



SANDHILLS CENTER

Managing Mental Health, Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services
910-673-9111 (FAX) 910-673-6202 www.sandhillscenter.org Victoria Whitt, CEO

Sunset of Sandhills Center's Temporary Care Plan Signature Requirements

Network Providers,

In March 2020, information about obtaining alternative consent for Care Plan Signature Requirements was distributed to the Sandhills Center provider network through a Provider Updates email (March 19, 2020), as pandemic response guidance. This guidance made acceptable for a qualified professional/paraprofessional or clinician signature in place of the member or legally responsible person, when accompanied with a notation that the member/ Legal Responsible Person (LRP) gave consent for the provider representative to sign the document on his or her behalf.

Since that time, NC Medicaid has updated telehealth flexibilities into permanent policy for the following:

- Policy 8-C Outpatient Behavioral Health Services Provided by Direct-Enrolled Providers
- Policy 8-F Research-Based Behavioral Health Treatment (RB-BHT) for Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Policy 8-G Peer Support Services
- Policy 8-P North Carolina Innovations

As a result of these permanent telehealth policies, many providers have transitioned their practices to regular part or full-time telehealth services.

Many temporary COVID-19 flexibilities for services delivery were ended on June 30, 2022; other temporary flexibilities will end at or after the Federal Public Health Emergency. On August 15, 2022, Governor Cooper lifted the State Public Health Emergency. (For a full list of telehealth services provisions and COVID temporary flexibility sunsets, please see COVID Bulletin 237).

With these now-permanent telehealth policies and ending temporary flexibilities, Sandhills Center will sunset the temporary acceptance of alternative signatures for Care Plans on **Monday, October 31, 2022**. If your agency or practice has adopted telehealth service delivery, Sandhills Center holds the expectation that your organization has policies and procedures developed to support this practice with regard to obtaining signatures for Consents for Treatment, Care Plans and Consents to Release Information. These procedures may include the adoption of an electronic means of signature. Sandhills Center reminds providers that state rules do not include verbal consent (APSM 45-2, 8-2, 8-8).

Karen Kern,
Provider Network Operations Director

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