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MEDICAL SOCIETY

Every physician matters, each patient counts.

Reviewing Massachusetts' Behavioral Health Wellness Examination Webinar

Presented in partnership with the Massachusetts Chapters of the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Family Practice, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society

Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Please be advised that this event is being recorded

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Q&A

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Faculty

Moderator

- Barbara S. Spivak, MD, President, Massachusetts Medical Society

Presenters

- Kevin Beagan, Deputy Commissioner, Massachusetts Division of Insurance
- Hugh Taylor, MD, President-elect, Massachusetts Medical Society
- Sarah Gordon Chiaramida, Esq., Senior Vice President and General Counsel, representing the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans
- Gregory Harris, MD, MPH, DFAPA, Senior Medical Director for Mental Health, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

Mental Health Wellness Examination Overview/Requirements

Bulletin 2024-02 Appendix A

The **Mental Health Wellness Examination** is performed by a licensed mental health professional* or by a primary care provider. The **Mental Health Wellness Examination** is defined by law to consist of a screen or assessment that seeks to identify any behavioral or mental health needs and appropriate resources for treatment. The Mental Health Wellness Examination is defined as:

1. Observation, a behavioral health screening, education, consultation on healthy lifestyle changes, referral to ongoing treatment, mental health services, other necessary supports, and discussion of potential options for medication; and
2. Age-appropriate screenings or observations to understand a covered person's mental health history, personal history, mental or cognitive state and, when appropriate, relevant adult input through screenings, interviews, and questions.

Providers of Service

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*Licensed Mental Health Professional is a licensed physician who specializes in the practice of psychiatry, a licensed psychologist, a licensed supervised mental health counselor, a licensed independent clinical social worker, a licensed certified social worker, a licensed mental health counselor, a licensed psychiatric nurse mental health clinical specialist, a licensed psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, a licensed physician assistant who practices in the area of psychiatry, a licensed alcohol and drug counselor I, or a licensed marriage and family therapist with the lawful scope of practice for such therapist.

Content of Behavioral Health Wellness Examination

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1) History

- a. Current mental health concerns; as described by the patient, parent, or guardian;
- b. Past and current mental health diagnoses;
- c. Social history, including family and relationship status; social determinants of health; use of tobacco, alcohol, cannabis and derivatives, and other substances;
- d. History of exposure to trauma or violence/adverse childhood events;
- e. Gender identity and sexual orientation;
- f. Family history of mental illness;
- g. A review of systems to include anxiety/panic; guilt/hopeless; self- injurious or risky behavior; depression; somatic symptoms; suicidal thoughts or plans;
- h. School or work performance; and
- i. Use of social media.

- 2) **Brief Mental Health Exam** includes elements of appearance, behavior, agitation, speech, mood, affect, thought process and content, orientation, cognition, insight, and judgment.

Content of Behavioral Health Wellness Examination

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- 3) One or more **Screening Tests** appropriate for the patient's age
 - a. The purpose of the screening test will be to methodically search for mental health problems that may not be evident based on the History and Mental Health Examination.
 - b. Age-appropriate screening tool will be chosen from the “toolkit.”
 - c. All tests in the screening tools have been validated.
 - d. At least one screening test that is appropriate for each age range will be conducted.
 - e. Plans should not require a specific tool but allow the clinician to make the determination.

- 4) **Shared Decision Making**

Shared decision making may include education and counseling on healthy lifestyle changes and discussion of the need for further evaluation and treatment.

Content of Behavioral Health Wellness Examination

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5) Outcome and recommendations

Summarize findings and interventions provided.

Provide diagnosis if appropriate *but not required for payment*.

Education around behavioral lifestyle changes, reinforcement of healthy behavior (catch someone doing well), documentation of strengths, and provision of positive supports (motivational interviewing, etc.).

Explicit next steps and reference to any outcomes and/or recommendations documented as evidence the Mental Health Wellness Examination was performed as a *modular separately identifiable service* for billing.

6) Behavioral Health Screening Toolkit**

**Behavioral Screening Toolkit is not an exhaustive or exclusive list of validated screening tools. It is intended that the evolution of the field may allow newer tools as they are developed and chosen by the PCP or Licensed Mental Health Professional performing the examination. These screening tools are an aid for a comprehensive assessment of an individual's behavioral and mental health status. Included may be toolkits developed by Boston Children's Hospital, Massachusetts Medical Society, Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association, Massachusetts Psychiatric Society, or national healthcare agencies.

Guidelines About Behavioral Health Wellness Examination

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1. There are three options for the execution of the Mental Health Wellness Examination:
 - a. Licensed Mental Health Professional* alone;
 - b. Primary Care Provider alone; or
 - c. Integrated into the annual wellness PCP visit as a combination of both.
2. The Mental Health Wellness Examination may require 20-60 minutes to provide.
3. The Mental Health Wellness Examination is a screening and assessment examination with an educational component and outcome recommendations.
4. The Mental Health Wellness Examination identifies behavioral health needs and appropriate resources and/or treatments.
5. Prevention is a key aspect to the Mental Health Wellness Examination in which issues are identified early and outcomes/recommendations documented to promote healthy behaviors.

