

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

ACTION REFERRAL

TO <i>Waldrop</i>	DATE <i>12-21-11</i>
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DIRECTOR'S USE ONLY	ACTION REQUESTED
1. LOG NUMBER <i>100236</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for the Director's signature DATE DUE _____
2. DATE SIGNED BY DIRECTOR <i>Cleavel 1/17/12, with attached.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for appropriate signature DATE DUE <i>1-5-12</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> FOIA DATE DUE _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Necessary Action

APPROVALS <small>(Only when prepared for director's signature)</small>	APPROVE	* DISAPPROVE <small>(Note reason for disapproval and return to preparer.)</small>	COMMENT
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

CLEMSON

U N I V E R S I T Y

Burda K.

RECEIVED

DEC 21 2011

November 28, 2011
Department of Health & Human Services
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Sam Waldrop
South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
PO Box 8206
Columbia, SC 29202-8206

I have been bringing Clemson Nursing students to Gateway House (GH) since 2006. I make it the last clinical experience for their Psychiatric Nursing course since it gives them an uplifting experience of hope. Their entire semester is spent at Patrick B Harris Hospital in Anderson where they work closely with both acute and chronic inpatients. At Gateway House students are able to see some of these same patients transformed into "members" with a sense of purpose and of shared responsibility in a supportive community.

I have heard that with recent changes in Medicaid payments/allocations for mental health, a program like Gateway House does not meet criteria for "billable treatments/programs." I have observed the traditional model for outpatient treatment in my 40 years in Psychiatric Nursing with 25 of that in private practice in Georgia and South Carolina. I have never seen a more effective program than Gateway House.

The power of Gateway House is in the "intangibles." It is the "process" that creates an environment where individual members take pride in their clubhouse and in their unique contributions. It is the "process" that pushes former patients beyond the limiting expectations held by family, providers, and themselves secondary to their severe mental illnesses.

Our system for assigning value and for making payment is broken. This system is currently paying for groups that are nothing more than "busy work" such as making repetitive crafts, having a staff member read the local news to patients in mental health centers, or taking patients to watch planes take off at a local airport. The current system seems unwilling to assign value to time spent in a clubhouse where members are supported, are given tasks that are vital and meaningful which use their individual skills and strengths, and are encouraged to strive for education and employment.

This awareness of being empowered by membership at Gateway House is evident when talking to any of the members. My students have commented on the positive energy of GH members compared to what they have seen in local mental health centers. They see it in their faces, hear it in their voices as they share excitement with students over their apartments, their weight loss, their GH jobs, and their friendships.



SCHOOL OF NURSING

College of Health, Education & Human Development Robert Cook Edwards Hall Box 340742 Clemson, SC 29634-0743
864.656.7672 FAX 864.656.5488

Over the past six years I have seen tremendous growth in individual members at Gateway House. Some have maintained independent jobs for years that would have been unavailable to them if not for the GH programs and support. Most members maintain their own apartments and re-hospitalization is minimal. This is value to both the local community and to the state.

Conventional programs tend to foster dependence with the model for treatment being what professionals do for and to the patients. At Gateway House one of the sayings is, "I don't come to the clubhouse to be taken care of. I come to work toward achieving my goals." This is truly a program that supports independence and growth. I would encourage anyone to compare traditional programs to GH, even those claiming to be "clubhouses."

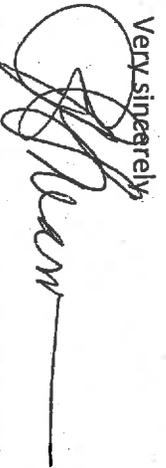
Any system that fails to assign value to this process of empowerment and mastery is missing key elements for the promotion of mental health – the ability to feel a sense of belonging, self-worth, and hope. Intangible? Yes. Its value? Priceless.

So, it is not about whether or not there is value at Gateway House. There is exceptional value in the process, in the program as a whole. Its value cannot, and should not, be divided "piece-meal" as in the traditional reimbursement system. In the case of this powerful program, there needs to be a reevaluation of the reimbursement system.

