



Medicare Mental Health
Workforce Coalition



NATIONAL BOARD FOR
CERTIFIED COUNSELORS®
AND AFFILIATES

Engagement Opportunities for County Behavioral Health Directors With MHCs and MFTs Under Medicare

Oct. 10, 2024 | noon—1 pm EDT

Sponsored by the Medicare Mental Health Workforce Coalition and NACBHDD



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Meeting Details

1

Closed Captioning is enabled and attendees can turn CC on or off as they desire.

2

Interpreter Phone Number: 305-224-1968 Webinar ID: 851 7550 1423 Passcode: 763870

3

Session Evaluation / Take our survey at the end of the webinar. (CE credit for live attendance only)

4

Webinar will be posted on NBCC website a few days following the webinar.

5

Q&A: Please add your questions in the Q&A box at any time during the meeting.

Previous Webinars



[View Previous Webinars](#) ➔

Medicare Mental Health Workforce Coalition Members

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Counseling Association

American Mental Health Counselors Association

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness

California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists

Centerstone

Center for Medicare Advocacy

Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research

National Association for Rural Mental Health

National Association of Community Health Centers

National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors

National Board for Certified Counselors

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

National Council on Aging

Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies

The Jewish Federations of North America

Learning Objectives

After this webinar, attendees will be able to:

- 1. identify the roles** that County Behavioral Health Directors play.
- 2. identify challenges** that County Behavioral Health Directors face and opportunities for engagement with MFTs and MHCs.
- 3. highlight** the skills, expertise, and experiences of MFTs and MHCs.
- 4. identify next steps** for MFTs and MHCs in engaging County Behavioral Health Directors to address the needs of older adults served by these county service systems.





Jonah C. Cunningham

Jonah C. Cunningham currently serves as President and CEO of the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD). In this role he proactively advocates for national policies that recognize and support the critical role counties play in caring for people affected by mental illness, addiction, and developmental disabilities. In this capacity, he also serves as Executive Director of the National Association for Rural Mental Health.

Prior to joining NACBHDD, Cunningham worked at Trust for America's Health, a public health think tank, where he focused extensively on ways to reduce mortality from substance misuse and suicide. Additionally, he worked as a congressional staffer for several years in the office of Congresswoman Grace F. Napolitano (CA) where he helped to reestablish the Congressional Mental Health Caucus and created a Suicide Prevention Task Force within the Caucus.

Cunningham has received numerous awards and recognition for his commitment to the field of behavioral health and those served by the nation's behavioral health system. He has a Bachelor of Science in political science from the University of Utah and a Master of Public Policy from The George Washington University.

Michelle Ponce

Michelle Ponce is the Associate Director of the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, where she has served since 2019. The Association represents all 26 licensed Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) in Kansas and provides representation in public policy, coordinates training and education opportunities, and fosters a culture for networking and engagement of thought leaders in Kansas behavioral health. Her education and work experience have focused on public management, with an emphasis on public and nonprofit administration and health and human services.

Previously, Ponce served as Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments for over 7 years. Prior to that, she served in the Office of the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, where she held several positions, including Director of Communications and Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Disability Directors and Oral Health Kansas. Ponce earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Emporia State University and a master's degree in public administration from Wichita State University.





Roger Smith

Roger Smith, JD, joined the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) in 2005. As AAMFT's chief advocacy officer, Smith oversees AAMFT's federal and state advocacy initiatives. As AAMFT's general counsel, Smith handles general legal issues for AAMFT. He serves as an AAMFT staff representative to the Medicare Mental Health Workforce Coalition.

After receiving a bachelor's degree from Purdue University, Smith earned his law degree from the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, in Indianapolis.

Jolie Long

Jolie Long, MS, EdS, NCC, MAC, LCMHC, is the Legislative Research Manager in the Government and Legislative Affairs Department for the National Board for Certified Counselors. She works to develop and implement policy initiatives in the state and federal legislative arena to promote professional excellence. She aims to strengthen the regulatory framework of the profession, expand governmental recognition of counselors, and increase access to high-quality counseling services.

Long analyzes active legislation and policy and coordinates advocacy, lobbying, and grassroots efforts on behalf of counselors and the profession. She is the former Executive Director of the American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB) where she provided administrative oversight, strategic leadership, and day-to-day administration of the organization. She received her master's and educational specialist degrees in counseling and educational development from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.





