STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
DIVISION OF MEDICAID
DR. ROBERT L. ROBINSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

August 10, 2010

Dear Community Mental Health Center Director:

This letter will serve as official notice that effective October 1, 2010, pursuant to 42 C.F.R. 455.23, the Division of Medicaid will withhold payments for claims submitted for Day Treatment Services for children under the age of six (6) until such claims are prior authorized by the Division to safeguard against paying for services that do not comport with appropriate policies and are not medically necessary. To guard against the payment of inappropriate claims, the claims payment system will be updated with an edit to prevent claims for children under the age of six (6) from automatically paying without the appropriate authorization from the Division of Medicaid.

This action is taken due to suspected fraud and/or abuse and/or willful misrepresentation under the program. As a result of a review by the Division of Medicaid and an investigation conducted by another entity, the Division has reason to believe that there are children under the age of six (6) receiving Day Treatment Services paid for by the Division for whom Day Treatment Services are not appropriate. These actions may have resulted in significant overpayments to providers by the Division.

After October 1, 2010, the withholding of payments for individual claims for children under the age of six (6) will be reviewed on a case by case basis to safeguard against inappropriate payments. For an individual under the age of six (6) who the provider believes clearly meets the criteria for Day Treatment Services, which includes: 1) a diagnosis of a serious emotional disturbance; 2) immediate risk of placement in a psychiatric residential treatment facility or acute psychiatric hospital without imminent safety risks; and 3) functional impairment in basic or instrumental activities or social skills, the provider will submit a prior authorization request to the Division for consideration.

Requests for prior authorization should be submitted to the Division's Bureau of Mental Health, following Mississippi Medicaid Provider Policy Manual Section 21.16 and should contain information from the beneficiary's medical file to sufficiently document the need for such services. Examples of such documentation include but are not limited to the following: statements from physicians and/or psychiatrists documenting the primary and secondary diagnoses, expected length of treatment, a description of significant problems and justifications, additional comments from the provider to support the request, and consent to treat forms from parents. If services are approved, you will be given an authorization number to submit with each claim for reimbursement for that child. The authorization number will be valid for six (6) months.

Suite 1000, Walter Sillers Building, 550 High Street, Jackson, MS 39201 (601) 359-6050

To facilitate review, providers are encouraged to submit prior authorization requests through the Mississippi Medicaid Envision Web Portal. Requests may also be emailed to kristi.plotner@medicaid.ms.gov or sent via secure facsimile to 601.359.6294. Due to the expected volume of requests, the Division suggests that providers submit the requests three (3) weeks in advance of the proposed admission date if submitting electronically and four (4) weeks in advance if submitting paper requests. The Division will host a webinar to explain the prior authorization process. More information on the webinar will be provided this week.

For those children under the age of six (6) for whom Day Treatment Services are not prior authorized by the Division, other forms of therapy services may be appropriate to assist the child.

The withholding under this authority will end after: (1) the Division and/or other prosecuting authorities determine that there is insufficient evidence of fraud/abuse or willful misrepresentation for these services; or, (2) legal proceedings related to any alleged fraud or willful misrepresentations are completed. In addition, the withholding may be discontinued as a result of policy revisions or other changes in program requirements.

The Division is committed to providing medically necessary services to children in need of therapeutic services in the least restrictive setting according to Medicaid policy and the approved Medicaid State Plan. The Division reminds its providers that the provider is ultimately responsible for each of its claims and for providing the appropriate documentation to support its claim.

I hope that this will clear up any confusion regarding this matter and I appreciate your understanding of the need for this action. In the event you still have questions or concerns regarding this letter, please feel free to contact Kristi Plotner, Bureau Director for Mental Health Programs at (601) 359-6698.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Robinson