HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE - HSC

DIVISION 2. LICENSING PROVISIONS [1200 - 1796.70] *(Division 2 enacted by Stats. 1939, Ch. 60.)*

CHAPTER 2.2. Health Care Service Plans [1340 - 1399.874] *(Chapter 2.2 added by Stats. 1975, Ch. 941.)*

ARTICLE 5.6. Point-of-Service Health Care Service Plan Contracts [1374.60 - 1374.76] *(Article 5.6 added by Stats. 1993, Ch. 987, Sec. 3.)*

1374.60. For purpose of this article, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) A "point-of-service plan contract" means any plan contract offered by a health care service plan whereby the health care service plan assumes financial risk for both "in-network coverage or services" and "out-of-network coverage or services."

The term "point-of-service plan contract" shall not apply to a plan contract where the out-of-network coverage or service is underwritten by an insurance company admitted in this state or is provided by a self-insured employer and is offered in conjunction with in-network coverage or services provided pursuant to a health care service plan contract.

(b) "Out-of-network coverage or services" means health care services received either from (1) providers who are not employed by, under contract with, or otherwise affiliated with the health care service plan, except for health care services received from these providers in an emergency or when referred or authorized by the plan under procedures specifically reviewed and approved by the director or (2) providers who are employed by, under contract with, or otherwise affiliated with a health care service plan in instances when the "in-network coverage or services" requirements for care set forth in the health care service plan's approved evidence of coverage are not met.

(c) "In-network coverage or services" means all of the following:

(1) All the health care services provided or offered under the requirements of this chapter that are received from a provider employed by, under contract with, or otherwise affiliated with the health care service plan and in accordance with the procedures set forth in the plan's approved evidence of coverage.

(2) Health care services received from a provider not affiliated with the health care service plan when the plan arranges for the enrollee to receive services from that provider.

(3) Out-of-area emergency care provided in accordance with the procedures set by the health care service plan to be followed in securing these services.

(Amended by Stats. 1999, Ch. 525, Sec. 115. Effective January 1, 2000. Operative July 1, 2000, or sooner, by Sec. 214 of Ch. 525.)

1374.62. A point-of-service plan contract, in which any risk for out-of-network coverage or services is transferred from a health care service plan through reinsurance, shall be subject to this article.

(Added by Stats. 1993, Ch. 987, Sec. 3. Effective January 1, 1994.)

1374.64. (a) Only a plan that has been licensed under this chapter and in operation in this state for a period of five years or more, or a plan licensed under this chapter and operating in this state for a period of five or more years under a combination of (1) licensure under this chapter and (2) pursuant to a certificate of authority issued by the Department of Insurance may offer a point-of-service contract. A specialized health care service plan shall not offer a point-of-service plan contract unless this plan was formerly registered under the Knox-Mills Health Plan Act (Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 12530) of Chapter 6 of Part 2 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code), as repealed by Chapter 941 of the Statutes of 1975, and offered point-of-service plan contracts previously approved by the director on July 1, 1976, and on September 1, 1993.

(b) A plan may offer a point-of-service plan contract only if the director has not found the plan to be in violation of any requirements, including administrative capacity, under this chapter or the rules adopted thereunder and the plan meets, at a minimum, the following

financial criteria:

(1) The minimum financial criteria for a plan that maintains a minimum net worth of at least five million dollars ($5,000,000) shall be:

(A) (i) Initial tangible net equity so that the plan is not required to file monthly reports with the director as required by Section 1300.84.3(d)(1)(G) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations and then have and maintain adjusted tangible net equity to be determined pursuant to either of the following:

(I) In the case of a plan that is required to have and maintain a tangible net equity as required by Section 1300.76(a)(1) or (2) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations, multiply 130 percent times the sum resulting from the addition of the plan's tangible net equity required by Section 1300.76(a)(1) or (2) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations and the number that equals 10 percent of the plan's annualized health care expenditures for out-of-network services for point-of-service enrollees.

(II) In the case of a plan that is required to have and maintain a tangible net equity as required by Section 1300.76(a)(3) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations, recalculate the plan's tangible net equity under Section 1300.76(a)(3) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations excluding the plan's annualized health care expenditures for out-of-network services for point-of-service enrollees, add together the number resulting from this recalculation and the number that equals 10 percent of the plan's annualized health care expenditures for out-of-network services for point-of-service enrollees, and multiply this sum times 130 percent, provided that the product of this multiplication must exceed 130 percent of the tangible net equity required by Section 1300.76(a)(3) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations so that the plan is not required to file monthly reports to the director as required by Section 1300.84.3(d)(1)(G) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations.

(ii) The failure of a plan offering a point-of-service plan contract under this article to maintain adjusted tangible net equity as determined by this subdivision shall require the filing of monthly reports with the director pursuant to Section 1300.84.3(d) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations, in addition to any other requirements that may be imposed by the director on a plan under this article and chapter.

(iii) The calculation of tangible net equity under any report to be filed by a plan offering a point-of-service plan contract under this article and required of a plan pursuant to Section 1384, and the regulations adopted thereunder, shall be on the basis of adjusted tangible net equity as determined under this subdivision.

