

**RCW 71.24.870 Behavioral health services—Adoption of rules—**

**Audit.** (1) Rules adopted by the department relating to the provision of behavioral health services must:

(a) Identify areas in which duplicative or inefficient documentation requirements can be eliminated or streamlined for providers;

(b) Limit prescriptive requirements for individual initial assessments to allow clinicians to exercise professional judgment to conduct age-appropriate, strength-based psychosocial assessments, including current needs and relevant history according to current best practices;

(c) Exempt providers from duplicative state documentation requirements when the provider is following documentation requirements of an evidence-based, research-based, or state-mandated program that provides adequate protection for patient safety; and

(d) Be clear and not unduly burdensome in order to maximize the time available for the provision of care.

(2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, audits conducted by the department relating to provision of behavioral health services must:

(a) Rely on a sampling methodology to conduct reviews of personnel files and clinical records based on written guidelines established by the department that are consistent with the standards of other licensing and accrediting bodies;

(b) Treat organizations with multiple locations as a single entity. The department must not require annual visits at all locations operated by a single entity when a sample of records may be reviewed from a centralized location;

(c) Share audit results with behavioral health administrative services organizations and managed care organizations to assist with their review process and, when appropriate, take steps to coordinate and combine audit activities;

(d) Not require information to be provided in particular documents or locations when the same information is included or demonstrated elsewhere in the clinical file, except where required by federal law; and

(e) Ensure that audits involving manualized programs such as wraparound with intensive services or other evidence or research-based programs are conducted to the extent practicable by personnel familiar with the program model and in a manner consistent with the documentation requirements of the program. [2019 c 325 s 1045; 2017 c 207 s 2.]

**Effective date—2019 c 325:** See note following RCW 71.24.011.

**Contingent effective date—2017 c 207 s 2:** "Section 2 of this act takes effect only if neither Substitute House Bill No. 1388 (including any later amendments or substitutes) nor Substitute Senate Bill No. 5259 (including any later amendments or substitutes) is signed into law by the governor by July 23, 2017." [2017 c 207 s 5.] Neither Substitute House Bill No. 1388 nor Substitute Senate Bill No. 5259 was signed into law by July 23, 2017.

**Findings—Intent—2017 c 207:** "The legislature finds that a prioritized recommendation of the children's mental health work group, as reported in December 2016, is to reduce burdensome and duplicative

paperwork requirements for providers of children's mental health services. This recommendation is consistent with the recommendations of the behavioral health workforce assessment of the workforce training and education coordinating board to reduce time-consuming documentation requirements and the behavioral and primary health regulatory alignment task force to streamline regulations and reduce the time spent responding to inefficient and excessive audits.

The legislature further finds that duplicative and overly prescriptive documentation and audit requirements negatively impact the adequacy of the provider network by reducing workforce morale and limiting the time available for patient care. Such requirements create costly barriers to the efficient provision of services for children and their families. The legislature also finds that current state regulations are often duplicative or conflicting with research-based models and other state-mandated treatment models intended to improve the quality of services and ensure positive outcomes. These barriers can be reduced while creating a greater emphasis on quality, outcomes, and safety.

The legislature further finds that social workers serving children are encumbered by burdensome paperwork requirements which can interfere with the effective delivery of services.

Therefore, the legislature intends to require the department of social and health services to take steps to reduce paperwork, documentation, and audit requirements that are inefficient or duplicative for social workers who serve children and for providers of mental health services to children and families, and to encourage the use of effective treatment models to improve the quality of services." [2017 c 207 s 1.]