TREATMENT TECHNICAL ADVISORY #09

SUBJECT: Early Intervention

ISSUED: November 30, 2011

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this advisory is to establish the process and expectations for Level 0.5 of the *American Society of Addiction Medicine's Patient Placement Criteria, 2nd Edition-Revised (ASAM PPC-2R)* in substance use disorder treatment.

SCOPE:

This advisory impacts all substance abuse PIHPs and their providers who offer substance use disorder (SUD) services.

BACKGROUND:

Substance abuse treatment early intervention programs are effective with clients who are considered risky users, those experiencing mild or moderate problems, as well as those who are experiencing some of the symptoms of abuse or dependence (DHHS CSAP, 2002). Early intervention services would also be appropriate for those individuals who are considered to be in the pre-contemplative stage of change.

Treatment and prevention service providers may offer early intervention services to clients who, for a known reason, are at risk for developing alcohol or other drug abuse or dependence, but for whom there is not yet sufficient information to document alcohol or other drug abuse or dependence. Those staff providing early intervention services must be supervised by appropriately credentialed staff. The goals of early intervention include:

- Increasing protective factors that promote a reduction in substance use.
- Improving a client's readiness to change.
- Preparing clients for the next level of treatment.
- Integrating new skills into clients' lives on a daily basis.

The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment's (CSAT) *Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) 35* (DHHS CSAT, 1999b), indicates providers can be helpful at any time in the change process by accurately assessing the client's readiness to change by utilizing the appropriate motivational strategies to assist their move to the next level. Clients already engaged in more intensive services (outpatient [OP], intensive outpatient [IOP], residential) should not receive early intervention services. However, clients who are at the level of contemplation that makes them appropriate for treatment may receive early intervention services as an interim service.

A workgroup was convened to determine standards for early intervention treatment. The workgroup was comprised of representatives from PIHPs, providers and the Office of Recovery Oriented Systems of Care.

Revisions to the *Substance Abuse Administrative Rules* have designated early intervention as a "substance abuse treatment service category." The Michigan Administrative Code, R325.14102(a)(1), defines early intervention as a specifically focused treatment program, including stage-based intervention for individuals with substance use disorders as identified through a screening or assessment process, and individuals who may not meet the threshold of abuse or dependence.

ASAM PPC-2R defines early intervention as "services that explore and address any problems or risk factors that appear to be related to the use of alcohol and other drugs and that help the individual to recognize the harmful consequences of inappropriate use. Such individuals may not appear to meet the diagnostic criteria for a substance use disorder, but require early intervention for education and further assessment," (Mee-Lee et. al., 2001). Ideally, early intervention services in Michigan will follow *ASAM PPC-2R* criteria while staying within the guidelines of the administrative rules.

It is important to note that, while this is a new service category for the treatment field, the prevention field has been providing this type of service for some time. "Prevention" refers to this level of service as Problem Identification and Referral (PIR), and defines it as "helping a person with an acute personal problem involving, or related to SUDs, to reduce the risk that the person might be required to enter the SUDs treatment system" (U.S. CFR, 1996). Individuals eligible for PIR services are identified as having indulged in illegal or age inappropriate use of tobacco, alcohol and/or illicit drugs. These individuals are screened to determine if their behavior can be reversed through education. Designed to increase and enhance protective factors that reduce and prevent SUDs, the assessment for, and the implementation of PIR services, may be population-based or focused on the individual. These potential participants of PIR services do not meet the threshold for substance abuse or dependence, and no diagnosis is made. PIR services include, but are not limited to, interventions such as, employee assistance programs, and student assistance and education programs targeting persons charged with driving under the influence (DUI), or driving while intoxicated. The Institute of Medicine's "Continuum of Care" model (Institutes of Medicine, 1994), classifies prevention interventions based on their target populations. For example, PIR interventions targeting individuals using substances, but not diagnosed with a substance use disorder, would be classified as "case identification" services, also described as "early intervention."

