

To: Child Behavioral Health Providers
From: Cindy Ehlers, Executive Vice President
Date: December 11, 2020
Subject: COVID-19 Update: State and Medicaid B3 Funded Respite for Children with Behavioral Health Needs

Trillium Health Resources aims to support members in their communities versus using higher levels of care. We are aware children with behavioral health needs and their families often need a break. It is important to remember that Respite can be utilized to provide this break for members and their families. Respite can also be utilized as a planned means to avoid disruption in residential care or to avoid crisis situations where an Emergency Department (ED) or other higher levels of care are utilized. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, our families need support now more than ever and Respite is a vital way to plan ahead with families in response to the stress and uncertainty they are experiencing right now. Respite should be a vital part of any member's crisis plan and any crisis planning activities.

We need help from our providers who serve children with behavioral health needs to provide avenues that allow children and their families to access respite. We want to ensure Respite is being utilized as an extra support for our members and caregivers. An example of where this support may be utilized is a youth who is engaging in challenging behaviors while participating in an enhanced behavioral health service (e.g. MST, IIH or Day Treatment). A family can be given a tremendous amount of support when able to access Respite. This can help to avoid a child having to leave their residence and/or access crisis/emergency services or other higher levels of care. Respite can also be used to when a member is already at the ED and needs to return back to his or her community with the appropriate supports in place.

Please note Respite can also be used to support members and families during the school day. This helps to ensure that members are able to receive the support that they need while participating in virtual learning. This also allows families to continue to work, participate in school, and other activities while the member is participating in virtual school. Please remember per [Network Communication Bulletin #133](#):

- 🌱 Respite **cannot** be used to assist with academic work. Examples include, but are not limited to, educational instruction, completion of educational activities, etc.

- 🌱 Respite **can** be utilized to support with logging on to remote learning and school-related Tele-therapy sessions, asking for technical assistance and managing the individual's non-academic support needs. This may include paying attention to the task at hand, behavior management, personal care needs, etc.

To help support our providers to be able to utilize Respite as detailed, Respite Benefit is being increased to 30 hours a week for children with behavioral health needs. Respite can be offered to children and youth with behavioral health needs through Medicaid B3 and State funding. State-funded Respite applies to children up to the age of 18. Medicaid B3 Respite is available for children up to the age of 22. Respite Benefit is being increased to 30 hours a week to be able to cover the virtual school day in addition to planned calendar breaks in the school year such as holidays and school work-days, during school hours for sickness, injury, when a student is suspended or expelled, or school hours during the public health emergency that requires remote learning. Respite should ideally be utilized as a planned way to offer families a "break" as needed which helps to avoid a child from leaving their home, to avoid crisis situations where emergency services or other higher levels of care would be needed.

If you are a provider who would like to provide Respite services within your agency, please let us know by contacting NetworkServicesSupport@TrilliumNC.org that contracts are updated accordingly to incorporate the following codes: H0045 U4 (Medicaid B3 respite) and YP010 (State-funded respite).

Providers who are already providing respite services under YP010, YP010 HH, H0045 U4, and H0045 HH U4 will need to request additional hours through TAR process but will continue to bill the codes in accordance with their contracts. We also encourage providers to make us aware of any barriers to utilizing Respite services. This will help us work to find solutions for those identified barriers.

Any questions about this Communication Bulletin may be sent to the following email: NetworkManagement@TrilliumNC.org. These questions will be answered in a Q&A format and published on Trillium's website.