



# HSCSN

## HSCSN Internal Policy

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**POLICY NAME:** Authorization of Therapeutic School Break Services

**POLICY ID:** UM\_14

**DEPARTMENT:** Utilization Management

**POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE:** 11/01/2024

**POLICY LAST UPDATED DATE:**  
11/01/2024

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### I. PURPOSE

This policy supports governance of HSCSN's delivery of quality services to its enrollees while ensuring compliance with regulations and implementation of industry-specific standards.

### II. POLICY STATEMENT

#### Summary

This policy describes the process and procedures for review of requests for therapeutic services during school breaks. These services are not initial or new services, but a time limited provision of services already being provided as part of the enrollee's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or as outpatient services as part of their Care Coordination Plan. The goal of therapeutic school break services is to continue medically necessary therapy while the enrollee has a school break. Services must be provided within a 30-mile radius of the District of Columbia and by a provider that is in-network with HSCSN.

### III. PROCEDURE

#### Definitions

"School break" means a period when the District of Columbia Public Schools are not open for classroom instruction. The three school breaks to which this policy applies are those that are customarily scheduled in late December to early January, in the spring in March and/or April, and during the summer vacation. Each school break includes each weekday of the school vacation that is not a federal or District of Columbia holiday.

For purposes of this policy, "therapeutic services" means Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Therapy, and/or Behavioral Support Services (Applied Behavior Analysis or other behavioral therapy) services that a treating practitioner prescribes during a school break that are similar to therapy services being received by the enrollee during the times that school is in session.

"Treatment Plan" means a document provided by a therapist or other provider that consists of four parts:

- Presenting Problem: A brief description of the main concern or problems that are to be treated.

- Goals of Therapy: An annotated list of both the overall goal(s) and the interim goal(s) of therapy.
- Methods: A short, annotated list of the techniques that will be used to achieve the goals.
- Length of Therapy: Time period (start date and end date) or length of therapy in treatment days.

“Progress Note” - provider’s documentation of all enrollee contact. These documents customarily include a subjective description of the enrollee followed by objective parameters and finally an assessment and plan. These documents may reference the goals listed in the treatment plans. All clinical documentation should have the signature of the treating provider and their supervisor, if applicable. Progress notes must be signed, dated/timed, and the name and credentials of the treating provider should be clearly identifiable.

## **Details**

### **1) Standards for Authorization Decisions**

HSCSN’s authorization decisions on requests for therapeutic services during school breaks will be based on whether the services are medically necessary to correct or ameliorate the condition they are intended to treat, consistent with the standard for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) in the federal Medicaid Act. Amelioration of a condition includes improvement of it, maintenance in its current state, prevention of it worsening, making it more tolerable, reduction of its effects, and prevention of additional health problems.

In making determinations for participation in therapeutic school break services, HSCSN will consider each enrollee’s individual circumstances. HSCSN will take into account the available clinical evidence as well as the opinion of the prescribing practitioner, and other clinical, educational and social services professionals who treat or interact with the enrollee. HSCSN will also consider best medical practices and relevant standards of care. HSCSN will consult with the requesting provider when appropriate.

Determination is based on the need for continuation of therapy services in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or other outpatient services during school breaks. HSCSN will not deny or limit medically necessary services on the basis that the amount of care requested exceeds the numeric limitations in a set of guidance or that the child does not exhibit certain impairments or limitations required by the guidance. Federal law will govern in the event of any conflict between any external guidance and federal EPSDT law.

HSCSN enrollees whose IEP includes therapeutic services or receives therapeutic services outside of school will be eligible to receive therapeutic school break services. Enrollees can receive individual therapy services or can be enrolled in a Therapeutic Day Program. To be eligible for a Therapeutic Day Program, the enrollee must receive two or more therapies in school and the Therapeutic Day Program must meet all of their therapy needs during the time of the authorization period for the program.

Authorization decisions are made according to UM\_09 Authorization of Health Services and notification of adverse benefit determinations are per UM\_08.

#### **Providers and Services Available:**

Enrollees/caregivers may select from providers in the HSCSN network that have available the needed therapeutic services. TSBS may be provided as a multidisciplinary therapeutic day program (billed as a per diem) or services may be provided as individual therapy services. If authorized as a Therapeutic Day Program, then one unit is authorized for each day in the program. If authorized as individual therapy services,

then units per week will be authorized to match therapy approved in the IEP. The Provider selected must be able to meet the therapeutic services needs of the enrollee as stated in their IEP. If a Therapeutic Day Program is used to meet the therapy needs, enrollees/caregivers must agree that Therapeutic Day Program meets all of their therapy needs (while in the program). To be eligible for a Therapeutic Day Program, the enrollee must receive 2 or more therapies as part of their IEP.

## 2) Procedure and Timelines

1. A treating practitioner must complete a referral/order for therapeutic services to be provided during a school break. A provider of Therapeutic School Break Services should be identified. The request should be sent to Utilization Management at HSCSN by email UM@hschhealth.org or fax **202-721-7190**. The request must include:
  - a. A completed Therapeutic School Break Services Request Form
  - b. Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
  - c. Proposed treatment plan from the treating therapy provider.
2. If an **incomplete** Therapeutic School Break Services request form is received, a Utilization Management staff member shall promptly notify the enrollee, authorized representative, and the enrollee's health care provider of its need for additional information, and document its efforts. The UM staff will provide the next business day timeframe for the additional information from the health care provider.
3. A request for the therapeutic services during a school break must be submitted no later than thirty (30) calendar days before the first day of the scheduled school break or the proposed start date of the services, if later.

A request for the therapeutic services during a school break should be submitted no earlier than one hundred twenty (120) calendar days before the first day of the scheduled school break or the proposed start date of the services, if later. HSCSN will make a decision on the request for therapeutic services within five (5) business days after receiving all of the required information to make the decision.

1. If insufficient information is available, HSCSN shall promptly notify the enrollee, authorized representative, and the enrollee's health care provider of its need for additional information, and document its efforts. The UM staff will provide the next business day timeframe for the additional information from the health care provider.. A request for services will be denied if HSCSN does not receive the additional information needed to make a decision.
2. HSCSN may request an extension of time of up to fourteen (14) additional calendar days to make a decision if HSCSN shows that the extension is in the enrollee's interest and that it needs additional information to make the determination.
3. Approved services are authorized for the specific dates of the designated school break.

## IV. ACCOUNTABLE EXECUTIVE(S) AND REVIEWER(S)

A. Accountable Executive(s): Levey, Eric

B. Committee(s) Responsible for Review: Benefits and Utilization Management Committee

**V. APPROVAL**

Approved by:

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Levey, Eric

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Date

**VI. REFERENCES**

**Dates:**

**Created:** 10/14

**Reviewed:** N/A

**Revised:** 03/15, 05/1703/18, 04/19, 06/21, 10/23, 10/24

**Committee Approval:** 11/01/2024 - Benefits and Utilization Management Committee (BUMC)

**Effective:** 11/01/2024

**References:**

**NCQA Standards:** N/A

**CN Documents/Policies:** N/A

**CASSIP Contract Sections:** N/A

**Federal Regulations:** N/A

**District Regulations:** N/A

**Transmittals:** N/A

**Internal Policies:** UM\_08 Notification of Adverse Benefit Determination, UM\_09 Authorization

**Internal Documents:** N/A

**Committees:** Benefits and Utilization Management Committee (BUMC)