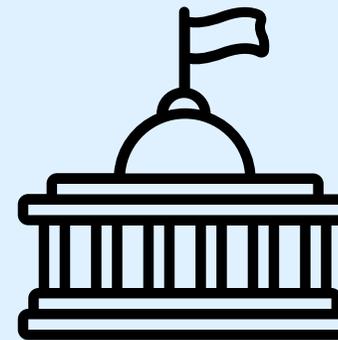
County Behavioral Health: Different Authorities, Same Mission

JONAH C. CUNNINGHAM
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF NACBHDD

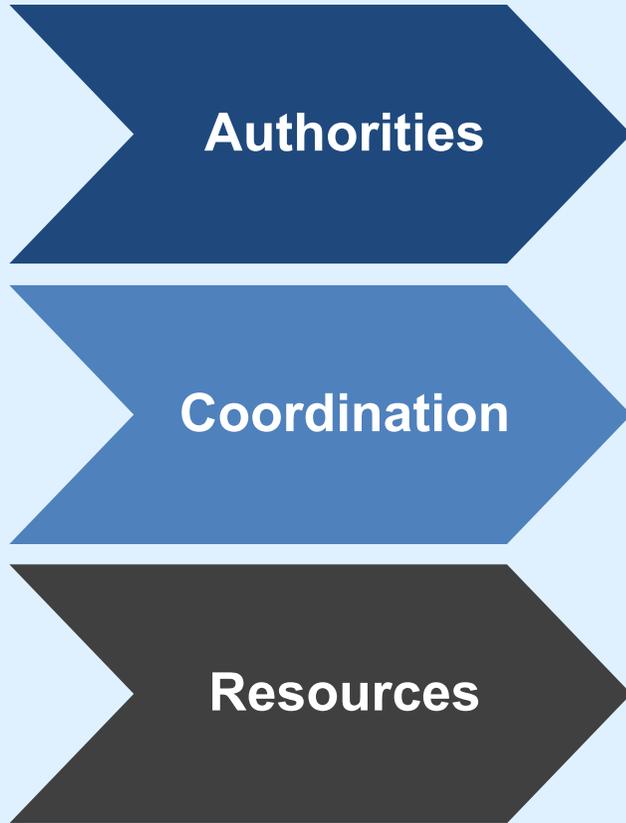


About NACBHDD

Founded in 1989
Represents local authorities
Affiliate of NACo



Variation Across States



