

Chapter Three: NorthCare Best Practices Guidelines

Section 3.1. Overview

Chapter Two focused on the Technical Requirements that are issued by the Michigan Department of Community Health and become contractual requirements. Chapter One indicates there are other pathways that may be followed for providers to follow that lead to practice guidelines that inform treatment options for different disabilities:

NorthCare is responsible for adopting, implementing and evaluating regional practice guidelines. (See the Balanced Budget Act (BBA), subpart D, section 438.236 and the Michigan Department of Community Health Master Contract Attachment P 6.7.1.1, X.) The BBA allows the adoption of practice guidelines either from a nationally recognized expert body or a consensus of healthcare workers in a particular field. The federal agency charged with providing guidance in our field is the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). They offer the following definitions of Practice Guidelines (PG) and Evidence Based Practices (EBP):

Practice Guidelines (PG)--*Systematically developed statements to standardize care and to assist in practitioner and patient decisions about the appropriate health care for specific circumstances. Practice guidelines are usually developed through a process that combines scientific evidence of effectiveness with expert opinion. Practice guidelines are also referred to as clinical criteria, protocols, algorithms, review criteria, and guidelines. (SAMHSA)*

Evidence Based Practices(EBP) --*In the health care field, evidence-based practices generally refer to approaches to prevention or treatment that are validated by some form of documented scientific evidence. What counts as "evidence" varies. Evidence often is defined as findings established through scientific research, such as controlled clinical studies, but other methods of establishing evidence are considered valid as well. Evidence-based practice stands in contrast to approaches that are based on tradition, convention, belief, or anecdotal evidence. (SAMHSA)*

The following sections contain the best practices being used in the region and the standards that guide the delivery of those practices. NorthCare considers these best practices even though several are at the level of evidence based practices because they are being implemented at the CMHSPs discretion and not according to contractual accountability. The material in each section comes from a variety of sources and the order of the documents continues the pattern in Chapters One and Two of moving from a macro level to the individual consumer level.