

SB 105 – “MARITAL/FAMILY THERAPY LIC & MED SERVICES”

April 18, 2018

The following information, questions, and answers are a consolidation that have accumulated over the course of CSSB 105(FIN)’s journey through four legislative committees in both bodies.

What does CSSB 105(FIN) accomplish?

Defines the supervision training hours and requirements for an Associate Marital & Family Therapist;

Expands the list of approved healthcare professionals that can provide group supervision of an Associate Marital & Family Therapist; and,

Adds Marital & Family Therapy services as eligible to render and bill for Medicaid-funded services as independent practitioners under Alaska Statute 47.07.030 (b).

Does CSSB 105(FIN) add LMFT services to the Medicaid optional services?

The answer is yes. Section 3 of the bill adds marital and family therapy services to the list of services the department may offer to Medicaid eligible clients.

The bill creates a new Medicaid provider type: marital & family therapists

Will SB 105 allow marriage counseling by licensed marital & family therapists (LMFTs) to be covered by Medicaid?

SB 105 does not allow for any new services to be billed to Medicaid that are not already eligible to be billed when an LMFT, or other behavioral health professional, provides them in a mental health physician clinic.

Marriage counseling may be a Medicaid-billable service if the counseling meets qualifications as a medically necessary service. For example, if a couple seeks marriage counseling from an LMFT, and the LMFT determines that a member of the couple has clinical depression, such group therapy could be billed to Medicaid. All the bill does is provide the ability for LMFTs to provide these services as independent practitioners.

Are the services an LMFT provides limited to a certain set of CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) codes?

The following CPT Codes would be anticipated as an eligible Medicaid service that an LMFT could provide:

- H0031 – Mental Health Intake Assessment
- H0031HH – Integrated Mental Health and Substance Use Assessment
- 90804/06/10/12 – Individual Psychotherapy (30min or 60min; adult or child)
- 90846/-U7/47/ - Family Psychotherapy (30min or 60min; with or without patient present)
- 90849/-U7 – Multi-family Group Psychotherapy (30min or 60min)
- 90853/-U7 – Group Psychotherapy (30min or 60min)
- S9484/-U6 – Short-term Crisis Intervention (1hr or 15min)
- 99408 – Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral for Treatment (SBIRT)

Technically, if an LMFT has the specific education, training and experience they could also provide:

- 96101/-U6 – Psychological Testing (1hr or 15mins)

Would CSSB 105(FIN) result in any savings?

The department would expect the increased availability of marital and family therapy services to provide Medicaid beneficiaries with ore options for more preventative care and thus reduce the need for more acute services.

We expect new access to marital and family therapy will reduce the likelihood that these individuals will wait until their symptoms become so urgent that they end up needing emergency services that typically are more intensive and more expansive.

Providing more options for clients seeking access to behavioral health services could also reduce burdens on a variety of state services, from Corrections to child protection to the Court System.

CSSB 105(FIN is supported by:

- Alaska Board of Marital & Family Therapy
- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
- Mat-Su Health Foundation
- American College of Emergency Physicians/Alaska Chapter
- Alaska Primary Care Association
- Alaska Emergency Room Physicians

Thank you for your support of CSSB 105(FIN)!