

Dear editor:

Recently, the Division of Medicaid discovered too many young children were undergoing therapy far in excess of their medical needs. Beginning Oct. 1, Medicaid will begin requiring young children who need day treatment services to obtain a medical professional's permission to enroll in such programs. This will help assure parents their child is receiving appropriate mental health care.

Currently, there are fewer than 200 children impacted by the state policy. No child will be denied unless a physician deems day treatment as medically unnecessary. As always, Medicaid will work with parents to find the appropriate path of treatment for their children.

Unlike pre-school or day camp, the day treatment program provides intense therapy for children with severe mental illnesses. Day treatment is the most intensive service available on an outpatient basis and should not be the first treatment option considered. Therapists and doctors believe few young children require the intensity of day treatment.

Medicaid has many mental health services for children and teens. Placement in the programs begins with an initial assessment to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each child and family. Potential services available include family therapy to equip parents with the tools to help their children and group therapy to teach social skills.

The Division of Medicaid will work with parents and families to ensure their children are receiving the correct medical services to lead healthy lives. Please contact your regional Medicaid office if you have any questions.

Robert L. Robinson
Executive Director
Division of Medicaid