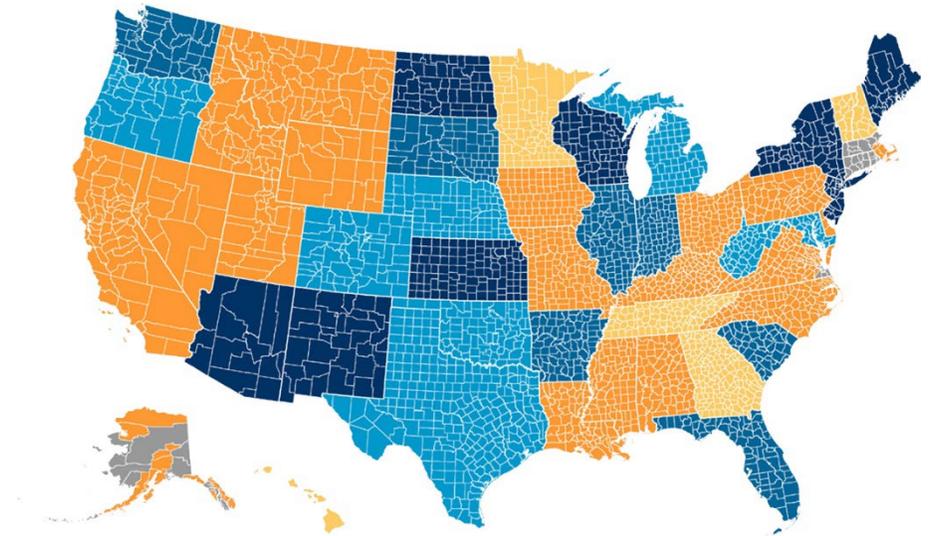
County Authorities

Dillon Rule

- Powers Granted by State

Home Rule

- Autonomy from State

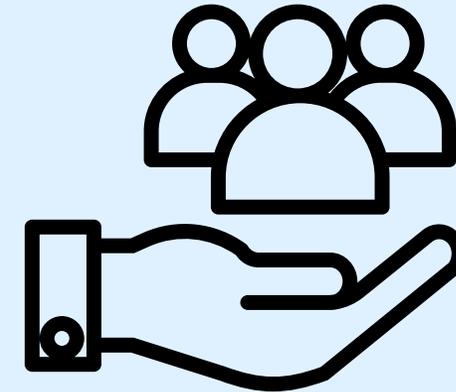


Behavioral Health Authorities

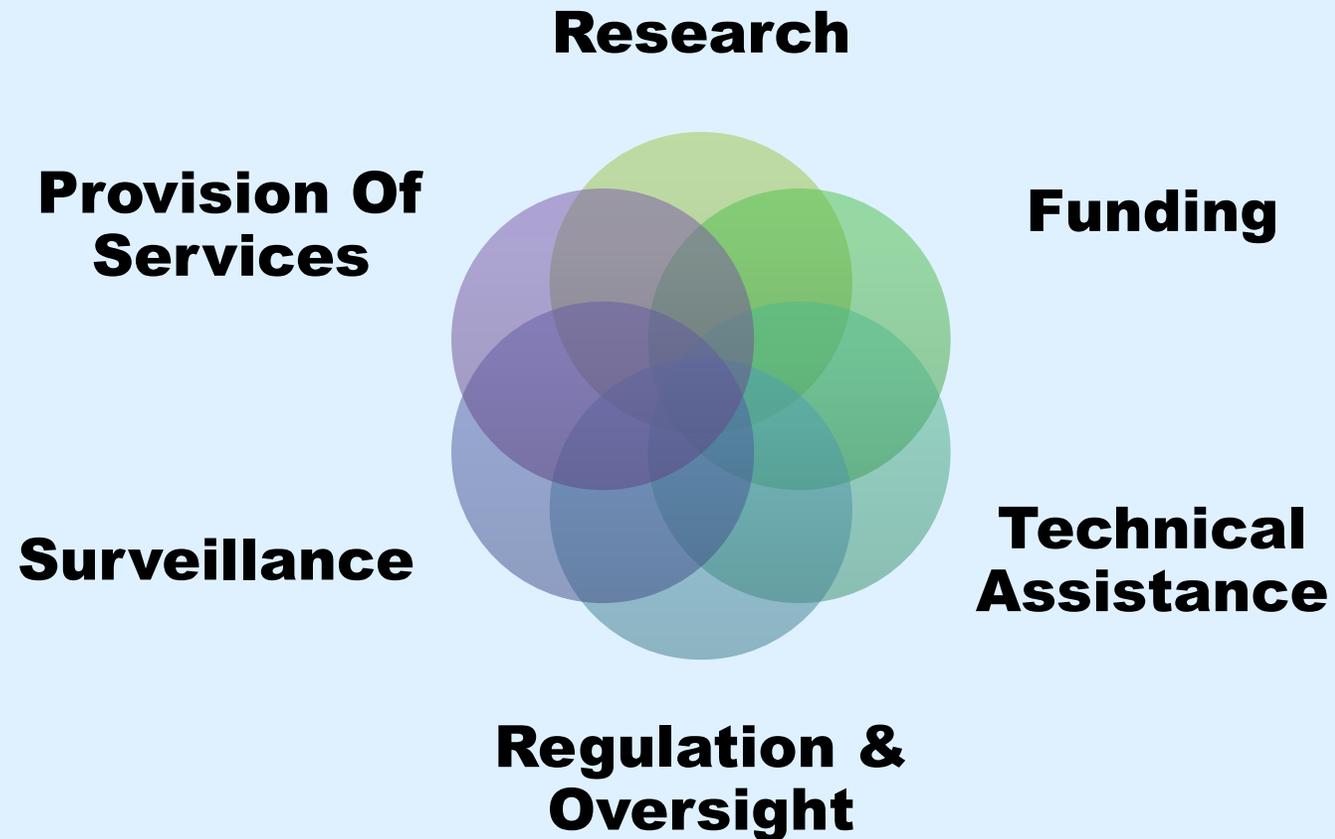
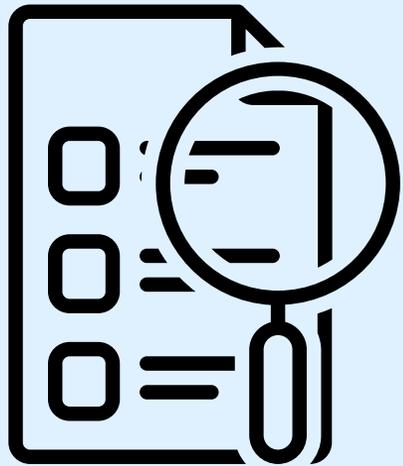
Advisory and
Technical
Assistance

