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Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Field Operations Memo 2008-31
July 28, 2008

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: **MassHealth: The Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) – Standardized Behavioral Health Screenings for MassHealth Members Under the Age of 21**

Background

The Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) is the result of the decision in the *Rosie D. et. al. v. Patrick* lawsuit. It is a joint collaboration between the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and MassHealth to implement the decision and to take additional steps to promote the behavioral health of MassHealth-enrolled children under the age of 21.

As part of the CBHI, MassHealth is improving its education and outreach to MassHealth members, providers, members of the public, and private and state agency staff who come into contact with MassHealth-enrolled children under the age of 21 about Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) services as well as other preventive care services provided through MassHealth. These services for children under the age of 21 include an array of preventive health care services, including well-child visits.

Effective December 2007, MassHealth began requiring primary-care doctors and nurses to offer to use a standardized behavioral-health (mental health and substance abuse) screening tool at every well-child visit for MassHealth members who are under the age of 21. This standardized behavioral-health screening tool is designed to help identify possible behavioral health concerns early.

**Purpose of
Memo**

This memo:

- informs TAO staff about two MassHealth informational fact sheets that describe well-child visits, the required standardized behavioral-health screening tool and current and future behavioral health services being developed through the CBHI for MassHealth-enrolled children under the age of 21; and
 - provides instructions for case managers to encourage applicants and clients (hereafter referred to as clients) with children under the age of 21 to schedule and keep well-child visits and to avail themselves of the behavioral health services, if needed.
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**MassHealth
Fact Sheets**

For the CBHI implementation, MassHealth has created two informational fact sheets which provide details about well-child visits, the newly-required standardized behavioral-health screenings and current and future behavioral health services developed through the CBHI.

The fact sheet entitled *An important message about care for children and young adults on MassHealth* (Attachment A) has been developed for children and young adults under the age of 21 and their families. It is available in English and Spanish. This fact sheet can be viewed by accessing the MassHealth CBHI website link: www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth, clicking on “Information for Members” and clicking on “Fact Sheets.”

The fact sheet entitled *An important message about care for children on MassHealth* (Attachment B) was distributed in December 2007 to school nurses, child-care providers, school districts, Head Start programs, Early Intervention program providers, and other providers, clinicians and state agency staff who come in contact with children under the age of 21. This fact sheet in English, Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese can be viewed by accessing the MassHealth CBHI website link listed above, clicking on “Information for Providers” and clicking on “Fact Sheets.”

For TAO reference, this fact sheet can be viewed by accessing DTA Online - Policy Online - Online Guides as well.

**Case Manager
Responsibilities**

Case managers should become familiar with the information contained in the fact sheets.

Beginning August 1, 2008, at application and during reevaluation interviews, case managers should:

- discuss with the client the schedule to take a child for well-child visits recommended in the fact sheets;
- encourage the client to schedule and keep well-child visit appointments according to the schedule;
- encourage the client to talk with the child's primary-care doctor or nurse about any concerns the client may have about the child's behavioral health;
- encourage the client to have a behavioral-health screening for the child, to detect any behavioral-health issues, when indicated;
- advise the client to follow-up with the child's primary-care doctor or nurse for the screening results and for additional behavioral-health services that may be indicated; and
- advise the client to access the MassHealth CBHI website link noted earlier in this memo for more information about the MassHealth standardized behavioral-health screenings.

The client may also contact the MassHealth Customer Service at **1-800-841-2900**. For people with partial or total hearing loss a TTY line is available at **1-800-497-4648**.

An important message about care for children and young adults on MassHealth

This message is for children and young adults under the age of 21. It is about well-child care, including behavioral-health care for children and young adults.

It is important for children and young adults under the age of 21 to see a primary-care doctor or nurse on a regular basis to stay healthy. These visits are called well-child visits.

Well-child visits

MassHealth pays for members who are under age 21 (except those with MassHealth Limited) to see their primary-care doctor or nurse for well-child visits at least once every year, and more often if the child or young adult is under age two. At these visits, the primary-care doctor or nurse checks the child or young adult's physical health, dental health, behavioral health, development, and need for immunizations. MassHealth members under age 21 can also visit their primary-care doctor or nurse any time there is a health need.

If either you or your child are under the age of 21, you should be seen by a primary-care doctor or nurse for a checkup even when you are well. By regularly having well-care visits, your or your children's doctor or nurse can find and treat small problems before they become big ones.

Here are the ages to take yourself or your child for a well-child visit.

- 1 to 2 weeks
- 1 month
- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 12 months
- 15 months
- 18 months
- ages 2 through 20 — once a year

MassHealth members under age 21 who are enrolled in a MassHealth managed-care plan get these visits from their primary-care doctor or nurse in that health plan. MassHealth members under age 21 who are not enrolled in a managed-care plan can get these services from any MassHealth primary-care doctor or nurse.

