



## North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Services for Children with Mental Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and Complex Needs

### Fact Sheet

A Settlement Agreement was reached between the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Disability Rights North Carolina (DRNC) on October 14, 2016 to outline a plan to assist children with complex needs. DHHS successfully complied with the terms of the Settlement Agreement effective December 18, 2018. DHHS continues the work and collaboration as outlined in the Settlement Agreement.

The settlement defines **children with complex needs** as those who meet the following criteria:

- ✓ *Medicaid eligible and is*
- ✓ *Ages 5 and under 21 and is*
- ✓ *Diagnosed with a Developmental Disability (including Intellectual Disability and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder) and a Mental Health Disorder and is*
- ✓ *At - risk of not being able to return to or maintain placement within the community*

Children with Mental Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (MH/IDD) and complex needs are covered by a provision in federal Medicaid law called the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Services (EPSDT).

The Medicaid Act [ at 42 U.S.C. §§ 1396a(a)(10)(A), 1396a(a)(43),] requires that beneficiaries under 21 years of age receive any service listed at §1905(a) when that service is decided by a ***review under EPSDT standards*** to be medically necessary to ‘correct or ameliorate’ defects, physical and mental illnesses and conditions’. These services, products and treatments must be provided regardless of their inclusion in any state’s plan of covered services. If those services are medically necessary in quantities, at frequencies or in locations which aren’t included in state Medicaid policies, the policy limit must be set aside to provide appropriate care.

These federal standards apply to all children, including those with complex developmental, behavioral and medical needs. North Carolina DHHS has contracted with Local Management Entity / Managed Care Organizations throughout the state to manage services addressing the behavioral needs for these children.

### **For Access to Care**

Contact the 24/7 access/crisis center of the LME-MCO in your area. A listing is available at:

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/providers/lme-mco-directory>

- LME-MCO access staff will determine whether the child may be a “child with complex needs.”
- If child meets “complex needs” requirements, the access staff will make an internal referral for the child to a designated Care Coordinator and will receive services determined to be medically necessary and that have been authorized.
- If child does not meet “complex needs” requirements they will be referred to receive medically necessary services and resources within the community.



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### **Assessments**

Assessments should be completed within last five years by a licensed or credentialed professionals outside of the LME-MCO who have experience diagnosing and treating an individual with IDD and MH.

### **DHHS Children's Assessment Clinics**

- Located at two sites: Murdoch Developmental Center located in Butner, NC & J. Iverson Riddle Developmental Center located in Morganton, NC.
- An interdisciplinary team will assess the child and review clinical information to make recommendations for appropriate services and supports likely needed for a child to maintain community placement.

### **Case Management**

- Available under EPSDT as an adjunctive service to Care Coordination.
- Must NOT be duplicative and must be medically necessary and authorized.

### **Children with Complex Needs Training**

- May 1, 2017, DHHS began offering training to providers dedicated to serving Children with Complex Needs to strengthen our provider network.
- This training is inclusive of trainings offered through NC START Programs.
- Educational opportunities including training and workforce development continue to be offered by DHHS to LME-MCOs, behavioral health providers, community partners and stakeholders, and families.

### **NC START (North Carolina Systemic, Therapeutic Assessment, Respite, and Treatment)**

- This is a comprehensive program that provides community-based crisis prevention and intervention services for individuals with IDD and challenging behaviors, often with a co-occurring mental illness.
- Can access NC START children's services by contacting your LME-MCO.
- The LME-MCO will determine eligibility and will make appropriate referrals.

### **Data Collection**

Data will be collected and analyzed at Murdoch Center Children's Outpatient Assessment Clinic, through information from NC START and through the LME-MCOs quarterly to determine trends.

### **State Administrator Role**

- The Division of Child and Family Wellbeing (DCFV) has a full-time position dedicated to the day-to-day operational oversight for this program under the guidance of DCFV leadership.

### **Assistance**

If you have trouble getting services for a child with complex needs, please contact [Children.ComplexNeeds@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Children.ComplexNeeds@dhhs.nc.gov)