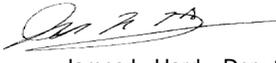




MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA • DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

ISSUE DATE August 24, 2006	EFFECTIVE DATE September 1, 2006	NUMBER * SEE BELOW
SUBJECT Revision to Minimum Staff Qualifications of Therapeutic Staff Support (TSS) Workers.	BY  James L. Hardy, Deputy Secretary Office of Medical Assistance Programs	

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Bulletin is to inform providers of changes to the minimum staff qualifications for Therapeutic Staff Support (TSS) workers. This Bulletin supersedes the minimum staff qualifications for TSS workers set forth in Medical Assistance (MA) Bulletin 01-01-05 et al., "Revisions to Policies and Procedures Relating to Mobile Therapy, Behavioral Specialist Consultant and Therapeutic Staff Support Services" (MA Bulletin 01-01-05), to the extent that the provisions of this bulletin conflict with those in the earlier bulletin.

SCOPE:

This bulletin applies to all providers enrolled in the MA Program to render TSS services to MA recipients under twenty-one years of age.

BACKGROUND:

In MA Bulletin 01-01-05, the Department of Public Welfare (Department) issued revised minimum staff qualifications for TSS workers to require at least the equivalent of three years of full-time paid work experience in a job that involved direct contact with children or adolescents for a person with an Associate's Degree or sixty credits toward a Bachelor's degree. The Department has reevaluated these minimum staff qualifications and has determined that three years work experience is unnecessary when the experience includes full-time work as a TSS Aide, since the experience gained as a TSS Aide is more closely related to the role of a TSS worker than other work experience. For this reason, the Department is modifying the minimum staff qualifications of a TSS worker to include an Associate's Degree or sixty credits toward a Bachelor's Degree and one year of experience as a TSS Aide. The Department expects that this modification will encourage longevity in the service community and further expand the pool of available TSS workers.

Although specifying the minimum staff qualifications, the Department continues to encourage providers to use their best efforts to hire and retain TSS workers with more education or work experience than the specified minimum.

* **08-06-15, 09-06-15, 11-06-07, 19-06-04, 31-06-21**

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The appropriate toll-free number for your provider type.

Visit the Office of Medical Assistance Programs website at www.dpw.state.pa.us/omap

TSS MINIMUM STAFF QUALIFICATIONS:

Effective September 1, 2006, the following persons will be eligible to provide TSS services:

- a. Persons with a Bachelor's Degree in psychology, social work, counseling, sociology, education, criminal justice, or similar human service field, with no previous work experience;
- b. Persons with a Bachelor's Degree in any other field, with the equivalent of at least one year of full-time paid work experience in a job that involved direct contact with children or adolescents;
- c. Licensed registered nurses, with the equivalent of at least one year of full-time paid work experience in a job that involved direct contact with children or adolescents;
- d. Persons with an Associate's Degree, or sixty credits toward a Bachelor's Degree, with the equivalent of at least one year of full-time paid work experience as a TSS Aide;
- e. Persons with an Associate's Degree, or sixty credits toward a Bachelor's Degree, with the equivalent of at least three years of full-time paid work experience in a job that involved direct contact with children or adolescents, other than as a TSS Aide;
- f. Licensed practical nurses, with the equivalent of at least three years of full-time paid work experience in a job that involved direct contact with children or adolescents.

As explained in MA Bulletin 01-01-05, for the purpose of evaluating paid work experience, a "job that involved direct contact with children" is a job such as a position working directly with children or adolescents in the mental health, mental retardation, early intervention, children and youth, juvenile justice, education, drug and alcohol, day care or health systems.

Time for which an individual received a stipend or payment for work experience obtained for educational credit or required for a college degree or professional license may be included in the calculation of either educational credit or paid work experience, but not both.

These requirements apply to all TSS workers, whether agency employees, independent contractors, contract workers, or workers in any other employment status. TSS services provided by staff who do not meet the specified minimum staff qualifications are ineligible for MA payment from either the Department or HealthChoices Behavioral Health Managed Care Organizations.

Except as modified by this bulletin, MA Bulletin 01-01-05 remains in effect.