(B) Demonstrates adequate working capital, including (i) a current ratio (current assets divided by current liabilities) of at least 1:1, after excluding obligations of officers, directors, owners, or affiliates, or (ii) evidence that the plan is now meeting its obligations on a timely basis and has been doing so for at least the preceding two years. Short-term obligations of affiliates for goods or services arising in the normal course of business that are payable on the same terms as equivalent transactions with nonaffiliates shall not be excluded. For purposes of this subdivision, an obligation is considered short term if the repayment schedule is 30 days or fewer.

(C) Demonstrates a trend of positive earnings over the previous eight fiscal quarters.

(2) The minimum financial criteria for a plan that maintains a minimum net worth of at least one million five hundred thousand dollars ($1,500,000) but less than five million dollars ($5,000,000) shall be:

(A) (i) Initial tangible net equity so that the plan is not required to file monthly reports with the director as required by Section 1300.84.3(d)(1)(G) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations and then have and maintain adjusted tangible net equity to be determined pursuant to either of the following:

(I) In the case of a plan that is required to have and maintain a tangible net equity as required by Section 1300.76(a)(1) or (2) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations, multiply 130 percent times the sum resulting from the addition of the plan's tangible net equity required by Section 1300.76(a)(1) or (2) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations and the number that equals 10 percent of the plan's annualized health care expenditures for out-of-network services for point-of-service enrollees.

(II) In the case of a plan that is required to have and maintain a tangible net equity as required by Section 1300.76(a)(3) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations, recalculate the plan's tangible net equity under Section 1300.76(a)(3) excluding the plan's annualized health care expenditures for out-of-network services for point-of-service enrollees, add together the number resulting from this recalculation and the number that equals 10 percent of the plan's annualized health care expenditures for out-of-network services for point-of-service enrollees, and multiply this sum times 130 percent, provided that the product of this multiplication must exceed 130 percent of the tangible net equity required by

Section 1300.76(a)(3) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations so that the plan is not required to file monthly reports to the director as required by Section 1300.84.3(d)(1)(G) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations.

(ii) The failure of a plan offering a point-of-service plan contract under this article to maintain adjusted tangible net equity as determined by this subdivision shall require the filing of monthly reports with the director pursuant to Section 1300.84.3(d) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations, in addition to any other requirements that may be imposed by the director on a plan under this article and chapter.

(iii) The calculation of tangible net equity under any report to be filed by a plan offering a point-of-service plan contract under this article and required of a plan pursuant to Section 1384, and the regulations adopted thereunder, shall be on the basis of adjusted tangible net equity as determined under this subdivision.

(B) Demonstrates adequate working capital, including (i) a current ratio (current assets divided by current liabilities) of at least 1:1, after excluding obligations of officers, directors, owners, or affiliates or (ii) evidence that the plan is now meeting its obligations on a timely basis and has been doing so for at least the preceding two years. Short-term obligations of affiliates for goods or services arising in the normal course of business that are payable on the same terms as equivalent transactions with nonaffiliates shall not be excluded. For purposes of this subdivision, an obligation is considered short term if the repayment schedule is 30 days or fewer.

(C) Demonstrates a trend of positive earnings over the previous eight fiscal quarters.

(D) Demonstrates to the director that it has obtained insurance for the cost of providing any point-of-service enrollee with out-of-network covered health care services, the aggregate value of which exceeds five thousand dollars ($5,000) in any year. This insurance shall obligate the insurer to continue to provide care for the period in which a premium was paid in the event a plan becomes insolvent. Where a plan cannot obtain insurance as required by this subparagraph, then a plan may demonstrate to the director that it has made other arrangements, acceptable to the director, for the cost of providing enrollees out-of-network health care services; but in this case the expenditure for total out-of-network costs for all enrollees in all point-of-service contracts shall be limited to a percentage, acceptable to the director, not to exceed 15 percent of total health care expenditures for all its enrollees.

(c) Within 30 days of the close of each month a plan offering point-of-service plan contracts under paragraph (2) of subdivision (b) shall file with the director a monthly financial report consisting of a balance sheet and statement of operations of the plan, which need not be certified, and a calculation of the adjusted tangible net equity required under subparagraph (A). The financial statements shall be prepared on a basis consistent with the financial statements furnished by the plan pursuant to Section 1300.84.2 of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations. A plan shall also make special reports to the director as the director may from time to time require. Each report to be filed by a plan pursuant to this subdivision shall be verified by a principal officer of the plan as set forth in Section 1300.84.2(e) of Title 28 of the California Code of Regulations.

(d) If it appears to the director that a plan does not have sufficient financial viability, or organizational and administrative capacity to ensure the delivery of health care services to its enrollees, the director may, by written order, direct the plan to discontinue the offering of a point-of-service plan contract. The order shall be effective immediately.

(Amended by Stats. 2009, Ch. 298, Sec. 5. (AB 1540) Effective January 1, 2010.)

1374.65. Point-of-service plan contracts shall:

(a) Provide incentives, including financial incentives, for enrollees to use in-network coverage or services.

(b) Only offer coverage or services obtained out-of-network if it also provides coverage or services on an in-network basis.

(c) Shall not consider the following to be out-of-network coverage or services:

(1) Health care services received from a provider not affiliated with the health care service plan when the plan arranges for the enrollee to receive services from that provider.

(2) Out-of-area emergency care provided in accordance with the procedures set by the health care service plan to be followed in securing these services.

(Added by Stats. 1993, Ch. 987, Sec. 3. Effective January 1, 1994.)