Administrative
and Oversight

Provide Direct
Services



Role of Federal Government in Health





State Comparison Report

Explain Local Public
MH Systems

Connection to
Medicaid and
Crisis Response

Demonstrate Impact

Learn More About the:
NACBHDD
State
Comparison
Project





Crisis Messaging Series

Designed for Local Leaders

Includes County Examples

Next Report Focused on Rural

Learn More About:
[NACo.org](https://www.naco.org)





THANK YOU

jcunningham@nacbhd.org

NACBHDD.org



Kansas Behavioral Health Center of Excellence



What is a Center of Excellence?

- ▶ A place (virtual or actual) of high achievement in a specific area, providing leadership, best practices, research, and training; a team of subject matter experts with a shared mission around a particular area of interest



Characteristics of a Successful Center of Excellence

Access to the right expertise at the right time

Builds research and innovation to leverage existing resources

Identifies and disseminates best practices

Develops actionable ideas and strategies (e.g., to address the workforce crisis)

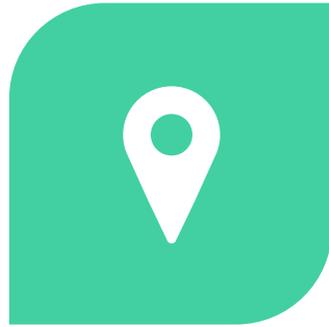
Generates knowledge and improved practices

Quick delivery of results

Why now? Why here?



**THE RIGHT
TIME**



**THE RIGHT
PLACE**



**THE RIGHT
PEOPLE**

Draft Mission and Vision

- ▶ As a consortium of professionals in the field, **KBHCE's mission** is to promote innovation and rigor in mental and behavioral health and human services, fostering a high-quality statewide interprofessional care model of prevention, resilience, and quality of life for all.
- ▶ **The vision of the KBHCE:** South Central Kansas is a leader in behavioral health education, training, and service provision



(Current) Member Agencies

Association of
Community Mental
Health Centers of
Kansas

KS Dept for Aging &
Disability Services

COMCARE of
Sedgwick County

Mental Health
America of SC
Kansas

Substance Abuse
Center of Kansas

Ascension Via Christi

Wichita State
University

KU Med - Wichita

Kansas Health
Science University

Friends
University

Newman
University

KS Community
College
Association

KS Technical
Colleges

Who We Are



Our partners employ mental health and addictions counselors, social workers, nurses (CNAs, LPNs, RNs, APRNs), care coordinators, peer support specialists, case managers, psychologists, psychiatrists



Our partners train and educate mental health and addictions counselors, social workers, nurses (CNAs, LPNs, RNs, APRNs), case managers, psychologists, psychiatrists

What We Do

The **KBHCE**, through its partner organizations, may provide or develop:

- technical assistance;
 - internship, training, and employment opportunities;
 - education;
 - data, research, and evaluation; and
 - advocacy.
-



Organizational Structure

Articles of Incorporation have been filed

Tax ID has been assigned

Bylaws adopted

Application for nonprofit status is in process

Governing board and advisory council have been established

Officers and staff appointed

Early Successes

- ▶ **\$75,000 grant** from Aetna Better Health to support development and administration
- ▶ Development of a policy agenda
- ▶ **\$5.7m FY 2025 State Budget Appropriations**
 - ▶ Expansion of psychiatric residency program and addiction medicine fellowship
 - ▶ Development of forensic psychology program
 - ▶ Additional applied learning opportunities in behavioral health degree programs
 - ▶ Paid internships
 - ▶ Recruitment and retention bonuses for nursing faculty in 2-year degree programs



The image features four 3D-style upward-pointing arrows of increasing size from left to right, set against a background of a sunset or sunrise over a landscape. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with a bright sun visible on the right side. The ground is a dark, reddish-brown color. The overall composition is on the left side of the slide, with a blue vertical bar on the far left edge.

