

## **Authorization of Therapeutic Group Care Services**

**Purpose:** To provide Child Welfare Partnership member with guidelines to ensure consistent and appropriate review of candidates for the Medicaid funded service Therapeutic Group Care Services (TGCS).

The Specialized Group Care Services Coordinator will be responsible for providing technical assistance to and monitoring for each CBC to determine the adequacy of procedures developed at the local level to manage this service. The Coordinator will develop a monitoring plan to assure that referrals and discharges are appropriate and timely. The Coordinator will review weekly reports from Magellan on placements and discharges to ascertain where there are gaps in service and excess capacity in order to provide assistance in placing children as quickly as possible into a treatment program.

This process is also to ensure accountability for placement of children in mental health treatment facilities who are in the child welfare system and ensure compliance with Florida Statutes 39.407 and Florida Statutes 394.492(5) or (6), which include the requirement for a suitability assessment by a Qualified Evaluator and subsequent Court hearing.

The procedure in this document acknowledges that Multidisciplinary Teams will exist, however they may exist in various forms based upon local need and the system of care. The MDT will now be coordinated by the CBC and will consist of members identified in each CBC. The STGC Coordinator will attend one MDT meeting at each CBC within the first 90 days to provide technical assistance and review for policy/procedure compliance. The Coordinator will then attend at least one MDT at least every 6 months.

The core members of the MDT should include the CBC Point of Contact, the Child Welfare Case Manager and a clinical person who can speak to the current clinical treatment of the child. The clinical person may be the current therapist or a representative from the treating entity. CBCs shall include other child advocates within the community in the MDT process including parents, foster parents, guardian ad litem, attorneys, etc.

The role of the MDT is to provide a forum for review of cases for STGC and STFC based upon medical necessity criteria of the CW Partnership. MDTs can also provide guidance/recommendations for other services in the event that STGC is not recommended. The recommendations from these teams are forwarded by the CBC Point of Contact to the Magellan care manager for authorization prior to referral for a suitability assessment. MDTs may also provide guidance/recommendations for other services in the event that TGCS is not appropriate.

Documents necessary for decision making for placement at the STGC level are

currently specified in the Medicaid Handbook. To ensure that permanency plans are considered it is recommended that the case plan be one of the documents reviewed. CBCs may require other documents such as the CBHA.

If STGC is authorized by Magellan, the referral and recommendation from MDT are forwarded to First Health to obtain the mandatory suitability assessment required by F.S. 394.492. Placement in Therapeutic Group Care is considered more restrictive than residential group care; therefore prior to utilizing this option other least restrictive options should be exhausted. No child can be placed in this level placement without a quality evaluation and required court hearing.

**Procedure:**

1. The Child Welfare Case Manager forwards the therapeutic packet to the CBC Point of Contact. The packet shall include the Referral for Mental Health Services form (as found in CFOP 155-10) and Appendix A of Medicaid Manual. The CBC may return/divert request for TGCS should the packet not meet the requirements for documentation in the Medicaid Handbook or have adequate clinical history to make a decision.
2. The referral date will begin on the date that all completed materials are received.
3. The CBC Point of Contact will convene the MDT. A decision will be made regarding service referral.
4. If the recommendation is for STGC, the CBC Point of Contact will contact the Magellan care manager to obtain authorization. If authorized by Magellan, the CBC Point of Contact will forward the referral to First Health, who then schedules an appointment by a Medicaid approved Qualified Evaluator (QE).
5. The QE must complete a written report. When the CBC receives the suitability assessment from First Health which confirms the recommendation for TGCS a court hearing shall be scheduled. The CBC must notify Child Welfare Legal Services when a child has been recommended for TGCS to assist with the required court hearing and track adherence to time frames.
6. The CBC Point of Contact will notify the Magellan care manager within 24 hours of obtaining authorization and court approval of a STGC placement. The CBC Point of Contact will provide documentation for the case record of the decisions made by the MDT and the persons present.
7. Locating a STGC placement is the responsibility of the CBC lead agency. All CBCs have a mechanism to locate placements for children placed in their care. The CBCs will use their current process to locate a treatment placement for STGC. Placements outside of the district will require contact with the CW Partnership STFC Coordinator prior to placement in order to ensure that various legal and programmatic processes are in compliance before the CBC places a child outside of their geographic

district.

8. Once a placement is located by the CBC and within 1 business day of locating an approved placement the CBC Point of Contact will fax the approved authorization to the Child Welfare Case Manager and the STGC provider. The CBC Point of Contact will notify the STGC Coordinator of the placement.
9. STGC placements may be authorized for no more than 90 days without a review by a QE. The CBC Point of Contact is responsible for tracking of these placements and may not authorize additional services at this level without review by the MDT and proper authorization from the Magellan care manager.
10. If the QE denies STGC placement, the QE may recommend other treatment options for the child. If the least restrictive, most appropriate placement is Specialized Therapeutic Foster Care, the CBC Point of Contact will utilize the STFC procedure and obtain approval for STFC. In the event another placement type or other services are recommended in the suitability assessment the CBC Point of Contact will assist the Child Welfare Case Manager in complying with those recommendations.

Please remember that any residential treatment placement or therapeutic foster care home are treatment programs, and not for placement. Once the child has improved his/her behavior, the child must be moved to a less restrictive placement.

If a STGC placement outside of the district is required because no provider is locally available or unable to meet the child's specific needs, the CW Partnership STGC Coordinator must be contacted prior to placement.

01/15/2007