1374.66. Any health care service plan that offers a point-of-service plan contract may do all of the following:

(a) Limit or exclude coverage for specific types of services or conditions when obtained out-of-plan.

(b) Include annual out-of-pocket limits, copayments, and annual and lifetime maximum benefit limits for out-of-network coverage or services that are different or separate from any amounts or limits applied to in-network coverage or services, and may impose a

deductible on coverage for out-of-network coverage or services.

(c) To the extent permitted under this chapter, may limit the groups to which a point-of-service plan contract is offered, and may adopt nondiscriminatory renewal guidelines under which one or more point-of-service plan contracts would be replaced with other than point-of-service plan contracts. If a point-of-service plan contract is sold to a group, then the group shall offer it to all members of that group who are eligible for coverage by the health care service plan.

(d) Treat as out-of-network services those services that an enrollee obtains from a provider affiliated with the plan, but not in accordance with the authorization procedures set forth in the health care service plan's approved evidence of coverage.

(e) Contracts between health care service plans and medical providers, for the purpose of providing medical services under point-of-service contracts, may include risk-sharing arrangements for out-of-network services, but only if the risk sharing arrangements meet all of the following conditions:

(1) The contracting medical provider agrees to participate in risk-sharing arrangements applicable to out-of-network services.

(2) If the medical provider is reimbursed on a capitated or prepaid basis, the contract shall clearly disclose the capitation or prepayment amount to be paid to the medical provider for in-network services received by enrollees under point-of-service contracts.

(3) Any capitation or prepayment amounts paid to the medical provider shall not place the medical provider directly at risk for or directly transfer liability for out-of-network services received by enrollees under point-of-service contracts.

(4) The risk-sharing arrangements for out-of-network services may provide a bonus or incentive to the medical provider to attempt to reduce the utilization of out-of-network services, but shall not place the medical provider at risk for any amounts in excess of the amounts used by the plan to budget for or fund the risk-sharing pool for out-of-network services.

(5) The contract between the medical provider and the plan shall clearly disclose the mathematical method by which funding for the risk-sharing arrangement is established, the mathematical method by which and the extent to which payments for out-of-network services are debited against the risk-sharing funds, and the method by which the risk-sharing arrangement is reconciled on no less than an annual basis.

(6) The contract is approved by the director.

(Amended by Stats. 1999, Ch. 525, Sec. 117. Effective January 1, 2000. Operative July 1, 2000, or sooner, by Sec. 214 of Ch. 525.)

1374.67. A health care service plan offering a point-of-service plan contract is subject to the following limitations:

(a) A health care service plan shall limit its offering of point-of-service plan contracts so that no more than 50 percent of the plan's total premium revenue in any fiscal quarter is earned from point-of-service plan contracts.

(b) A health care service plan offering a point-of-service plan contract shall not expend in any fiscal-year quarter more than 20 percent of its total health care expenditures for all its enrollees for out-of-network services for point-of-service enrollees.

(c) If the amount specified in subdivision (a) or (b) is exceeded by 2 percent in any quarter, the health care service plan shall come into compliance with subdivisions (a) and (b) by the end of the next following quarter. If compliance with the amount specified in subdivisions (a) and (b) is not demonstrated in the health care service plan's next quarterly report, the director may prohibit the health care service plan from offering a point-of-service plan contract to new groups, or may require the health care service plan to amend one or more of its point-of-service contracts at the time of renewal to delete some or all of the out-of-network coverage or services as may be necessary for the plan to demonstrate compliance to the director's satisfaction.

(d) The limitation imposed by this section shall not apply to a plan which in substantial part indemnified subscribers and enrollees pursuant to contracts issued under such plan's former registration under the Knox-Mills Health Plan Act in 1975 and as of that date, and on September 1, 1993, was offering point-of-service plan contracts previously approved by the director.

(Amended by Stats. 1999, Ch. 525, Sec. 118. Effective January 1, 2000. Operative July 1, 2000, or sooner, by Sec. 214 of Ch. 525.)

1374.68. A health care service plan that offers a point-of-service plan contract shall do all of the following:

(a) Deposit with the director or, at the discretion of the director, with any organization or trustee acceptable to the director through which a custodial or controlled account is maintained, cash, securities, or any combination of these, which is acceptable to the director, that at all times have a fair market value equal to the greater of either one of the following:

(1) Two hundred thousand dollars ($200,000).

(2) One hundred twenty percent of the plan's current monthly claims payable plus incurred but not reported balance for coverage out-of-network coverage or services provided under point-of-service contracts.

(b) Track out-of-network point-of-service utilization separately from in-network utilization.

(c) Record point-of-service utilization in a manner that will permit utilization and cost reporting as the director may require.

(d) Demonstrate to the satisfaction of the director that the health care service plan has the fiscal, administrative, and marketing capacity to control its point-of-service plan contract enrollment, utilization, and costs so as not to jeopardize the financial viability or organizational and administrative capacity of the health care service plan.

(e) Maintain the deposit required under subdivision (a) in a manner agreed to by the director, subject to subdivision (a) of Section 1377 and any regulations adopted thereunder.

(f) Any deposit made pursuant to this section shall be a credit against any deposit required by subdivision (a) of Section 1377.

(Amended by Stats. 1999, Ch. 525, Sec. 119. Effective January 1, 2000. Operative July 1, 2000, or sooner, by Sec. 214 of Ch. 525.)

