

Schlatter, Laura (OAH)

From: Pretzer, Maria (OAH)
Sent: Monday, December 06, 2010 9:13 AM
To: Schlatter, Laura (OAH)
Subject: FW: Response to Proposed Rule Changes, 9505.0371
Attachments: AACN-ABCN Response to MN 9505.0371.pdf

From: McCrea, Michael [mailto:michael.mccrea@phci.org]
Sent: Sunday, December 05, 2010 2:29 PM
To: rulecomments@state.mn.us
Cc: karen.wills@childrensmn.org; Michael Westerveld, Ph.D.; McCrea, Michael
Subject: Response to Proposed Rule Changes, 9505.0371

Your Honor:

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the American Board of Clinical Neuropsychology (ABCN) and the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (AACN), the attached letter and supporting documentation pertains to the proposed rule changes, 9505.0371, affecting Medical Assistance Coverage Requirements for Outpatient Mental Health Services under the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Specifically, this letter is in response to COMMENT NUMBER 51, a letter from Karen Wills, PhD, ABPP, dated November 30, 2010, which states that a comment from AACN/ABCN may follow. As a professional courtesy to Dr. Wills, I have also copied her on this email.


We hope you will give the strongest consideration to our response. We also hope you will call upon ABCN/AACN leaders and membership to dialog on this matter to develop policies that ensure the highest quality mental health services are provided to the citizens of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

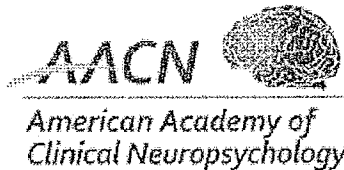
Michael McCrea, PhD, ABPP
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President, ABCN Board of Directors
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Comment 54 - REBUTTAL —

12/6/2010



Date: December 5, 2010

To: Administrative Law Judge Kathleen Sheehy
Office of Administrative Hearings
600 North Robert Street, P.O. Box 64620
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55164-0620
Submitted electronically to: rulecomments@state.mn.us

From: Michael McCrea, PhD, ABPP,
President, Board of Directors, American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology
Michael Westerveld, PhD, ABPP
President, Board of Directors, American Board of Clinical Neuropsychology

RE: Proposed rule changes, 9505.0371, Medical Assistance Coverage Requirements for
Outpatient Mental Health Services

Your Honor:

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the American Board of Clinical Neuropsychology (ABCN) and the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (AACN), we are writing to you on the topic of the proposed Department of Human Services (DHS) policies pertaining to neuropsychological services in the state of Minnesota. Specifically, this letter is in response to COMMENT NUMBER 51, a letter from Karen Wills, PhD, ABPP, dated November 30, 2010, which states that a comment from AACN/ABCN may follow.

As you may already be aware, AACN is the membership organization for all neuropsychologists who achieve board certification through the American Board of Clinical Neuropsychology (ABCN), the specialty board for neuropsychology under the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). We are aware that the DHS policy has for approximately 10 years cited ABCN certification as the accepted standard of competence in the process of credentialing neuropsychologists to provide services under DHS programs.

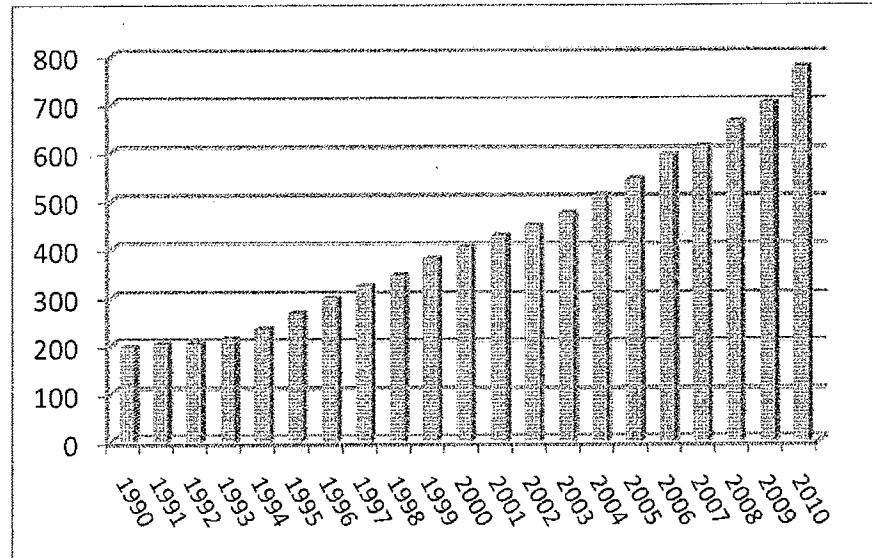
Our Boards have undertaken considerable deliberation on this matter over the past month, while also hearing the expressed opinions of our membership. The aim of this correspondence is to clarify the position of ABCN and AACN in a way that we believe a) meets the needs of the citizens of Minnesota who benefit from services provided by neuropsychologists, and b) is in keeping with the core mission of ABCN/AACN to promote the highest standards for quality and clinical excellence in clinical neuropsychology. This letter is meant to clarify AACN's position with respect to ABCN board certification and the needs of the citizens of MN. While we are aware of other boarding organizations in neuropsychology, we trust that they will state their own positions with respect to these issues.

