Answers

12/9/08

1) How are partial units billed?

Add up the total minutes for the specified date of service; divide by fifteen (15) and round down to the nearest whole number. This methodology is consistent with other state Medicaid mental health programs.

2) How are separate places of service billed on the same date of service?

Programming is being changed to allow separate line items for the same date of service and place of service when applicable to accommodate reporting of different places of service on the same date.

3) Can services be provided to a youth in a jail or detention center?

No. Section 1905(a) (A) of the Social Security Act specifically excludes Federal Financial Participation (Federal match) for medical care provided to inmates of a public institution, except when the inmate is a patient in a medical institution. An individual is an inmate when serving time for a criminal offense or confined involuntarily in State or Federal prisons, jails, detention facilities or other penal facilities. This policy also applies when the individual is awaiting criminal proceedings, penal dispositions or other involuntary detainment determinations. A facility is a public institution when it is under the responsibility of a governmental unit, or over which a governmental unit exercises final administrative control.

4) How do we bill for a child who has insurance in addition to Medicaid?

You must first bill the third party insurance, and then bill Medicaid reporting the total billed amount. After the third party payment is made, Medicaid will pay the difference between the billed amount, and the third party payment up to the Medicaid allowable for covered services. Federal regulations specify that Medicaid is the payer of last resort.

5) Can more than one child in a family receive 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.

6) After a case closes, if a family has difficulty months or a year later, can we go back into the home and provide a 2-3 week span of services, referred to as a “booster”, to get the family back up to speed?

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.

7) Can services be provided by a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) or a person working towards an LPC or LMFT license?

MST staffing requirements allow for “licensed master’s, non-licensed master’s or bachelor’s level behavioral health staff” to provide services. All licensed behavioral health practitioners must operate within the scope of practice specified by their respective licensing board regulations. Only licensed behavioral health practitioners may independently perform therapeutic interventions and supervision of non-licensed staff. Non-licensed master’s level and bachelor’s level staff may not provide supervision and must be supervised by a licensed master’s level practitioner for all clinical activities.

8) Can an LPC complete the required psychosocial evaluation?

No. The Rule specifies “A psychiatric, psychological or psychosocial evaluation completed by a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist or licensed clinical social worker...”

9) Can you bill more than one service in a day? For instance if you are meeting with mom about parenting practice and then you have to go to the school to deal with a crisis - do you bill for both?

Yes. Each place of service would be a separate line item on the CMS-1500 billing form.

10) Can you bill for telephone calls?

Phone calls to MST families and collateral contacts are billable as long as they are related to a service intervention provided to an eligible recipient, rather than administration-related. Thus, a collateral contact with a school teacher would be billable, while a call to schedule an appointment or a supervisory discussion between staff members would not.

11) Can an MST provider employ bachelor's level staff?

Bachelor's level staff is allowed, but their duties are limited, they can comprise no more than one-third of a treatment team and they must have the education and experience specified in Rule. They must be supervised by a licensed master's level practitioner. Currently, there are no MST teams in LA which choose to employ bachelor's level staff.