1374.69. At least 20 business days prior to offering a point-of-service plan contract, a health care service plan shall file a notice of material modification in accordance with Section 1352. The notice of material modification shall include, but not be limited to, provisions specifying how the health care service plan shall accomplish all of the following:

(a) Design the benefit levels and conditions of coverage for in-network coverage and services and out-of-network point-of-service utilization.

(b) Provide or arrange for the provision of adequate systems to do all of the following:

(1) Process and pay claims for all out-of-network coverage and services.

(2) Generate accurate financial and utilization data and reports on a timely basis, so that it and any authorized regulatory agency can evaluate the health care service plan's experience with point-of-service plan contracts and monitor compliance with point-of-service plan contract projections established by the health care service plan and regulatory requirements.

(3) Track and monitor the quality of health care obtained out-of-network by plan enrollees to the extent reasonable and possible.

(4) Respond promptly to enrollee grievances and complaints, written or oral, including those regarding services obtained out-of-network.

(5) Meet the requirements for a point-of-service plan contract set forth in this section and any additional requirements that may be required by the director.

(c) Comply initially and on an ongoing basis with the requirements of this article.

(d) This section shall become operative July 1, 1995.

(Amended by Stats. 1999, Ch. 525, Sec. 120. Effective January 1, 2000. Operative July 1, 2000, or sooner, by Sec. 214 of Ch. 525.)

1374.71. No plan formerly registered under the Knox-Mills Health Plan Act (Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 12530) of Chapter 6 of Part 2 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code) in 1975 shall be required to file a notice of material modification under Section 1374.69 or 1374.70 for any point-of-service plan contract previously approved by the director under this chapter and offered by plan on or before September 1, 1993.

(Amended by Stats. 1999, Ch. 525, Sec. 121. Effective January 1, 2000. Operative July 1, 2000, or sooner, by Sec. 214 of Ch. 525.)

1374.72. (a) (1) Every health care service plan contract issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2021, that provides hospital, medical, or surgical coverage shall provide coverage for medically necessary treatment of mental health and substance use disorders, under the same terms and conditions applied to other medical conditions as specified in subdivision (c).

(2) For purposes of this section, "mental health and substance use disorders" means a mental health condition or substance use disorder that falls under any of the diagnostic categories listed in the mental and behavioral disorders chapter of the most recent edition of the International Classification of Diseases or that is listed in the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Changes in terminology, organization, or classification of mental health and substance use disorders in future versions of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders or the World Health Organization's International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems shall not affect the conditions covered by this section as long as a condition is commonly understood to be a mental health or substance use disorder by health care providers practicing in relevant clinical specialties.

(3) (A) For purposes of this section, "medically necessary treatment of a mental health or substance use disorder" means a service or product addressing the specific needs of that patient, for the purpose of preventing, diagnosing, or treating an illness,

injury, condition, or its symptoms, including minimizing the progression of that illness, injury, condition, or its symptoms, in a manner that is all of the following:

(i) In accordance with the generally accepted standards of mental health and substance use disorder care.

(ii) Clinically appropriate in terms of type, frequency, extent, site, and duration.

(iii) Not primarily for the economic benefit of the health care service plan and subscribers or for the convenience of the patient, treating physician, or other health care provider.

(B) This paragraph does not limit in any way the independent medical review rights of an enrollee or subscriber under this chapter.

(4) For purposes of this section, “health care provider” means any of the following:

(A) A person who is licensed under Division 2 (commencing with Section 500) of the Business and Professions Code.

(B) An associate marriage and family therapist or marriage and family therapist trainee functioning pursuant to Section 4980.43.3 of the Business and Professions Code.

(C) A qualified autism service provider or qualified autism service professional certified by a national entity pursuant to Section 10144.51 of the Insurance Code and Section 1374.73.

(D) An associate clinical social worker functioning pursuant to Section 4996.23.2 of the Business and Professions Code.

(E) An associate professional clinical counselor or professional clinical counselor trainee functioning pursuant to Section 4999.46.3 of the Business and Professions Code.

(F) A registered psychologist, as described in Section 2909.5 of the Business and Professions Code.

(G) A registered psychological associate, as described in Section 2913 of the Business and Professions Code.

(H) A psychology trainee or person supervised as set forth in Section 2910 or 2911 of, or subdivision (d) of Section 2914 of, the Business and Professions Code.

(5) For purposes of this section, “generally accepted standards of mental health and substance use disorder care” has the same meaning as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (f) of Section 1374.721.

(6) A health care service plan shall not limit benefits or coverage for mental health and substance use disorders to short-term or acute treatment.

(7) All medical necessity determinations by the health care service plan concerning service intensity, level of care placement, continued stay, and transfer or discharge of enrollees diagnosed with mental health and substance use disorders shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of Section 1374.721. This paragraph does not deprive an enrollee of the other protections of this chapter, including, but not limited to, grievances, appeals, independent medical review, discharge, transfer, and continuity of care.

(8) A health care service plan that authorizes a specific type of treatment by a provider pursuant to this section shall not rescind or modify the authorization after the provider renders the health care service in good faith and pursuant to this authorization for any reason, including, but not limited to, the plan’s subsequent rescission, cancellation, or modification of the enrollee’s or subscriber’s contract, or the plan’s subsequent determination that it did not make an accurate determination of the enrollee’s or subscriber’s eligibility. This section shall not be construed to expand or alter the benefits available to the enrollee or subscriber under a plan.