Early intervention as a treatment service provides an intervention that is appropriate for the individual and their stage of change, as well as access to clinical services. Clients are screened on an individual level only, and a diagnosis is required, at least on a provisional basis. Intervention plans, or at minimum a participation goal, are developed for this level of service. Participants are not required to meet abuse or dependence thresholds for early intervention services.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Community Group Activist/Recovery or Other Volunteer:** Not recognized as a credential category; responsibilities determine credentialing requirement.
- **Intervention Plan:** A minimal plan that sets forth the goals, expectations, and implementation procedures for an intervention. Specific activities that intend to change the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, or practices of individuals.
- **Prevention Professional:** An individual who has licensure as identified in the *Credentialing and Staff Qualifications* portion of the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) CA contract, **AND** is working within his or her licensure-specified scope of practice, or an individual who

has an approved certification. These individuals have responsibility for implementing a range of prevention plans, programs and services.

- **Specially Focused Staff:** Individuals responsible for carrying out specific activities relative to treatment programs and are not responsible for clinical activities. May include case managers or AMS staff. Staff works under the direction of specialists or supervisors. Certification is not required, although appropriate licensure may be required depending on the scope of practice.
- **Stages of Change:**
  - **Pre-contemplation:** clients are not considering change at this stage, and do not intend to change behaviors in the foreseeable future.
  - **Contemplation:** clients have become aware that a problem exists, may recognize that they should be concerned about their behavior, but are typically ambivalent about their use, and changing their behavior.
  - **Preparation:** clients understand that the negative consequences of continued substance use outweigh any perceived benefits and begin specific planning for change. They may begin to set goals for themselves, and make a commitment to stop using.
  - **Action:** clients choose a strategy for change and actively pursue it. This may involve drastic lifestyle changes and significant challenges for the client.
  - **Maintenance:** clients work to sustain sobriety and prevent relapse. They become aware of situations that will trigger their use of substances and actively avoid those when possible.
- **Substance Abuse Treatment Specialist (SATS):** An individual who has licensure as identified in the *Credentialing and Staff Qualifications* portion of the MDHHS PIHP contract, **AND** is working within his or her licensure-specified scope of practice, **OR** an individual who has an approved certification. These are clinical staff providing substance use disorder treatment and counseling, and are responsible for the provision of treatment programs and services.*****
- **Substance Abuse Treatment Practitioner (SATP):** An individual who has a registered Michigan Certification Board for Addiction Professionals (MCBAP) certification development plan, that is timely in its implementation, **AND** is supervised by an individual with a Certified Clinical Supervisor credential through MCBAP or a registered development plan to obtain the supervisory credential, while completing the requirements of the plan (6000 hours).*****

**** The above definitions can be found in the SUD Services Policy Manual included in the MDHHS PIHP contract agreement. Please refer to the contract agreement for a full description of the credentialing requirements.***

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Clients who are appropriate for this level of treatment, at the very least, shall meet the criteria in the current edition of the *ASAM PPC-2R*, for level 0.5 or its equivalent. The criteria are as follows:

- The individual who is appropriate for level 0.5 services shows evidence of problems and risk factors that appear to be related to substance use, but do not meet the diagnostic criteria for a Substance-Related Disorder, as defined in the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM).
- Dimensions 1, 2, and 3: concerns are stable or being addressed through appropriate services.

- Dimensions 4, 5, and 6: one of the following specifications in these dimensions must be met.
  - Dimension 4: the individual expresses a willingness to gain an understanding of how his/her current alcohol or drug use may be harmful or impair the ability to meet responsibilities and achieve goals.
  - Dimension 5: the individual does not understand the need to alter his/her current pattern of use, *or* the individual needs to acquire the specific skills needed to change his/her current pattern of use.
  - Dimension 6: the individual's social support system consists of others whose substance use patterns prevent them from meeting responsibilities or achieving goals, or the individual's family members are abusing substances which increases the individual's risk for a substance use disorder, or the individual's significant other holds values regarding substance use that create a conflict for the individual, or the individual's significant other condones or encourages inappropriate use of substances.