How to find a primary-care doctor or nurse to do well-child visits if you or your child are enrolled in MassHealth

Most MassHealth-enrolled members under the age of 21 already will have a primary-care doctor or nurse. However, if you or your child are a MassHealth member under 21 and you do not know who your/your children's primary-care doctor or nurse is, or if you need help finding a primary-care doctor or nurse, you can call MassHealth Customer Service at 1-800-841-2900. If you or your children enrolled in a MassHealth managed-care plan, you can contact the health plan for help, too. The phone numbers are listed at the end of this notice.

Standardized behavioral-health (mental health and substance abuse) screens at well-child visits

Starting in December 2007, MassHealth requires primary-care doctors and nurses to offer to use a standardized behavioral-health (mental health and substance abuse) screening tool at every well-child visit for MassHealth members who are under the age of 21 to help detect issues with behavioral health, social-emotional well-being, or mental health. This screening tool helps to identify behavioral-health concerns early and will give you an opportunity to discuss your (if you are under 21 years or age) or your child's behavioral-health needs with your or your child's primary-care doctor or nurse or specialist.

A behavioral-health screening tool is a short list of questions or a checklist that the parent, guardian, or child (depending on the child's age) fills out and then talks about with the doctor or nurse. The primary-care doctor or nurse might use:

- the Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC);
- the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS); or
- some other tool.

You can ask the primary-care doctor or nurse which tool he or she uses.

After you and/or your child complete the behavioral-health screening tool, you will talk about the answers with the doctor or nurse. Talking about the completed tool will help you and the doctor or nurse decide if follow-up care or further assessment is needed. If you decide that you (if you are under 21 years of age) or your child need to see a behavioral-health provider, the primary-care doctor or nurse will tell you how to get needed services. If you need additional assistance, call your or your child's health plan or call MassHealth Customer Service. These phone numbers are at the end of this notice.

Follow-up for behavioral-health issues after well-child visits

Standardized needs assessments conducted by behavioral-health (mental health and substance abuse) providers

Starting in late 2008, behavioral-health providers will assess MassHealth members under age 21 who seek care from them using the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool. The CANS tool will help the behavioral-health provider collect information and make recommendations about behavioral-health needs. The behavioral-health provider will work with you to decide if you (if you are under 21) or your children should be referred for treatment. If you or your children need further treatment, the behavioral-health provider will work with you to create a treatment plan.

Behavioral-health (mental health and substance abuse) services available now

Children and young adults under the age of 21 can get office visits with a behavioral-health provider. If you (if you are under 21) or your children need more services, MassHealth currently covers other services, such as Family Stabilization Team (FST) services. These services are available now for any child or young adult under age 21 enrolled in MassHealth who needs them. Services must be determined to be medically necessary for you or your children before MassHealth will pay for them.

Talk to the primary-care doctor or nurse, the behavioral-health provider, the health plan, or MassHealth Customer Service for information about these services and how to get them.

Behavioral-health (mental health and substance abuse) services for MassHealth Standard and CommonHealth members under the age of 21 available in the future

MassHealth will soon cover several new behavioral-health services for MassHealth Standard and CommonHealth members under the age of 21. These new services will be for children and young adults with a serious emotional disturbance. This also includes children and young adults who have both a serious emotional disturbance and another condition such as autism spectrum disorder. Once MassHealth gets approval from the federal government for these services, we will give you more information about them.

What do I do if my children are not on MassHealth?

In addition to MassHealth, Massachusetts offers several other health-insurance and health-assistance programs at no cost or low cost. To find out if you or your children qualify for MassHealth or any other Massachusetts health-insurance or health-assistance program, call MassHealth Customer Service at the number listed below.

Important phone numbers

MassHealth Customer Service

1-800-841-2900

TTY: 1-800-497-4648 (for people with partial or total hearing loss)

Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan

1-888-217-3501

TTY: 1-800-421-1220 (for people with partial or total hearing loss)

Fallon Community Health Plan

1-800-868-5200

TTY: 1-877-608-7677 (for people with partial or total hearing loss)

Neighborhood Health Plan

1-800-462-5449

TTY: 1-800-655-1761 (for people with partial or total hearing loss)

Network Health

1-888-257-1985

TTY: 617-806-8196 (for people with partial or total hearing loss)

Primary Care Clinician (PCC) Plan

1-800-841-2900

TTY: 1-800-497-4648 (for people with partial or total hearing loss)

Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership

1-800-495-0086

TTY: 617-790-4130 (for people with partial or total hearing loss)

An important message about care for children on MassHealth

This message is for school nurses, child-care providers, school districts, Head Start programs, Early Intervention Program providers, and other providers and clinicians who come into contact with children under the age of 21.

As you know, it is important for children who are under the age of 21 to see a primary-care doctor or nurse on a regular basis to stay healthy. These visits are called well-child visits.