Looking Toward FY 2026

- ▶ In FY26 we are requesting **\$8,677,500** for the following workforce initiatives:
 - ▶ Addictions fellowship program Integrated adult and child psychiatric residency program at KU-Med Wichita
 - ▶ Behavioral health programs to increase applied learning opportunities at Wichita State University, including forensic and psychological assessment training; paid internship training with community-based providers; physician assistant training with a specialization in behavioral health; and social work, nursing, and clinical mental health counselor & addiction counselor training
 - ▶ Expansion of Master of Science Family Therapy (MSFT) degree program
 - ▶ Creation of an undergraduate pathway to prepare graduates to pursue the licensed addiction counselor credential

Looking Toward FY 2026

- ▶ In FY26 we are requesting **\$8,677,500** for the following workforce initiatives:
 - ▶ Re-establishment of the Wichita Collaborative Psychology Internship Program (WCPIP) for paid psychology internship programs at Comcare, Prairie View, and South Central Mental Health Center
 - ▶ Provision of **\$5,000** stipends to graduate-level social work students who will complete practicum experiences with community-based behavioral health providers
 - ▶ Recruitment and/or retention incentives for full or part-time nursing faculty members at community and technical colleges

What Our Partners Are Saying: *What's in It for Them?*

- ▶ Overall, the focus has been on **development of workforce strategies** and how to best meet the needs of the community
- ▶ There is **broad consensus** on the importance of collaboration
- ▶ When asked how they see this work benefiting them, their staff, and/or students, responses included the following:
 - ▶ *Networking that comes with collaborating*
 - ▶ *Opportunities for connection and discussions with other organizations*
 - ▶ *Already making progress finding new practicum sites for students*
 - ▶ *Center has allowed communication to happen among Wichita agencies who often operate in silos*





Michelle Ponce

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Engagement Opportunities for County Behavioral Health Directors With MHCs and MFTs Under Medicare

Presentation by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy & the National Board for Certified Counselors



Roger Smith, JD

Chief Advocacy Officer & General Counsel

Jolie Long, MS, EdS, NCC, LCMHC

Legislative Research Manager

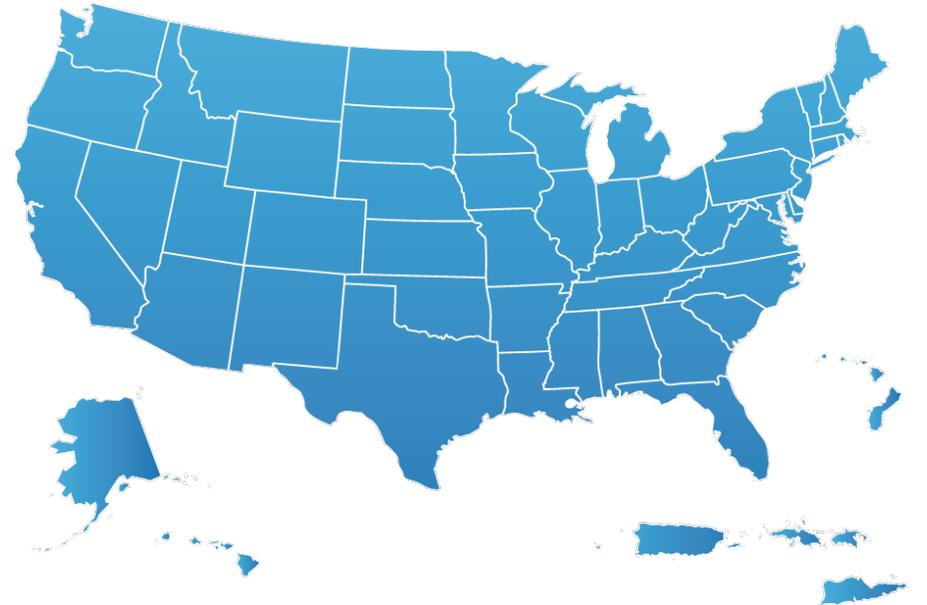


Marriage and Family Therapists

Marriage and family therapists (MFTs) are licensed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia

