



MACOMB COUNTY

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

Subject: Utilization Management	Procedure: Authorizations for Respite Care Services	
Last Updated: 9/15/2026	Owner: Managed Care Operations	Pages: 4

I. PURPOSE

To provide procedural and operational guidance to directly operated and contract providers on the documentation requirements for authorizations of respite care services.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Medical Necessity:

Determination that a specific service is medically (clinically) appropriate; necessary to meet needs; consistent with the person's diagnosis, symptomatology, and functional impairments; is the most cost-effective option in the least restrictive environment; and is consistent with clinical standards of care. The medical necessity of a service shall be documented in the individual plan of service (IPOS).

B. Respite Care Services:

Medicaid funded support services provided on a short-term, intermittent basis to relieve the family or other primary unpaid caregiver(s) from the daily stress and care demands during times when they are providing unpaid care. Respite is not intended to be provided on a continuous, long-term basis, where it is part of the daily services that would enable an unpaid caregiver to work. To be eligible for Respite, a person must be on one of the following Medicaid waiver programs: 1915(i) State Plan Amendment (iSPA), Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances Waiver (SED Waiver), Children's Waiver Program (CWP), or Habilitation Supports (HSW).

III. PROCEDURE

- A. Respite Care Services are intended to assist in maintaining a goal of living in a natural community home and are provided on a short-term, intermittent basis to relieve the person's family or other primary unpaid caregiver(s) from the daily stress and care demands during times when they are providing unpaid care.

1. The person served must be on one of the following Medicaid waiver programs: 1915(i) State Plan Amendment (iSPA), Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances Waiver (SED Waiver), Children's Waiver Program (CWP), or Habilitation Supports (HSW).

2. The person served must meet eligibility standards for MCCMH services as a person with a Serious Emotional Disturbance, a Severe Mental Illness, or a person with an Intellectual/Developmental Disability.
 3. Short-term means the respite service is provided during a limited period, such as a few hours, a few days, weekends, or for vacations.
 4. Intermittent means the respite service does not occur regularly or continuously. The service stops and starts repeatedly or with periods in between.
 5. Unpaid means the respite service may only be provided during portions of the day when no one is being paid to provide care, i.e., not a time when the person is receiving Adult Home Help, CLS, a service through another program (e.g. school), or another support service. The person served must have periods of unpaid care to be eligible for respite care services.
 6. Respite is not to be provided as a part of daily services to enable the unpaid caregiver to work elsewhere.
- B. Supports and services are not intended to meet all of the individual's needs and preferences, as some may be better met by community and other natural supports.
1. Natural supports means unpaid assistance provided to the individual by people in their network (Family, friends, neighbors, community volunteers) who are willing and able to provide such assistance. The use of natural supports must be documented in the IPOS.
 2. It is reasonable to expect that parents of minor children with disabilities will provide the same level of care they would provide to their children without disabilities.
 3. The documentation must include custody arrangements, visitation time, and legal custody status for minor children, as applicable.
- C. When a person served notifies their primary case holder of an interest in Respite Care Services, the primary case holder shall:
1. Identify if this is a treatment need for the person served, per the Michigan Medicaid Provider Manual, specific to the service and medical necessity.
 2. The primary case holder discusses this service need as a part of the person-centered planning process.
 3. The primary case holder ensures that this service is an identified service in the individual's person-centered treatment plan. The goal(s) must address the medical necessity of the service, identify the provider, and the amount, scope, and duration of the service.

- a) The IPOS must clearly differentiate respite hours from Community Living Services (CLS).
- B. The primary case holder assists the person in identifying a provider for this service.
 - 1. A list of all Respite Care providers can be found in the MCCMH Provider Directory.
 - 2. Persons served can hire family members or other natural supports to provide Respite Care Services through the Self-Determination process.
 - a) Respite Care Services may not be provided by the parent of a minor, spouse of the person served, legal guardian of the person served, or the unpaid primary caregiver.
- C. The primary clinical provider submits the prior authorization request to Managed Care Operations (MCO) in the FOCUS Electronic Medical Record (EMR). Authorization requests can be submitted up to sixty (60) calendar days, and no less than fourteen (14) calendar days, prior to the effective date of the authorization.
- D. MCO has seven (7) calendar days to make a medical necessity determination on these requests.
 - 1. When it is determined that the individual meets the medical necessity criteria for the authorization of Respite Care Services, the authorization is approved in the Focus EMR, and an electronic notification is sent to the primary clinical provider.
 - 2. When it is determined that the individual does not meet the medical necessity criteria for all or part of the authorization of Respite Care Services, the authorization is denied in the Focus EMR, and an electronic notification is sent to the primary clinical provider. MCO sends a Notice of Adverse Benefit Determination to the person served and/or their legal guardian.

IV. REFERENCES

- A. Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) Medicaid Provider Manual
- B. Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) Behavioral Health Code Charts and Provider Qualifications

V. RELATED POLICIES

- A. MCCMH MCO Policy 2-032, “Person Centered Planning, Training, and the Role of Health and Safety Considerations”
- B. MCCMH MCO Policy 4-020, “Medicaid and Non-Medicaid Notice of Adverse Benefit Determination”
- C. MCCMH MCO Policy 12-004, “Service Authorizations”

VI. EXHIBITS

None

Annual Review Attestation / Revision History:

Revision #:	Revision/Review Date:	Revision Summary:	Reviewer/Reviser:
1	9/12/2024	Creation of Procedure	MCCMH MCO Division
2	12/3/2024	Implementation of Procedure	MCCMH MCO Division
3	3/19/2026	Revision of Procedure	MCCMH MCO Division
4	9/15/2026	Revision of Procedure	MCCMH MCO Division