(b) The benefits that shall be covered pursuant to this section shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) Basic health care services, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 1345.

(2) Intermediate services, including the full range of levels of care, including, but not limited to, residential treatment, partial hospitalization, and intensive outpatient treatment.

(3) Prescription drugs, if the plan contract includes coverage for prescription drugs.

(c) The terms and conditions applied to the benefits required by this section, that shall be applied equally to all benefits under the plan contract, shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following patient financial responsibilities:

(1) Maximum annual and lifetime benefits, if not prohibited by applicable law.

(2) Copayments and coinsurance.

(3) Individual and family deductibles.

(4) Out-of-pocket maximums.

(d) If services for the medically necessary treatment of a mental health or substance use disorder are not available in network within the geographic and timely access standards set by law or regulation, the health care service plan shall arrange coverage to ensure the delivery of medically necessary out-of-network services and any medically necessary followup services that, to the maximum extent possible, meet those geographic and timely access standards. As used in this subdivision, to "arrange coverage to ensure the delivery of medically necessary out-of-network services" includes, but is not limited to, providing services to secure medically necessary out-of-network options that are available to the enrollee within geographic and timely access standards. The enrollee shall pay no more than the same cost sharing that the enrollee would pay for the same covered services received from an in-network provider.

(e) This section shall not apply to contracts entered into pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000) or Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 14200) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, between the State Department of Health Care Services and a health care service plan for enrolled Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

(f) (1) For the purpose of compliance with this section, a health care service plan may provide coverage for all or part of the mental health and substance use disorder services required by this section through a separate specialized health care service plan or mental health plan, and shall not be required to obtain an additional or specialized license for this purpose.

(2) A health care service plan shall provide the mental health and substance use disorder coverage required by this section in its entire service area and in emergency situations as may be required by applicable laws and regulations. For purposes of this section, health care service plan contracts that provide benefits to enrollees through preferred provider contracting arrangements are not precluded from requiring enrollees who reside or work in geographic areas served by specialized health care service plans or mental health plans to secure all or part of their mental health services within those geographic areas served by specialized health care service plans or mental health plans, provided that all appropriate mental health or substance use disorder services are actually available within those geographic service areas within timeliness standards.

(3) Notwithstanding any other law, in the provision of benefits required by this section, a health care service plan may utilize case management, network providers, utilization review techniques, prior authorization, copayments, or other cost sharing, provided that these practices are consistent with Section 1374.76 of this code, and Section 2052 of the Business and Professions Code.

(g) This section shall not be construed to deny or restrict in any way the department's authority to ensure plan compliance with this chapter.

(h) A health care service plan shall not limit benefits or coverage for medically necessary services on the basis that those services should be or could be covered by a public entitlement program, including, but not limited to, special education or an individualized education program, Medicaid, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income, or Social Security Disability Insurance, and shall not include or enforce a contract term that excludes otherwise covered benefits on the basis that those services should be or could be covered by a public entitlement program.

(i) A health care service plan shall not adopt, impose, or enforce terms in its plan contracts or provider agreements, in writing or in operation, that undermine, alter, or conflict with the requirements of this section.

(Amended by Stats. 2024, Ch. 497, Sec. 91. (SB 1526) Effective January 1, 2025.)

1374.721. (a) A health care service plan that provides hospital, medical, or surgical coverage shall base any medical necessity determination or the utilization review criteria that the plan, and any entity acting on the plan's behalf, applies to determine the medical necessity of health care services and benefits for the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders on current generally accepted standards of mental health and substance use disorder care.

(b) In conducting utilization review of all covered health care services and benefits for the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders in children, adolescents, and adults, a health care service plan shall apply the criteria and guidelines set forth in the most recent versions of treatment criteria developed by the nonprofit professional association for the relevant clinical specialty.

(c) In conducting utilization review involving level of care placement decisions or any other patient care decisions that are within the scope of the sources specified in subdivision (b), a health care service plan shall not apply different, additional, conflicting, or more restrictive utilization review criteria than the criteria and guidelines set forth in those sources. This subdivision does not prohibit a health care service plan from applying utilization review criteria to health care services and benefits for mental health and substance use disorders that meet either of the following criteria:

(1) Are outside the scope of the criteria and guidelines set forth in the sources specified in subdivision (b), provided the utilization review criteria were developed in accordance with subdivision (a).

(2) Relate to advancements in technology or types of care that are not covered in the most recent versions of the sources specified in subdivision (b), provided that the utilization review criteria were developed in accordance with subdivision (a).

(d) If a health care service plan purchases or licenses utilization review criteria pursuant to paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (c), the plan shall verify and document before use that the criteria were developed in accordance with subdivision (a).

(e) To ensure the proper use of the criteria described in subdivision (b), every health care service plan shall do all of the following:

(1) Sponsor a formal education program by nonprofit clinical specialty associations to educate the health care service plan's staff, including any third parties contracted with the health care service plan to review claims, conduct utilization reviews, or make medical necessity determinations about the clinical review criteria.

(2) Make the education program available to other stakeholders, including the health care service plan's participating providers and covered lives. Participating providers shall not be required to participate in the education program.

(3) Provide, at no cost, the clinical review criteria and any training material or resources to providers and health care service plan enrollees.