Guidelines About Behavioral Health Wellness Examination

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6. Outcomes/Recommendations may include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Tracking ACES and/or social determinants of illness;
 - b. Supporting wellness and self-care activities;
 - c. Emerging behavioral health diagnoses;
 - d. A single session of psychoeducation/motivational interviewing;
 - e. Use of Artificial Intelligence or smart phone Apps;
 - f. Referral to another skilled provider; and
 - g. Activation of the Behavioral Healthcare System.
7. This is not a treatment statute.
8. Documentation requirements for this Mental Health Wellness Examination must be a separately identifiable service from the medical documentation of the PCP visit.
9. Any positive screens must include recommendations for these positive findings.
10. There should be a clear understanding of next steps generated by the findings of the Mental Health Wellness Examination.

Using Codes for Behavioral Health Wellness Exams

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By no later than March 31, 2024,

- Carriers to update their systems to enable covered members to obtain behavioral health wellness exams from network providers.
- Carriers are also expected to update their billing systems so that health care providers are able to process claims for the annual behavioral health wellness exam using the following codes:
 - Procedure Code: 90791** (An integrated biopsychosocial assessment, including history, mental status, and recommendations),
 - Diagnosis Code: Z13.30** (Encounter for screening examination for mental health and behavioral disorders, unspecified); and
 - Modifier: 33** (to make clear that the evaluation is for preventive purposes and not an initial evaluation due to a particular presenting issue/illness, and to indicate that it is not subject to cost-sharing).

NOTE: The **Mental Health Wellness Examination** may be provided by the primary care provider as part of the annual preventive visit, with systems in place to charge for both.

Patient Education and Resources

- We recommend that each patient be made aware during the exam/visit that this visit constitutes the annual **Mental Health Wellness Examination** and that there may be follow-up services necessary. This communication also raises awareness of this new coverage and eliminates redundancy from multiple providers.

Questions ?

Select Referral Resources

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

[Massachusetts Behavioral Health Help Line](#)

Call or text 833-773-2445 or online chat 24/7/365. Connects individuals and families to outpatient, urgent, and immediate crisis care services for mental health and substance use in the Commonwealth.

[MCPAP](#) **Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program**

This free psychiatric consultation program provides access to and facilitates referrals for behavioral health care. MCPAP is available for all children and families through their primary care physicians regardless of insurance. MCPAP is free for all PCPs.

[MCPAP for Moms](#) **Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program for Mothers**

This free service is designed particularly for obstetric, pediatric, primary care, and psychiatric providers serving pregnant and postpartum women. Pediatricians should refer mothers with mental health concerns or positive screening results to their obstetric or primary care providers who can obtain assistance directly from MCPAP for Moms. MCPAP for Moms assists pregnant and postpartum women and their children up to one year after delivery. Fathers and other caregivers experiencing postpartum depression can also access MCPAP for Moms.

Select Referral Resources (continued)

SUICIDE PREVENTION

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) (formerly the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline)

A dedicated 3-digit number for callers looking for suicidal crisis support or support for emotional distress.

[National Institute of Mental Health](#) (NIMH)

The NIMH offers a number of screening tools, evidence-based clinical pathways for youth and adults, and the Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ) Toolkit which is available in 14 languages. NIMH and other experts have recently developed a clinical pathway for PCPs to implement [risk screening for adult patients](#) in their practices. The information will include details on how to conduct suicide risk screening and when and how to intervene.

SCREENING TOOLS

[Pediatric Mental Health Gateway](#)

The MA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics offers a curated collection of mental health resources and links for clinical teams.

Select Referral Resources (continued)

SUBSTANCE USE

MCSTAP Massachusetts Consultation Service for Treatment of Addiction and Pain

MCSTAP provides physicians and their staff with evidence-based tools, real-time consultations on safe prescribing and managing care for adult patients with chronic pain, substance use disorders, or both, and referral information.

ASAP-MCPAP Adolescent Substance Use and Addiction Program - Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program

ASAP-MCPAP services are growing to offer telehealth counseling for adolescents who use substances. ASAP-MCPAP's substance use counselor will offer substance use evaluation and care to pediatric primary care patients. In order to access this service, primary care providers should continue to call their regional MCPAP line and ask to connect with the ASAP team. The ASAP consultant on-call will speak with the primary care provider and determine if virtual substance use counseling would be appropriate for their patient. The ASAP-MCPAP staff will complete intake information and reach out to your patient to schedule the first appointment.

Select Referral Resources (continued)

SUBSTANCE USE

[Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Addiction Services \(BSAS\)](#)

The BSAS, through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, oversees prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services in the Commonwealth. Information for physicians is available including information for substance treatment providers.

NEURODIVERSE CHILDREN

[MCPAP for ASD-ID](#) **The Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Program for Autism Spectrum Disorders and Intellectual Disabilities**

MCPAP for ASD-ID provides support and consultation to Emergency Services Program and Mobile Crisis Intervention clinicians working with youth and young adults up to age 26 years with ASD or ID who are having a behavioral health crisis. The free on-demand consultations are available seven days a week including holidays from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. by calling **(866) 273-4399**.

These selected referrals are intended to serve as a general resource. No recommendation or endorsement by the MMS for the individual(s) or service(s) listed is expressed or implied. This information does not constitute legal advice. The MMS is not responsible for the recommendation of, or the quality of the work provided by any of the parties listed.

Please send questions to PPRC@mms.org