



Texas Association of Health Plans
1001 Congress Ave., Suite 300
Austin, Texas 78701
P: 512.476.2091
www.tahp.org

August 14, 2023

Re: Proposed Rule §3.8001, Chemical Dependency Treatment Standards

Dear Texas Department of Insurance,

As the statewide trade association representing health insurers, HMOs, Medicaid managed care, and other health plans that serve over 20 million Texans, the Texas Association of Health Plans (TAHP) is committed to ensuring that Texas families and employers have access to affordable, comprehensive, and high-quality coverage. We are writing today to express our support for proposed rule §3.8001, but also to share two recommendations to limit disruption of current practice and improve the overall functionality.

First, we ask that the proposal also include InterQual as one of the acceptable standards for chemical dependency treatment. InterQual criteria are derived from the continuous review of the most current evidence-based literature, incorporating evidence from over fifteen sources. This review includes literature from federal agencies, such as the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), as well as national medical societies like the American Psychiatric Association and American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Along with the MCG Care Guidelines, InterQual criteria is one of the two most commonly used criteria for chemical dependency standards. Given its popularity and rigorous standards, we ask that InterQual be expressly included in the rule language.

The second recommendation we have is to remove references to specific editions of the guidelines. As proposed, the rule would require use of the 27th edition of MCG Care Guidelines or the 3rd edition of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Criteria. If these specific editions are included in the adopted version of this proposal, it will suffer from the same issues facing the current rule, namely that the standards will eventually become outdated and require another rulemaking each time a new edition is released. In fact, it is our understanding that the 4th edition of the ASAM Criteria is set to release in November 2023, meaning the rule will be outdated shortly after its adoption. By replacing references to specific editions with “the latest version of” or simply removing them entirely, the agency can avoid the additional regulatory burden of having to adjust this rule regularly.



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We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to comment on these rules, both in these comments and during the public hearing. Again, we strongly support the agency moving towards streamlining these lengthy requirements by simply moving to named national standards. Please contact us if you have any additional questions or concerns regarding our recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Dudensing". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie Dudensing, RN
CEO
Texas Association of Health Plans