- Provide individual, family, and group psychotherapy services
- Regulated by state licensure boards/agencies like other health care providers

Over 81,000 Licensed MFTs in the United States



Marriage and Family Therapists

MFT education and training:

- Master's or doctoral degree
- Two years of clinical supervised experience
- Clinical exam



Diagnose, assess, and treat mental, emotional and addictive disorders

Trained to address anxiety, depression, PTSD, and other mental, emotional, and addictive disorders



Marriage and Family Therapists

Systemic orientation



MFTs work in a wide variety of settings



Recognized by Medicaid, Medicare (effective 2024), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Indian Health Service, private health plans, and other payers



Mental Health Counselors (MHCs)

Mental health counselors are licensed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia

- Provide individual, family, and group psychotherapy services
- Regulated by state licensure boards/agencies like other health care providers



300,000 counselors serve on the frontlines of our mental health delivery system and are ready to provide needed care to older adults in county behavioral health systems.



Mental Health Counselors

Education

Master's or doctoral degrees from an accredited institution. Requires approximately 6–7 years of study beyond the high school level.

Although graduate programs generally accept students from all academic backgrounds, undergraduate coursework in psychology, human development, and social work is desirable.



Training

Accredited training programs include extensive, supervised field experience in the form of practicums and internships.

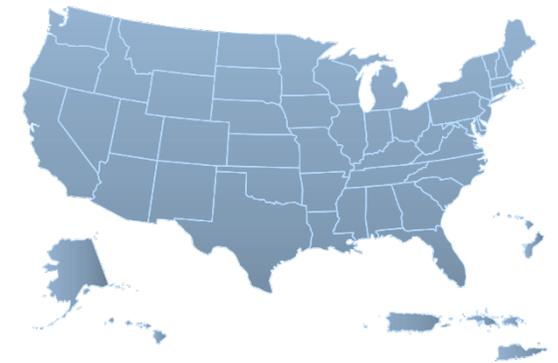
Accreditation available from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Standards include 60 credit hours with specified course work and supervised experience.



Licensing and Certification of MHCs

MHCs licensed in all 50 states.

- Requires a master's degree
- 2,000–4,000 hours of supervised clinical experience
- Must pass a knowledge/clinical exam prior to practicing



To maintain licensure and certification, counselors must engage in continuing education (CE) during their careers.



AAMFT

NATIONAL BOARD FOR
CERTIFIED COUNSELORS
AND AFFILIATES

Licensing and Certification of MHCs



Experienced counselors often hold administrative or supervisory positions at agencies and treatment facilities. Many return to school to pursue doctorates.



National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC):

- The **National Certified Counselor (NCC)** credential requires rigorous education and experience requirements, including a minimum of 3,000 hours of supervised clinical work experience. Candidates must also pass the National Counselor Examination (NCE).
- The **Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CCMHC)** credential requires candidates to be certified as NCCs and meet rigorous education, examination, supervision, and experience requirements. The examination required is the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE).



Attributes of Mental Health Counselors



Primary mental health providers who provide psychotherapy and other services for the betterment of the mental health and emotional well-being of their clients.



Diagnose, assess and treat mental, emotional, and addictive disorders.



Trained to assess and treat the symptoms of depression, anxiety, trauma, PTSD, substance use, and other mental health disorders.



Use evidence-based approaches to treat mental health disorders and are holistically trained to address social, cultural, integrated behavioral health, and physical wellness.



Rigorously qualified to provide a wide spectrum of services and in many practice settings and locations such as underserved areas (e.g., rural areas).



All public and private payers recognize mental health counselors, including Medicare (2024).



Who Are MHCs?

Employed by counties, rural health clinics, community mental health centers, substance abuse treatment facilities, general and specialty hospitals, universities and private businesses. Many also run their own practices.

Often operate as part of a multidisciplinary care team that includes psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, MFTs, case managers, and others invested in the client's welfare.

Make referrals to community agencies, treatment programs, other medical professionals, and any other resources needed.

Practitioners provide significant telehealth services in their practices—telephone and online counseling.



MHC and MFTs Primed and Ready to Address Needs of County BH Directors

Items critically important for improving quality and outcomes:

1. The skill and training of practitioners
2. Understanding emotional influences on disease – critical in PC setting and achieving integration
3. The use of evidence-based treatments
4. Trained in trauma-specific or trauma-informed approaches
5. Improve communication
6. Cultural competence



Counselors and MFTs are uniquely qualified to meet the challenges of providing high quality care and in a cost-effective manner.