Our position specifically relevant to the DHS policy in your state is best summarized by the following:

- **Board Certification as the Standard for Competence:** We continue to believe that board certification is the highest objective standard of competence and quality in clinical neuropsychology, as well as other specialties in psychology and medicine. Like the DHS, we are seeing a nationwide movement among hospitals, payers and other credentialing bodies toward requiring board certification for specialty clinical practice.
- **ABCN Certification as a Recognized Standard:** As of the fall 2010 oral board examinations, ABCN has awarded 775 diplomas in Clinical Neuropsychology. Figure 1 below illustrates the trajectory of cumulative growth in AACN membership since 1990. This continued growth is a testimonial to the high level of interest among clinical neuropsychologists to achieve board certification through ABCN as a credential of competency in our field. AACN membership is comprised of both adult and pediatric subspecialists. Specific to meeting the needs of children and adolescents, recent statistics indicate that 40.7% of ABCN diplomates see pediatric patients in their practice.

Currently, there are 30 ABCN certified neuropsychologists who practice in Minnesota, one of the highest totals of any state in the country. I have attached for your convenience a preprint of the most recent President's Annual State of the Academy Report that provides a more detailed overview of AACN's strong tradition and current standing as a recognized standard of competence in clinical neuropsychology.

Figure 1.
Cumulative
total of
ABCN
diplomas
awarded
(1990-
2010)



- **Ensuring a Future of Quality and Excellence:** In addition to the increase in the number of ABCN certified neuropsychologists, there are approximately 350 neuropsychologists who have passed the ABCN credential review and who are currently "in the pipeline" toward ABCN certification. In accordance, we are also seeing

significant growth in our affiliate membership (currently 363 affiliate members), primarily represented by neuropsychologists in training who have yet to complete ABCN certification. In fact, among the 13 ABPP specialties, ABCN now regularly credentials the most specialists annually and nets the highest proportion of new diplomates who elect to join their associated specialty Academy.

- **Demonstrated Competence Through ABCN Certification:** It is not simply size and growth rate that make ABCN the most widely recognized standard for board certification in neuropsychology. We believe the fairness, thoroughness, and rigor of the ABCN examining process are equivalent to those of medical examining boards and set a solid standard for board certification of neuropsychologists. Every ABCN diplomate has been credentialed based upon individual review of education and training consistent with the guidelines of the Houston Conference (see attached). Diplomates have passed a broad written examination on neuropsychological science and practice. They have submitted two separate practice cases, revealing breadth as well as depth of knowledge. In a 3-hour oral examination, they have defended their own practice cases, and been examined on ethics, professional development, and on the ability to gather and analyze relevant data, and arrive at a diagnosis, given a new case. In addition to assessment of broad knowledge in neuropsychology, each person is examined specifically for relevant competencies within his or her area(s) of expertise.
- **A Balanced Approach to Meeting Community Need:** Despite the relatively large number of neuropsychologists in Minnesota who have already successfully achieved ABCN certification, we also recognize that individuals who live in rural areas of the state may not have equal access to these services. In order to ensure that every neuropsychologist qualified to practice with state-funded Minnesotans meets the same credentialing standards, it is very important to have a common standard.
- **A Proposed Solution:** Our brief recommendation for your consideration is to allow “board eligible” neuropsychologists to provide services under DHS-administered programs for a defined period of time (e.g., up to 5 years) while they are working toward board certification. The guideline that could be adopted to ensure that individuals are board eligible is commonly known as the “*Houston Guidelines*” that defines the qualifications of specialists in neuropsychology. Furthermore, the Houston Guideline applies only to practitioners who achieved their PhD after January 1, 2005, thereby creating a “grandfathering” clause for more senior providers. I have attached a copy of this guidance document and the more recently published “*AACN Practice Guidelines*” for your convenient reference.
- **AACN as Your Partner:** We would be happy to work with DHS, groups of MN neuropsychologists, or other associations to craft guidelines that might supplement the existing MN DHS regulations to support paths to establishing competency guidelines that would help increase access to neuropsychological services while assuring that the citizens of MN who receive DHS services are protected.

In closing, we applaud the DHS's requirement that neuropsychologists demonstrate their competency through board certification and are gratified that the DHS has recognized the ABCN certification in this context to ensure that the citizens of Minnesota receive the highest quality clinical services from neuropsychologists participating in DHS administered programs. We also believe that the inclusion of a "board eligible" clause may provide some reasonable flexibility to meet the needs of underserved populations in your state, while also maintaining high standards of competence and quality among providers. It will remain the core mission of ABCN and AACN to promote ABCN certification as the highest objective standard of competence in clinical neuropsychology and facilitate the progression of "board eligible" individuals to full certification.

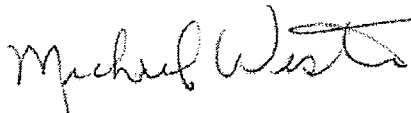
We would welcome the opportunity to engage you and other DHS leadership in dialog on this topic. You can call upon us or other AACN members to provide input as subject matter experts on policies relevant to neuropsychological services. Our Board membership has direct experience in working with DHS leaders in other states to draft effective mental health policy. We are very confident that any one of our many ABCN-certified neuropsychologists from Minnesota would be very willing to contribute to the greater good intended by DHS policy.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. We look forward to your response to this correspondence. You can feel free to contact Dr. McCrea at michael.mccrea@phci.org or 262-928-2156 or Dr. Westerveld at westerm@msn.com.

Sincerely,



Michael McCrea, PhD, ABPP
President, AACN Board of Directors



Michael Westerveld, PhD, ABPP
President, ABCN Board of Directors

Enclosures:

1. AACN President's Annual State of the Academy Report (2011)
2. The Houston Conference on Specialty Education and Training in Clinical Neuropsychology (2003)
3. American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (AACN) Practice Guidelines for Neuropsychological Assessment and Consultation (2007)