



Division of Behavioral Health Services

Division of Compliance

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TO: T/RBHA CEOs and CMOs

FROM: Laura K. Nelson, M.D.
Deputy Director

Margaret Russell
Bureau Chief of Policy

SUBJECT: **POLICY CLARIFICATION: SMI Eligibility Determination Timeframes**

DATE: August 19, 2010

This memorandum is intended to clarify the responsibilities of Tribal and Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (T/RBHAs) and T/RBHA providers in meeting the Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services' (ADHS/DBHS) expectations regarding requirements in the following ADHS/DBHS document:

- [ADHS/DBHS Provider Manual Section 3.10, SMI Eligibility Determination](#)

Frequency of SMI Eligibility Determinations

When a person has been evaluated for Serious Mental Illness (SMI) as described in [PM Section 3.10, SMI Eligibility Determination](#) and is not determined SMI eligible, the person must be notified of the denial and the right to appeal the determination. The policy, as currently written, does not specify a permissible timeframe in which an applicant may request to reapply for another SMI evaluation and determination following a denial of SMI eligibility. The intent of this policy clarification is to establish a timeframe for re-application/re-determination. ADHS/DBHS expects that persons who were evaluated for SMI eligibility and denied will be permitted to reapply for another SMI evaluation and determination no sooner than six months from the date of the denial from the previous SMI eligibility determination. Determinations for SMI eligibility must not occur more frequently than six months from the date of the last eligibility denial for persons who are requesting to be re-evaluated for SMI eligibility.

Referrals from the Arizona Department of Corrections

Referrals for an SMI eligibility determination may be received by the T/RBHA from various sources, including the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC). When a person is in the custody of ADC, the T/RBHA may not be able to schedule the initial appointment for the SMI eligibility determination with a qualified assessor within seven days and complete the SMI determination within three days of the initial appointment. As such, ADHS/DBHS has established a separate timeframe for completion of SMI determinations for persons in the custody of ADC. ADHS/DBHS expects the initial appointment and SMI determination to be completed within 30 days of the referral from ADC.

The timeframes indicated above are effective immediately and will be incorporated into the next version of [PM Section 3.10, SMI Eligibility Determination](#). Questions regarding this clarification may be directed to the ADHS/DBHS Policy Office at (602) 364-4670.