

Summary

The Qualified Evaluator Network was established by Magellan Medicaid Administration in July 2001 to provide assessment services for children in the care and custody of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). These assessments are limited to children referred to our continuing placement in a therapeutic group home (TGH) or statewide independent psychiatric program (SIPP). Each Qualified Evaluator (QE) is required by state law to be either a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist and have no financial or business relationship with a SIPP or TGH facility. Each assessment must provide an independent, professional assessment of suitability for these levels of care.

This process was created by a 2000 state legislative initiative and is intended to prevent premature or inappropriate referrals to residential psychiatric placements and recommend a return to community-based services as soon as possible. Each network assessment is designed to provide a brief clinical status review of the child and supports his/her due process rights under state law. These assessments provide DCF and the Agency for Health Care Administration (ACHA) with a summary of treatment status and progress toward goals on the child's treatment plan.

Assessments

Each assessment consists of two elements:

1. A review of medical records and placement documentation
2. A face-to-face clinical interview

Because the TGH and Inpatient Residential treatment setting is often a longer term setting for children with serious emotional disturbances (SEDs), the Qualified Evaluator must have access to a complete medical record database as well as the child. All clinically relevant documentation, including but not limited to foster care placement orders and past psychological, psychiatric, and psychosocial assessments are needed to make a placement recommendation.

Each assessment is distributed by Magellan Medicaid Administration to DCF or community-based care (CBC) single point of access (SPOA) and/or a caseworker upon completion. Most assessments are completed and distributed within six days of the assessment date.

If you have any questions about specific recommendations or findings in the QE report, you may contact Magellan Medicaid Administration. If additional clarification is needed, a Magellan Medicaid Administration representative will contact the evaluator for consultation. It is not appropriate to require the QE to make specific recommendations to facilities by name or to require a

specific set of findings. The QE is required to render a professional and independent recommendation based on the documented clinical needs and face-to-face presentation of the child.

Qualified evaluation assessments are not intended to replace forensic or psychological testing. They are designed to assist with clinical decision-making with regards to placement and basic treatment needs. For this reason, each report is quite brief and does not include psychometric tests or projective assessments.

Qualified Evaluators

Qualified Evaluators are contracted and reimbursed by Magellan Medicaid Administration. As a condition for inclusion in the network, each QE must

- Complete a Magellan Medicaid Administration QEN application
- Possess Florida state licensure as a psychologist or psychiatrist
- Have at least three years of direct clinical experience
- Submit fingerprints for a Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) background screening
- Have no financial or direct working relationship with a SIPP or TGH provider
- Complete telephonic training with the QEN coordinator and successfully pass post-testing
- Agree to all rates and procedures required by Magellan Medicaid Administration
- Adhere to all report formatting, scope, and timeframe standards established by Magellan Medicaid Administration on an ongoing basis

Magellan Medicaid Administration performs primary source validation on all credentials and licenses reported by each applicant. Each QE is responsible for maintaining all credentials as required for this scope of work and throughout their relationship with Magellan Medicaid Administration. Qualified Evaluators are not guaranteed a set amount of referrals each month, nor rates beyond those established in the service contract.

Program Impact

Since implementation of the Qualified Evaluator Network (QEN) program in July 2001, Magellan Medicaid Administration has performed over 12,000 assessments on behalf of the state. Process audits conducted by AHCA and the state legislature have consistently endorsed our approach and performance as meeting both the intent and goals of the QEN program.

The program has enabled the state to provide

- A standardized and consistent assessment scheduling process
- Prompt turnaround times for scheduling and distribution of final reports
- High quality reports

- A large pool of credentialed Qualified Evaluators, reducing waiting times or other barriers to prompt assessment

In addition to these benefits, the QEN

- Supports each child's due process rights as defined by state law
- Helps document medical necessity to fulfill federal requirements for the Medicaid program
- Provides cost avoidance for QEN referrals that do not result in placement in locked residential facilities