Medicare Update: Additional Behavioral Health Providers



MFTs and MHCs are now Medicare-eligible providers

Provision included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023 (omnibus legislation) that was signed into law in December 2022

Added to Medicare's rules

Significant increase in Medicare-eligible Behavioral Health Providers: MFTs and MHCs make up 40% of the behavioral health workforce with at least a master's degree

First addition of licensed behavioral health providers to Medicare since 1989



Adding MHCs/MFTs as Medicare Providers

Many settings:

- Traditional (Fee-for-Service)
- Private Practices
- Medicare Advantage
- Rural Health Clinics & Federally Qualified Health Centers
- County Behavioral Health Systems
- Partial Hospitalization Services
- Intensive Outpatient Program Services
- Hospice
- Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs)
- Integrated Care Systems



Traditional (Fee-for-Service)

Serve as Medicare-eligible providers:

- Private or group practices
- Other settings where behavioral health providers may directly bill Medicare



MFTs/MHCs paid same rate as CSWs



RHCs and FQHCs

**MFTs/MHCs
added as
practitioners in
RHCs & FQHC**

MHCs and MFTs can be hired to serve as providers in RHCs/FQHCs in the same manner as other Medicare-eligible behavioral health providers

**Allows RHCs
and FQHCs
to fully
utilize the
services of
MHCs/MFTs**

**Added to
Medicare rules
(42 CFR part 405)**



Ready to Serve



Rural America:
MFTs and MHCs
are more likely to
practice in rural
communities

**Over 46,000
MHCs and MFTs
have already
enrolled as
Medicare Part B
providers**

**MFTs and MHCs are
eligible to work in
community health
settings and receive
reimbursement from
Medicare and
Medicaid for their
services**



Questions?



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Legislative Research Manager

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Questions and Answers

Resources



Critical Resources on Medicare Part B Coverage of Counselors and MFTs

Legislation Mandating Medicare Part B Coverage of Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists

<https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr2617/BILLS-117hr2617enr.pdf>

How to Enroll in the Medicare Program

- **Medicare Enrollment for Providers and Suppliers**
<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/enrollment-renewal/providers-suppliers/chain-ownership-system-pecos>
- **New Provider Type: Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) and Mental Health Counselors (MHCs) FAQs (36 questions answered) Published Sept 2023**
<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/marriage-and-family-therapists-and-mental-health-counselors-faq-09052023.pdf>
- **The Medicare Learning Network:**
<https://www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/medicare-learning-network-mln/mlnngeninfo>
- **Web-based Training:**
<https://www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/medicare-learning-network-mln/mlnproducts/webbasedtraining>
- **Becoming a Medicare Provider (World of Medicare):**
<https://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/MLN/WBT/MLN9329634-WOM/WOM/index.html>
- **Weekly Email Newsletter for Medicare Providers:**
<https://www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/outreach/ffsprovpartprog/provider-partnership-email-archive>



Critical Resources on Medicare Part B Coverage of Counselors and MFTs cont.

Role of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

- <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/u/us-centers-medicare-and-medicaid-services-cms.asp>
- <https://www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/outreach/ffsprovpartprog/provider-partnership-email-archive>

Medicare Mental Health Benefits for Beneficiaries

Medicare Mental Health:

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/mln1986542-medicare-mental-health.pdf>

Medicare Beneficiary Handbook:

<https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-and-you>



Critical Resources on Medicare Part B Coverage of Counselors and MFTs cont.

Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs)

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/medicare-contracting/medicare-administrative-contractors/what-is-a-mac>

Medicare Physician Fee Schedule

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/08/07/2023-14624/medicare-and-medicaid-programs-cy-2024-payment-policies-under-the-physician-fee-schedule-and-other>

Key Steps to Becoming a Medicare Provider

1. Register in the [I&A](#) System
2. Get an [NPI](#)
3. Enter information into [PECOS](#)
4. Decide if you want to be a participating provider

[Form CMS-855I: Physicians and non-physician practitioners \(PDF link\)](#)



**Thank you
for attending!**



**Medicare Mental Health
Workforce Coalition**