

Clinical Practice Guidelines

Western Behavioral Health (WBH) utilizes Clinical Practice Guidelines to help providers and members make decisions about appropriate health care for specific clinical circumstances. These evidence-based guidelines are reviewed at least every two years, updated as appropriate and approved by the Quality and Care Management Committee. WBH uses the American Psychiatric Association (APA) Guideline for Major Depressive Disorder (Second Edition) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment: A Research-Based Guide for Substance Use Disorders.

WBH measures compliance to the guidelines within the network through adherence measures. These measures include data for both the Commercial and Medicare populations.

The two adherence measures for depression are:

- Patients in treatment for depression with more than one behavioral health clinician where there is evidence of communication between clinicians during the treatment episode
- Patients being treated with psychotherapy for a new episode of Major Depressive Disorder who have weekly visits during the first four weeks of treatment

The first measure is based on 2005 record review data for inpatient and outpatient levels of care. For calendar year 2005, 77% of patients in treatment with more than one behavioral health clinician had evidence of communication between clinicians during the treatment episode. The goal is 90%. Providers falling under the 90% goal had to submit a Corrective Action Plan for improving communication with other behavioral health clinicians.

The second measure is based on calendar year 2004 claims data. In 2004, 13% of patients being treated for a new episode of Major Depressive Disorder had weekly visits during the first four weeks of treatment. The goal is 25%. The Quality and Care Management Committee identified the following barriers to this measure:

- Members feeling better after the initiation of treatment and not wanting weekly visits
- Providers or members not being aware of the expectation of weekly visits for a new episode of Major Depressive Disorder

Interventions are in place to increase this rate and include:

- A Provider Alert was sent in April 2005, informing providers of the Clinical Practice Guidelines that WBH utilizes
- A letter with the expectation of weekly visits is sent to all practitioners with authorizations for members newly diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder

The NIDA Guideline was adopted in April 2005. There are three adherence measures for Substance Use:

- Patients with substance abuse disorders who receive an adequate length of treatment defined as three months
- Patients that initiate follow up chemical dependency treatment after detoxification
- Patients in treatment for substance abuse who are assessed for the co-occurrence of a mental disorder and, if identified, receive integrated treatment for both conditions

The first measure is based on calendar year 2004 claims data. In 2004, 27% of patients with substance use disorders received treatment for 3 months. The second measure is also based on calendar year 2004 claims data. In 2004, 47% of patients initiated follow up chemical dependency treatment after detoxification. These data are considered baseline, as the results are from prior to the adoption of the NIDA guideline. Goals are yet to be set. WBH is hopeful that the April 2005 distribution of the Clinical Practice Guidelines will improve these rates. Additionally, the Audit C screening tool for alcohol abuse is posted on both the provider and member websites at www.ccbh.com

The third measure is broken down into two indicators and is based on 2005 record review data: Patients in treatment for substance use disorders who are screened for a co-occurring mental disorder and Patients in treatment for substance use disorders who are identified as having a co-occurring mental disorder who receive integrated treatment for both conditions. The rate for both of these indicators for calendar year 2005 was 100%.

WBH continues to encourage providers in our network to consider utilizing these guidelines when treating patients with Major Depressive Disorders or Substance Use Disorders.

To obtain copies of the APA guideline, contact the American Psychiatric Association, 1400 K Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. The guideline may also be obtained via the APA website at:
http://www.psych.org/psych_pract/treatg/pg/Practice%20Guidelines8904/MajorDepressiveDisorder_2e.pdf

To obtain copies of the NIDA guideline, contact the National Institute of Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, 6001 Executive Boulevard, Room 5213, Bethesda, MD 20892. The guideline may also be obtained via the NIDA website at:
<http://www.nida.nih.gov/PODAT/PODATIndex.html>

For more information about our Clinical Practice Guidelines or adherence measures, please contact WBH at 1-888-251-2224.