(4) Track, identify, and analyze how the clinical review criteria are used to certify care, deny care, and support the appeals process.

(5) Conduct interrater reliability testing to ensure consistency in utilization review decisionmaking covering how medical necessity decisions are made. This assessment shall cover all aspects of utilization review as defined in paragraph (3) of subdivision (f).

(6) Run interrater reliability reports about how the clinical guidelines are used in conjunction with the utilization management process and parity compliance activities.

(7) Achieve interrater reliability pass rates of at least 90 percent and, if this threshold is not met, immediately provide for the remediation of poor interrater reliability and interrater reliability testing for all new staff before they can conduct utilization review without supervision.

(f) The following definitions apply for purposes of this section:

(1) "Generally accepted standards of mental health and substance use disorder care" means standards of care and clinical practice that are generally recognized by health care providers practicing in relevant clinical specialties such as psychiatry, psychology, clinical sociology, addiction medicine and counseling, and behavioral health treatment pursuant to Section 1374.73. Valid, evidence-based sources establishing generally accepted standards of mental health and substance use disorder care include peer-reviewed scientific studies and medical literature, clinical practice guidelines and recommendations of nonprofit health care provider professional associations, specialty societies and federal government agencies, and drug labeling approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration.

(2) "Mental health and substance use disorders" has the same meaning as defined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 1374.72.

(3) "Utilization review" means either of the following:

(A) Prospectively, retrospectively, or concurrently reviewing and approving, modifying, delaying, or denying, based in whole or in part on medical necessity, requests by health care providers, enrollees, or their authorized representatives for coverage of health care services prior to, retrospectively or concurrent with the provision of health care services to enrollees.

(B) Evaluating the medical necessity, appropriateness, level of care, service intensity, efficacy, or efficiency of health care services, benefits, procedures, or settings, under any circumstances, to determine whether a health care service or benefit subject to a medical necessity coverage requirement in a health care service plan contract is covered as medically necessary for an enrollee.

(4) "Utilization review criteria" means any criteria, standards, protocols, or guidelines used by a health care service plan to conduct utilization review.

(g) This section applies to all health care services and benefits for the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders covered by a health care service plan contract, including prescription drugs.

(h) This section applies to a health care service plan that conducts utilization review as defined in this section, and any entity or contracting provider that performs utilization review or utilization management functions on behalf of a health care service plan.

(i) The director may assess administrative penalties for violations of this section as provided for in Section 1368.04, in addition to any other remedies permitted by law.

(j) A health care service plan shall not adopt, impose, or enforce terms in its plan contracts or provider agreements, in writing or in operation, that undermine, alter, or conflict with the requirements of this section.

(k) This section does not apply to contracts entered into pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000) or Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 14200) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, between the State Department of Health Care Services and a health care service plan for enrolled Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

(Added by Stats. 2020, Ch. 151, Sec. 5. (SB 855) Effective January 1, 2021.)

1374.722. (a) (1) A health care service plan contract issued, amended, renewed or delivered on or after January 1, 2024, that is required to provide coverage for medically necessary treatment of mental health and substance use disorders pursuant to Sections 1374.72, 1374.721, and 1374.73 shall cover the provision of the services identified in the fee-for-service reimbursement schedule published by the State Department of Health Care Services, as described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (5) of subdivision (c), when those services are delivered at schoolsites pursuant to this section, regardless of the network status of the local educational agency, institution of higher education, or health care provider.

(2) This section does not relieve a local educational agency or institution of higher education from requirements to accommodate or provide services to students with disabilities pursuant to any applicable state and federal law, including, but not limited to, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1400 et seq.), Part 30 (commencing with Section 56000) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, Chapter 26.5 (commencing with Section 7570) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code, and Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 3000) of Division 1 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations.

(b) The following definitions apply for purposes of this section:

(1) “Health care provider” has the same meaning as defined in paragraph (4) of subdivision (a) of Section 1374.72 and paragraph (5) of subdivision (c) of Section 1374.73.

(2) “Institution of higher education” means the California Community Colleges, the California State University, or the University of California.

(3) “Local educational agency” means a school district, county office of education, charter school, the California Schools for the Deaf, and the California School for the Blind.

(4) “Medically necessary treatment of a mental health or substance use disorder” has the same meaning as defined in paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 1374.72.

(5) “Mental health and substance use disorder” has the same meaning as defined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 1374.72.

(6) “School site” means a facility or location used for public kindergarten, elementary, secondary, or postsecondary purposes. “School site” also includes a location not owned or operated by a public school, or public school district, if the school or school district provides or arranges for the provision of medically necessary treatment of a mental health or substance use disorder to its students at that location, including off-campus clinics, mobile counseling services, and similar locations.

(7) “Utilization review” has the same meaning as defined in paragraph (3) of subdivision (f) of Section 1374.721.

(c) When a local educational agency or institution of higher education provides or arranges for the provision of treatment of a mental health or substance use disorder services subject to this section by a health care provider for an individual 25 years of age or younger at a school site, the student’s health care service plan shall reimburse the local educational agency or institution of higher education for those services.

(1) A health care service plan shall not require prior authorization for services provided pursuant to this section.

(2) A health care service plan may conduct a postclaim review to determine appropriate payment of the claim. Payment for services subject to this section may be denied only if the health care service plan reasonably determines that the services were provided to a student not enrolled in the health plan, were never performed, or were not provided by a health care provider appropriately licensed or authorized to provide the services.

