



Massachusetts Provider Alert

Expedited Psychiatric Inpatient Admission Protocol 3.0 (EPIA 3.0) BULLETIN 2021-07

June 28, 2021

EPIA protocol establishes clear steps and responsibilities for escalating cases, where an inpatient psychiatric admission has not been achieved in a reasonable period of time. Emergency Department Evaluation Teams (ED Evaluation Team), Inpatient Psychiatric Providers, Insurance Carriers and state oversight agencies share responsibly for assuring members in need of psychiatric hospitalization have access to services in a timely and geographically reasonable manner.

Working Together

ED Evaluation Team must notify Optum within 24 hours of arrival in the ED when a member is waiting for an inpatient admission. Optum will assist the ED Evaluation Team in locating an available bed, following the standardized Bed Search Protocol.

Optum will ensure medical directors or their designees are available each day when decisions regarding admissions are being made to address ED behavioral health admissions. It is expected that Inpatient Psychiatric Providers do the same.

Optum will arrange payment for all medically necessary care for members admitted by Inpatient Psychiatric Providers, including care required to enable the Provider to accept a member with specialty needs. When there is an identified need for special services and Optum authorizes coverage, the Inpatient Psychiatric Provider is expected to admit the member.

Additional resources on EPIA 3.0 are available here:

[Bulletin 2018-01: Prevention of Emergency Department Boarding of Patients with Acute Behavioral Health and/or Substance Abuse Disorder Emergencies | Mass.gov](#)

[Bulletin 2021-07; Updated Protocols for Prevention of Emergency Department Boarding of Patients with Acute Behavioral Health and/or Substance Use Disorder Emergencies under Expedited Psychiatric Inpatient Admission \("EPIA"\) Protocols; Issued June 28, 2021 | Mass.gov](#)

Note: This mandate is applicable to fully insured and ASO non-ERISA Massachusetts commercial plans. Other plans may also elect into following the mandate.