

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
POLICY

Subject: Third Party Coverage for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders

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POLICY STATEMENT

The SDSMA recognizes there are challenges and barriers to treatment for mental health and substance use disorders. Barriers include the social stigma of mental health conditions, a lack of mental health education and awareness, the cost of treatment, a lack of financial resources, health insurance limitations, a lack of transportation, a shortage of mental health professionals, among others. The SDSMA shall advocate to reduce barriers to care and support efforts to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and substance use disorders.

The SDSMA believes that comprehensive medical, psychiatric, and other specialty evaluations by appropriately licensed professionals that aid in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of mental health and substance abuse disorders are comparable to evaluations of any other illness. The SDSMA further believes that coverage and authorization for services should not be arbitrarily limited by monetary, visit, or level of care limits that are at variance with other medical conditions, but be appropriately monitored by peer review processes, as with any other medical illness.

Therefore, the SDSMA shall also advocate for:

- a. Parity in coverage of mental health and substance abuse disorders.
- b. Physicians, including psychiatrists, and other professionals who are appropriately trained and licensed to provide treatment for mental illness to be paid by both private and public payers for the provision of evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, and management services.
- c. Payment for case management, coordination, interpretive and indirect services on parity with other medical conditions.
- d. Direct access to a psychiatrist and or other appropriately licensed behavioral health/addiction specialists in the health plan referral process.
- e. Health plans to make it easy to access treatment for mental and substance abuse disorders
- f. Collaboration among various licensed professionals in mental health and addiction.

AUTHORITY

South Dakota State Medical Association Policy Council, 6/3/2022; South Dakota State Medical Association Board of Directors, 6/3/2022.