(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a health plan may require prior authorization for services as authorized by the department pursuant to subdivision (d).

(4) A local educational agency, community college district, the California State University system, or the Regents of the University of California may consolidate claims for purposes of submitting the claims to a health care service plan.

(5) A health care service plan shall provide reimbursement for services provided to students pursuant to this section at the greater of either of the following amounts:

(A) The health plan's contracted rate with the local educational agency, institution of higher education, or health care provider, if any.

(B) The fee-for-service reimbursement rate published by the State Department of Health Care Services for the same or similar services provided in an outpatient setting, pursuant to Section 5961.4 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(6) A health care service plan shall provide reimbursement for services provided pursuant to this section in compliance with the requirements for timely payment of claims, as required by this chapter.

(7) Services provided pursuant to this section shall not be subject to copayment, coinsurance, deductible, or any other form of cost sharing.

(8) An individual or entity shall not bill the enrollee or subscriber, nor seek reimbursement from the enrollee or subscriber, for services provided pursuant to this section.

(d) No later than December 31, 2023, the director shall issue guidance to health care service plans regarding compliance with this section. This guidance shall not be subject to the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code). Any guidance issued pursuant to this subdivision shall be effective only until the director adopts regulations pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act.

(e) This section does not apply to contracts entered into pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000) or Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 14200) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, between the State Department of Health Care Services and a health care service plan for enrolled Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

(Added by Stats. 2021, Ch. 143, Sec. 13. (AB 133) Effective July 27, 2021.)

1374.723. (a) A health care service plan contract issued, amended, renewed, or delivered on or after July 1, 2023, that covers hospital, medical, or surgical expenses shall cover the cost of developing an evaluation pursuant to Section 5977.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code and the provision of all health care services for an enrollee when required or recommended for the enrollee pursuant to a CARE agreement or a CARE plan approved by a court in accordance with the court's authority under Sections 5977.1, 5977.2, 5977.3, and 5982 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, regardless of whether the service is provided by an in-network or out-of-network provider.

(b) (1) A health care service plan shall not require prior authorization for services, other than prescription drugs, provided pursuant to a CARE agreement or CARE plan approved by a court pursuant to Part 8 (commencing with Section 5970) of Division 5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(2) A health care service plan may conduct a postclaim review to determine appropriate payment of a claim. Payment for services subject to this section may be denied only if the health care service plan reasonably determines the enrollee was not enrolled with the plan at the time the services were rendered, the services were never performed, or the services were not provided by a health care provider appropriately licensed or authorized to provide the services.

(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a health care service plan may require prior authorization for services as permitted by the department pursuant to subdivision (e).

(c) (1) A health care service plan shall provide for reimbursement of services provided to an enrollee pursuant to this section, other than prescription drugs, at the greater of either of the following amounts:

(A) The health plan's contracted rate with the provider.

(B) The fee-for-service or case reimbursement rate paid in the Medi-Cal program for the same or similar services as identified by the State Department of Health Care Services.

(2) A health care service plan shall provide for reimbursement of prescription drugs provided to an enrollee pursuant to this section at the health care service plan's contracted rate.

(3) A health care service plan shall provide reimbursement for services provided pursuant to this section in compliance with the requirements for timely payment of claims, as required by this chapter.

(d) Services provided to an enrollee pursuant to a CARE agreement or CARE plan, excluding prescription drugs, shall not be subject to copayment, coinsurance, deductible, or any other form of cost sharing. An individual or entity shall not bill the enrollee or

subscriber, nor seek reimbursement from the enrollee or subscriber, for services provided pursuant to a CARE agreement or CARE plan, regardless of whether the service is delivered by an in-network or out-of-network provider.

(e) No later than July 1, 2023, the department may issue guidance to health care service plans regarding compliance with this section. This guidance shall not be subject to the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code). Guidance issued pursuant to this subdivision shall be effective only until the department adopts regulations pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act.

(f) This section does not excuse a health care service plan from complying with Section 1374.72.

(g) This section does not apply to Medi-Cal managed care contracts entered pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000), Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 14200), or Chapter 8.75 (commencing with Section 14591) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, between the State Department of Health Care Services and a health care service plan for enrolled Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

(h) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2023.

(Added by Stats. 2022, Ch. 319, Sec. 2. (SB 1338) Effective January 1, 2023. Operative July 1, 2023, by its own provisions.)

1374.724. (a) Coverage of mental health and substance use disorder treatment pursuant to Section 1374.72 includes behavioral health crisis services that are provided to an enrollee by a 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services, as set forth in Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 53000) of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5 of the Government Code, regardless of whether the service is provided by an in-network or out-of-network provider or facility. With respect to behavioral health crisis services provided to an enrollee by a 988 center or mobile crisis team, a health care service plan shall cover, at a minimum, all items and services that are eligible for coverage under the Medi-Cal program.

(b) (1) A health care service plan shall not require prior authorization for behavioral health crisis stabilization services and care provided by a 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services to an enrollee pursuant to Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 53000) of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5 of the Government Code.

(2) Notwithstanding any other law, payment for behavioral health crisis stabilization services and care pursuant to this section shall not be denied unless the health care service plan, or its contracting medical provider, reasonably determines that the services were never performed.

