

Medical Assistance Transportation Program Memorandum MATP OPS # 11-2009-012

Date: November 30, 2009

Subject: Pilot Program on New Mileage Reimbursement Protocol for Transportation to Methadone Maintenance Providers

To: All Statewide County MATP Program Offices

From: Tyrone E. Williams, Director, MATP

Purpose:

To notify counties that effective **January 1, 2010**, the Department of Public Welfare will conduct a pilot in conjunction with Indiana and Cambria Counties on a new mileage reimbursement protocol for methadone maintenance.

Background:

Indiana and Cambria Counties have volunteered to pilot a new policy in their counties. Both counties will only reimburse Medical Assistance consumers requiring mileage reimbursement up to the distance of one of the two closest in-network methadone clinics from a consumer's residence. Additionally, a 50-mile trip limit will apply.

Please note that this reimbursement limitation is subject to the exception processes described in detail in the Discussion section of this memorandum.

This policy is a limitation on the amount of mileage reimbursement to be provided to the recipient, not on the actual place of treatment. The recipient's Behavioral Health Managed Care Organization (BH-MCO) will continue to pay for services under existing HealthChoices policy.

Discussion:

Effective **January 1, 2010**, if an MATP recipient should choose to travel farther than the two closest methadone maintenance providers for treatment, that recipient's reimbursement shall be limited to the distance to the second closest methadone clinic that is accessible to the recipient. This policy is subject to the exception policy described below. Additionally, a one-way 50-mile trip limit will apply. If the clinic the recipient attends is not one of the two closest and is greater than 50 miles one-way from the recipient's residence, the recipient must request an exception that will explain their need to travel to the clinic. Recipients still have the right to visit any clinic in a BH-MCO's network, but Cambria and Indiana County MATP offices will reimburse them based on this new policy.

Example 1:

If Clinic A is 25 miles away from the recipient's home, Clinic B is 30 miles, and the recipient chooses to travel to Clinic C which is 40 miles away, the county MATP will only reimburse mileage to Clinic B.

Example 2:

If Clinic A is 40 miles and Clinic B is 60 miles, and the recipient chooses to travel to Clinic B for treatment, to receive reimbursement to Clinic B they will need approval for an exception from the Department to go to Clinic B because it is greater than 50 miles away.

Cambria and Indiana County MATP offices will follow the written notice requirements when a recipient makes a request for reimbursement to a specific clinic that the MATP office denies.

Exception Processes1) Justification for not going to one of the two closest clinics

The Department is allowing an exception process for those recipients who may not have the option to choose between one of the two closest clinics for reasons that include, but not limited to:

- the facility is not accepting new patients
- the recipient does not meet the intake criteria for the facility
- Medical reasons

A recipient must provide in writing a request for an exception to this policy that includes one of the reasons above or another valid reason that the Department will review in conjunction with the recipients BH-MCO. Cambria or Indiana County will identify staff that will help a recipient write their request for an exception, if the recipient requests assistance. If the Department grants an exception, the recipient may receive reimbursement to either of the two next closest facilities with a 50-mile trip limit.

Example 3:

Clinic A is 10 miles away, Clinic B is 20 miles away and Clinic C is 30 miles away. The Department verifies and approves the recipient's exception request that Clinic A is not accepting new patients. The recipient may choose to receive reimbursement to Clinic B or Clinic C.

2) Justification for mileage to a clinic greater than 50 miles away:

If a clinic is greater than 50 miles away but it is the closest clinic, no verification is required. However, if a recipient chooses to receive treatment at a clinic that is greater than 50 miles away, and if that clinic is not the closest, the recipient must submit in writing a request for an exception to this policy. The request should include one of the reasons above or another valid reason that the Department will review in conjunction with the recipient's BH-MCO. Cambria and Indiana Counties will help a recipient write their exception, if the recipient requests assistance. The Department will review the documentation and grant an exception as appropriate. The Department will notify the recipient in writing of the result, with a copy to the county MATP offices and the BH-MCO Director of Member and Provider Services.

3) Grandfathering existing clients for medical necessity:

Recipients of MATP mileage reimbursement to methadone maintenance who would be affected by this new policy and wish to continue to be reimbursed for mileage to their existing provider must submit in writing a request for an exception to this policy. The request should include one of the reasons outlined above or another valid reason that the Department will review in conjunction with the recipients BH-MCO. Cambria and Indiana Counties will help a recipient write their exception, if the recipient requests assistance. If DPW grants an exception, the recipient may continue to receive reimbursement to the facility s/he is attending as of the effective date of this memo. The Department will notify the recipient of the result with a copy to the county MATP offices and the BH-MCO Director of Member and Provider Services.

All recipients will be instructed to send their requests for exceptions to the following address via consumer notice (which the county MATP offices will send):

DPW MATP Exception Request
DGS Annex Complex
PO Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105
Fax-(717)705-8112

Consumer Notices

Indiana and Cambria Counties will send notices to all current recipients receiving mileage reimbursement for methadone maintenance and current recipients who are traveling distances outside the standard of the new policy. Indiana and Cambria Counties must send these notices at least 30 days prior to implementation of this policy. In addition, they will both emphasize the new mileage reimbursement protocol to all new methadone maintenance recipients at initial application.

Next Steps:

All counties please note that this policy will operate as a Pilot Program that includes Indiana and Cambria Counties, only. The results of this pilot will determine next steps and help with the decision on whether the Department takes this policy statewide. In addition, the process described in this memorandum is subject to change based on the reported outcomes. Counties are welcome to comment on the pilot in the interim. Please provide all comments to your program advisor.