

North Carolina
State Health Plan

for Teachers and State Employees and
NC Health Choice for Children

www.shpnc.org

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING
POLICY NUMBER: AH0725

Definition:

Psychological testing involves the culturally and linguistically competent administration and interpretation of standardized tests to assess an individual's psychological or cognitive functioning. Testing is viewed as a potentially helpful second opinion for treatment failures and/or difficult to diagnose cases. Psychological testing may include one or more tests given to aid in the evaluation of an individual with emotional, psychiatric, neuropsychiatric, personality illness(es) or developmental delays.

Coverage:

1. Psychological testing to be utilized in the evaluation for psychiatric care is covered when rendered by:
 - a. A doctor of psychology who is licensed or certified in the state in which he or she performs any service covered by the Plan. He or she must have a doctorate practice degree in psychology and at least two years clinical experience in a recognized health setting or has met the standards of the National Register of Health Service Provider in Psychology.
 - b. A licensed psychological associate who is supervised by a psychiatrist or licensed/certified doctoral psychologist, when completed within the requirements outlined by the NC Practicing Psychologist Licensing Act (G.S. 90-270/21 NCAS 54.2006).

Approval:

1. Pre-certification is not required when psychological testing is done in an office setting when completed within the first 26 visits allowed without case management in any Plan Year.
2. Pre-certification by the Mental Health Case Manager is always required when psychological testing is done:

- a. In a clinic or facility setting as an outpatient visit
 - b. On an outpatient basis after the 26 office visit limit has been exhausted;
 - c. During a stay at any higher level of care (inpatient, partial hospitalization, residential treatment center, intensive outpatient program, 23 hour observation stay).
3. Information needed by the Mental Health Case Manager prior to the testing includes names of tests, rationale for testing, number of hours requested, and name and credentials of the provider who plans to do the testing. The Mental Health Case Manager must render a decision regarding the medical necessity of the requested psychological testing prior to the testing being performed. Testing is rarely if ever, needed on an emergency basis; therefore requests for psychological testing must be pre-certified.
 4. Routine testing (as may be regularly requested by facilities at admission or upon initiation of treatment) may not be considered medically necessary.

Limitations and Exclusions:

1. Itemization per test is required. For example, a “Standard Battery of Psychological Tests” is not covered.
2. Psychological testing is generally not approved for those persons with a chemical dependency diagnosis until 30 consecutive days of abstinence are obtained.
3. Two episodes of psychological testing will be allowed within a 60 day time period. Situations outside this limit should be reviewed on an individual consideration basis according to the age of the patient, complexity of the symptoms, and medical necessity.
4. The following are not covered:
 - a. Educational or achievement testing for the sole purpose of resolving educational performance questions.
 - b. Psychological testing for conditions which are classified solely as a learning disability.
 - c. Psychological testing performed by a psychiatric nurse, social worker or any other allied mental health professional, for whom psychological testing is beyond his/her “scope of practice” and/or for which he/she is not licensed.
 - d. Scoring of psychological testing, report writing, and sessions to review test results are considered integral to the testing and are not eligible for separate reimbursement.
5. For additional limitations and exclusions, see Medical Policy AD0430, Mental Health and Chemical Dependency Case Management.
6. See <http://www.shpnc.org> for a complete listing of medical policies.

Authority:

N.C. G.S. 135-44.4

N.C. G.S. 135-45.1

N.C. G.S. 135-45.9

G.S. 90-270/21 NCAS 54.2006

Reviewed:

September 2008

November 2008

May 2009

Effective:

November 18, 2008