

December 3, 2013: Policy Guidance on the use of Advanced Practice Nurses and Physician Assistants

In accordance with Texas law¹ and HHSC contract requirements², Texas Medicaid and CHIP managed care organizations are required to use advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and physician assistants (PAs) as primary care providers (PCPs) to increase the availability of primary care providers in the organization's provider network. APRNs and PAs practicing as PCPs serve an important role in expanding access to health services for Medicaid clients. Managed care organizations (MCOs) should therefore encourage and facilitate the use of APRNs and PAs as PCPs, in accordance with this goal and applicable state law.

APRNs and PAs who serve as PCPs in an MCO network must be listed in the same manner as other primary care provider types in the MCO's provider network and directory and should be assigned in the same manner as other primary care provider types. Additionally, MCOs may not refuse a request by an APRN or PA to be listed as a PCP if the APRN or PA meets the relevant standards, as described below.³

In order to serve as a PCP, an APRN or PA must meet the MCO's credentialing standards and be practicing under the supervision of a physician acting as a PCP in the MCO's provider network. The supervising physician must be practicing as a specialist in family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, or obstetrics/gynecology.⁴ Advanced practice nurses should be enrolled with Medicaid or CHIP and designated as either a clinical nurse specialist or a nurse practitioner in order to be properly recognized by Texas Medicaid and CHIP systems.

In accordance with federal regulation, guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and state law, APRNs and PAs are prohibited from prescribing for any durable medical equipment (including home health supplies) and outpatient schedule II controlled substances for Medicaid and CHIP clients.⁵ See Section 157.0511 of the Occupations Code for more information about the specific in-patient settings where APRNs and PAs may prescribe schedule II controlled substances.

¹ Section 533.005(a)(13) of the Government Code as amended by S.B. 406, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013; *see also* Section 62.1551 of the Health and Safety Code, as added by S.B. 406, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013.

² Section 8.1.4.2, Attachment B-1, Uniform Managed Care Contract; Section 8.1.4.2, Attachment B-1, STAR+PLUS Expansion Contract; Section 8.1.4.2, Attachment B-1, CHIP RSA Contract; Section 4.1.4.5, Attachment B-1, STAR Health Contract.

³ Section 843.312 of the Texas Insurance Code

⁴ See Section 8.1.4.2 of the Texas Medicaid Uniform Managed Care Contract

⁵ 42 C.F.R. § 440.70