Services should be focused on meeting the client where they are within the stages of change. Some clients may be appropriate for a higher level of care, but uncomfortable engaging in formal treatment, or at a stage of change that may not significantly benefit from formal treatment services. In this instance, early intervention services would be allowable. Clients may be screened through the local Access Management System (AMS) and, if appropriate, referred for early intervention services at the provider of their choice. However, clients may also be screened through the early intervention program, as determined by the appropriate coordinating agency. Treatment providers will perform, at minimum, a screening to determine appropriate services for the client, as well as to measure future progress. The treatment provider and the client will then establish goals to achieve during the course of treatment/intervention. Clients may then be offered an appropriate intervention, based on their established goals. Some clients will require referral for further assessment or to another level of treatment due to emerging concerns.

Early intervention services should be time-limited and short-term, and may be used as a stepping-stone to the next level for those clients who need it. Early intervention may also be used as an interim service, while an individual waits for their assessed level of care to become available.

<u>Allowable Services in Early Intervention</u>

- **Group:** Prevention and/or treatment occurring in a setting of multiple persons with similar concerns/situations gathered together with an appropriately credentialed staff that is intended to produce prevention of, healing or recovery from, substance abuse and misuse. Group models used in early intervention prevention and treatment are not intended to be psychotherapeutic or limited, and may include:
  - **Educational groups**, which educate clients about substance abuse.
  - **Skill development groups**, which teach skills needed to attain and sustain recovery, for example: relapse triggers and tools to sustain recovery.
  - **Support groups**, which support members and provide a forum to share information about engaging in treatment, maintaining abstinence and managing recovery. These may be managed by peers or credentialed staff.
  - **Interpersonal process groups**, which look at major developmental issues that contribute to addiction or interfere with recovery.

- **Individual:** One-on-one education and/or counseling between a provider and the client.

- **Alcohol and Drug Education:** May occur in a group setting as outlined above (educational groups), or may be used as independent study, with the provider giving "assignments" to be discussed at the next session.

- **Referral/Linking/Coordination of Services:** Office-based service activity performed by the primary service provider to address needs identified, and/or to ensure follow-through with outside services/community resources, and/or to establish the client with other substance use disorder services.

Please note that the above services are offered in many treatment settings, and may be utilized for those clients seeking early intervention services. However, in order to be billed as an early intervention service, a program must have a license for early intervention.

Clients may engage in more than one of the above interventions at a time, based upon individual need. If it becomes evident that a client is in need of a higher level of care, arrangements should be made to transfer that client into the appropriate level of service. Also to be taken into consideration at that point, is the client's readiness to change and willingness to engage in treatment.

The transferring of clients between treatment providers and counselors often results in client dropout. Thus, what is frequently termed a "warm hand-off," connecting the client with the new provider/therapist directly by way of a three-way call or other appropriate communication, is preferred when transitioning clients.

Eligibility

Prevention: Persons identified and assessed as having indulged in illegal or age inappropriate use of tobacco, alcohol and/or illicit drugs that do not meet the threshold for substance abuse or dependence, and for whom no diagnosis is made; i.e., college or military substance abuse; alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug–impaired driving; children of alcoholics; children of substance abusing parents; Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder; and HIV/AIDs.

Treatment: As previously noted, clients seeking this level of care, must meet, at a minimum, Level 0.5 of the *ASAM PPC-2R*, and be experiencing some problems and/or consequences associated with their substance use. For example, those who are seeking services related to a first time DUI charge would not be eligible without also meeting ASAM criteria. Clients already engaged in more intensive services, or at a level of contemplation that makes them appropriate for treatment, should not receive early intervention services. However, those clients waiting for treatment services may access early intervention as an interim service.

Funding

Funding for early intervention services comes from treatment and prevention. However, early intervention services performed or provided within a prevention program shall not be funded with Community Grant dollars. The Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System for early intervention services provided with treatment funding is *H0022*, which encompasses many of the allowable services. The Medicaid Provider Manual lists early intervention as an allowable service (12.1.B, 2011).

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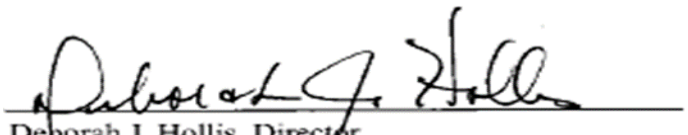

Deborah J. Hollis, Director
Bureau of Substance Abuse and Addiction Services