Well-child visits

MassHealth pays for members who are under age 21 (except those with MassHealth Limited) to see their primary-care doctor or nurse for well-child visits at least once every year, and more often if the child is under age two. At these visits, a child's primary-care doctor or nurse checks the child's physical health, dental health, behavioral health, development, and need for immunizations. MassHealth members under age 21 can also visit their primary-care doctor or nurse any time there is a health need.

You should encourage parents or guardians who have children under the age of 21 to take them to their primary-care doctor or nurse for a checkup even when the children are well. If you as a provider have a concern about the child's behavioral health, you can encourage the parent or guardian to raise the concern at the well-child visit. Remember to follow up after the appointment with the parent or guardian to find out how things went. Ask the family if there are ways that you might be able to help with any issues or concerns that might have been raised.

You should remind parents and guardians that it is important to make and keep appointments for well-child care at the ages below. By regularly taking children for well-child visits, a child's doctor or nurse can find and treat small problems before they become big ones.

Here are the ages to take a child for a well-child visit:

- 1 to 2 weeks
- 1 month
- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 12 months
- 15 months
- 18 months
- ages 2 through 20 — once a year

MassHealth members under age 21 who are enrolled in a MassHealth managed-care plan get these visits from their primary-care doctor or nurse in that health plan. MassHealth members under age 21 who are not enrolled in a managed-care plan can get these services from any MassHealth primary-care doctor or nurse.

How to find a primary-care doctor or nurse to provide well-child visits for children with MassHealth coverage

Most MassHealth-enrolled children already have a primary-care doctor or nurse. However, if a parent or guardian of a MassHealth-enrolled child does not know who their child's primary-care doctor or nurse is, or if they need help finding a primary-care doctor or nurse for a child, the parent or guardian can call MassHealth Customer Service at 1-800-841-2900. If a child is enrolled in a MassHealth managed-care plan, the parent or guardian can contact the child's health plan for help too. The phone numbers are listed at the end of this notice.

Standardized behavioral-health (mental health and substance abuse) screens at well-child visits

Starting December 31, 2007, MassHealth requires primary-care doctors and nurses to offer to use a standardized behavioral-health (mental health and substance abuse) screening tool at every well-child visit for children under the age of 21 who are enrolled in MassHealth to help detect issues with behavioral health, social-emotional well-being, or mental health. This screening tool helps to identify behavioral health concerns early and will provide an opportunity for parents and guardians to discuss a child's behavioral health needs with his or her primary-care doctor or nurse or specialist.

A behavioral-health screening tool is a short list of questions or a checklist that the parent, guardian, or child (depending on the child's age) fills out and then talks about with the doctor or nurse. The primary-care doctor or nurse might use:

- the Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC);
- the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS); or
- some other tool.

Parents and guardians can ask a child's primary-care doctor or nurse which tool he or she uses.

Talking about the completed tool will help a child's doctor or nurse decide if follow-up care or further assessment is needed. If a parent or guardian decides that a child needs to see a behavioral-health provider, the child's primary-care doctor or nurse will tell them how to get needed services. For additional assistance, parents or guardians can call the child's health plan or call MassHealth Customer Service. These phone numbers are at the end of this notice.

Follow-up for behavioral-health issues after well-child visits

Standardized needs assessments conducted by a behavioral-health (mental health and substance abuse) provider

Starting in late 2008, when a child who is under age 21 and enrolled in MassHealth visits a behavioral-health provider, the provider will give the child an assessment using the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool. The CANS tool will help the behavioral-health provider collect information and make recommendations about the child's behavioral health needs. If the child needs further treatment, the behavioral-health provider will work with the parent or guardian to create a treatment plan.

Behavioral-health (mental health and substance abuse) services available now

Children enrolled in MassHealth are covered for office visits with a behavioral-health provider. If a child needs more services, MassHealth currently covers other services, such as Family Stabilization Team (FST) services. These services are available now for any child enrolled in MassHealth who needs them. Services must be determined to be medically necessary for your child before MassHealth will pay for them.

Parents and guardians can talk to a child's primary-care doctor or nurse, behavioral-health provider, or health plan, or MassHealth Customer Service for information about these services and how to get them.

Behavioral-health (mental health and substance abuse) services for MassHealth Standard and CommonHealth members under the age of 21 available in the future

MassHealth will soon cover several new behavioral-health services for MassHealth Standard and CommonHealth members under the age of 21. These new services will be for children with a serious emotional disturbance. This also includes children who have both a serious emotional disturbance and another condition such as autism spectrum disorder. Once MassHealth gets approval from the federal government for these services, MassHealth will give you more information about them.

What can you do if a child (or any of his or her family members) is not on MassHealth?

In addition to MassHealth, Massachusetts offers several other health-insurance and health-assistance programs at no cost or low cost. To find out if a child you are working with (or any of his or her family members) qualifies for MassHealth or any other Massachusetts health-insurance or health-assistance program, call MassHealth Customer Service at the number listed below.

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