

Mental health assessment for young children

Overview

In 2021, Governor Inslee signed into law [2021 c 126 § 2](#). This legislation changes policy within Apple Health (Medicaid) to match best practices for the mental health assessment for children from birth through five years of age, including:

- (a) Allowing reimbursement for up to five sessions;
- (b) Allowing reimbursement for clinician travel to home and community settings; and
- (c) Requiring use of the Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood (DC:0-5™).

Updated Reimbursement Policies

On January 1, 2022, Apple Health policies were updated to allow reimbursement for up to five sessions for the diagnostic intake assessment for children younger than six. In addition, mental health professionals are now eligible for reimbursement for travel to home/community settings for these sessions.

Support for Use of the DC:0-5™

The Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood (DC:0-5™) is [recommended](#) by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for developmentally appropriate assessment of young children's mental health. The DC: 0 - 5™ uses developmentally specific diagnostic criteria and reflects mental health disorders that are typically diagnosed in infancy and early childhood.

Training: To support clinicians in adopting the DC: 0 - 5™, HCA is sponsoring the Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Workforce Collaborative ([IEMCH-WC](#)), in partnership with the Washington Association for Infant Mental Health. The IEMCH-WC provides free training in the DC:0-5™, as well as other related professional development supports, to mental health and allied professionals. Trainings began in March 2022, with approximately 275 mental health professionals and 200 allied professionals trained to date. Trainings will be offered on an ongoing basis.

Other Tools and Guidance: HCA, in partnership with members of the infant-early childhood mental health community, has published a '[DC:0-5 crosswalk](#)' that connects DC:0-5™ diagnoses to DSM diagnoses and ICD codes, for billing and documentation purposes. The Department of Health (DOH) has also issued a [policy statement](#) allowing for use of the DC:0-5 in clinical records. HCA and its partners, including DOH, will continue to develop additional tools and guidance to support providers in developmentally appropriate mental health assessments for young children.

Eligibility

Mental health professionals serving children younger than six enrolled in Apple Health; allied professionals supporting families enrolled in Apple Health.

Authority

2021 c 126 § 2; 2021 c 334 § 215 Proviso 43; RCW 74.09.520; WAC 182-531-1400; WAC 246-341-0640.

Budget

\$557,000 of the general fund—state appropriation and \$331,000 of the general fund—Medicaid appropriation for fiscal year 2022; \$522,000 of the general fund—state appropriation and \$297,000 of the general fund—Medicaid appropriation for fiscal year 2023. This amount includes the allocation of \$450,000 of Federal Medicaid funding through the 2022 Supplementary Budget.

Partners

Washington Association for Infant Mental Health

Oversight

Health Care Authority

More information

Kimberly "Kiki" Fabian
Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Analyst
kiki.fabian@hca.wa.gov

Christine Cole
Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Manager
christine.cole@hca.wa.gov

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