The severe cutbacks of mental health services in this state have left state mental hospitals with empty yet useable beds while local hospitals are housing mental patients in emergency rooms, intensive care units, and even on medical/surgical and oncology floors. This is an abomination in the allocation of funds that promotes unsafe conditions for both medical and mental health patients.

Please do not continue to make the same poor decisions in the area of outpatient mental health treatment reimbursement. It is vital to continue financial support at the highest level possible for Gateway House which is a program that consistently produces results.

Very sincerely,



Barbara J G Warner, MS, PMHCNS-BC
Lecturer/Instructor, Clemson University
Retired 12/11

Copy to

Sam

CLEMSON
UNIVERSITY

RECEIVED

DEC 10 2011

Department of Health & Human Services
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

November 28, 2011

Anthony Keck, Director
South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
PO Box 8206
Columbia, SC 29202-8206

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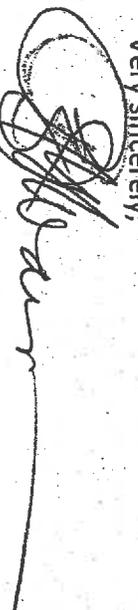
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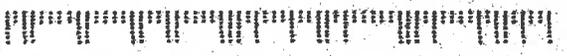
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Barbara J G Warner, MS, PMHCNS-BC
Lecturer/Instructor, Clemson University
Retired 12/11

Jan Wardrop
SE Dept Health & Human Services
P.O. Box 8206
Columbia, SC 29202-8206



29202-8206

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CLEMSON
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USA FIRST CLASS FOREVER



Log # 236

January 17, 2012

Ms. Barbara J.G. Warner, MS, PMHCNS-BC
Clemson University School of Nursing
College of Health, Education & Human Development
Robert Cook Edwards Hall
Post Office Box 340742
Clemson, South Carolina 29634-0743

Dear Ms. Warner:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Gateway House program and outpatient mental health treatment for adults. We appreciate the support you expressed for Gateway House and we share your concern regarding the continued availability of quality outpatient services for Medicaid beneficiaries with mental health needs.

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Service (SCDHHS) received approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service (CMS) for a State Plan Amendment (SPA) for Rehabilitative Behavioral Health Services (RBHS) effective July 1, 2010. In order to be reimbursed by Medicaid, all services must be determined medically necessary and must be rendered in compliance with Medicaid policy and procedure, as specified in the RBHS Policy Manual.

As a result of the implementation of RBHS SPA, Medicaid reimbursement for outpatient mental health services is no longer available for "bundled services" or day treatment programs. Compliance with the SPA requires that reimbursement for RBHS may only be claimed for a discrete treatment service(s) rendered by a qualified professional or paraprofessional, as specified in the SPA. The fee schedule is based on the education and credentials of the staff rendering the service, i.e., psychiatrist, psychologist, etc. CMS also requires that the rendering provider be enrolled directly with the Medicaid program to claim Medicaid reimbursement.

In an effort to continue the availability of specialized support services for adults such as those offered by Gateway House, this provider along with other similar private organizations with programs serving adults across the state was directly enrolled with the South Carolina Medicaid Program effective July 1, 2010. This allows these programs to claim Medicaid reimbursement for the discrete treatment or support service rendered in compliance with the RBHS SPA.

We have also facilitated discussions between the South Carolina Department of Mental Health and these clubhouse providers in an effort to problem solve and seek solutions to some of the challenges and issues that have arisen. SCDHHS is committed to continue these ongoing discussions as we attempt to support a variety of individual treatment options in the least restrictive setting possible. We will continue to promote and empower beneficiaries to choose and direct their own treatment.

We appreciate your continued support of the Medicaid program.

Sincerely,

Sam Waldrep
Deputy Director

SW/hcj

Brenda James - Log 236

From: Teeshla Curtis
To: Brenda James
Date: 01/13/2012 1:29 PM
Subject: Log 236



Brenda,

Sam is reviewing the response for Log 236. We will have a formal letter next week.

Teeshla