(3) If its prior authorization requirements comply with Section 1374.721, a health care service plan may require prior authorization as a prerequisite for payment for medically necessary mental health or substance use disorder services following stabilization from a behavioral health crisis addressed by services provided through the 988 system. If there is a disagreement between the health care service plan and the behavioral health crisis service provider or facility regarding the need for medically necessary mental health or substance use disorder services following stabilization of the enrollee, the plan shall assume responsibility for the care of the enrollee by arranging for services for the enrollee pursuant to Section 1374.72 at a level of care consistent with utilization review criteria pursuant to Section 1374.721.

(4) A health care service plan shall not require, under any circumstances, a behavioral health crisis services provider or facility to discharge or transfer an enrollee before stabilization has occurred or before utilization review consistent with Section 1374.721.

(c) (1) A health care service plan that is contacted by a 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services shall, within 30 minutes of the time the provider makes the initial telephone call requesting information, either authorize poststabilization care or inform the provider that it will arrange for the prompt transfer of the enrollee's care to another provider.

(2) A health care service plan that is contacted by a 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services shall reimburse the provider for poststabilization care rendered to the enrollee if any of the following occur:

(A) The health care service plan authorized the 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services to provide poststabilization care.

(B) The health care service plan did not respond to the provider's initial contact or did not make a decision regarding whether to authorize poststabilization care or to promptly transfer the enrollee's care within the timeframe set forth in paragraph (1).

(C) There is an unreasonable delay in the transfer of the enrollee's care to another provider, and the provider determines that the enrollee requires poststabilization care.

(3) A health care service plan shall prominently display on its internet website the specific telephone number for noncontracting providers to obtain prompt authorization for the transfer of a stabilized enrollee's care to another provider or authorization to provide poststabilization care. The health care service plan shall ensure the telephone number published on its internet website is the correct telephone number for purposes of this paragraph. The health care service plan shall update the telephone number on

the plan's internet website within one business day if the telephone number changes. A health care service plan shall provide the telephone number to the department, and the department shall post the telephone number on its internet website.

(4) To the extent permissible under federal law, a health care service plan shall not require a 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services to make more than one telephone call to the number provided in advance by the health care service plan. The representative of the 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services that makes the telephone call may be, but is not required to be, a physician or surgeon.

(5) A 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services shall not bill a patient who is an enrollee of a health care service plan for poststabilization care, except for the in-network cost-sharing amount as defined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (d). An enrollee who is billed in violation of this section may report receipt of the bill to the health care service plan and the department. The department shall forward that report to the State Department of Public Health.

(d) (1) Notwithstanding subdivision (f) of Section 1371.4, a health care service plan shall reimburse a 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services for emergency and nonemergency behavioral health crisis services and care pursuant to this section, consistent with the requirements of Section 1371.4 and any other applicable requirement of this chapter.

(2) If an enrollee receives services and care pursuant to this section from a 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services outside the plan network, the enrollee shall pay no more than the same cost sharing that the enrollee would pay for the same services received from an in-network provider. This amount shall be referred to as the "in-network cost-sharing amount." An out-of-network 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services shall not bill or collect an amount from the enrollee for services subject to this section except for the in-network cost-sharing amount.

(e) For purposes of this section:

(1) "Behavioral health crisis services" has the same meaning as set forth in Section 53123.1.5 of the Government Code.

(2) "Behavioral health crisis stabilization services" means the services necessary to determine if a behavioral health crisis exists and, if a behavioral health crisis does exist, the care and treatment that is necessary to stabilize the behavioral health crisis within the capability of the 988 center, mobile crisis team, or other provider of behavioral health crisis services.

(3) "Poststabilization care" means medically necessary care provided after a behavioral health crisis has been stabilized.

(4) An enrollee is "stabilized" or "stabilization" has occurred when, in the opinion of the treating provider or facility, the enrollee's condition is such that, within reasonable medical probability, both of the following criteria are satisfied:

(A) Material deterioration of the enrollee's condition is unlikely to result from, or occur during, the discharge or transfer of the enrollee to the care of another provider.

(B) The enrollee is able to safely travel from the site of care using nonmedical transportation or nonemergency medical transportation. The health care service plan shall continue to cover all services and care as behavioral health crisis stabilization services and care until the enrollee is discharged or transferred.

(f) This section does not excuse a health care service plan from complying with Section 1374.72 or any other requirement of this chapter.

(g) This section does not apply to Medi-Cal managed care contracts entered pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000), Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 14200), or Chapter 8.75 (commencing with Section 14591) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code between the State Department of Health Care Services and a health care service plan for enrolled Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

(Amended by Stats. 2023, Ch. 42, Sec. 17. (AB 118) Effective July 10, 2023.)

1374.725. For services provided to an enrollee under a health care service plan contract issued, amended, or renewed on or after July 1, 2025, a health care service plan subject to Section 1374.72, and its delegates, shall establish a process to reimburse providers for mental health and substance use disorder treatment services that are integrated with primary care services. A process required under this section may be based upon federal rules or guidance issued for the Medicare program.

(Added by Stats. 2024, Ch. 135, Sec. 1. (SB 1320) Effective January 1, 2025.)

1374.73. (a) (1) Every health care service plan contract that provides hospital, medical, or surgical coverage shall also provide coverage for behavioral health treatment for pervasive developmental disorder or autism no later than July 1, 2012. The coverage shall be provided in the same manner and shall be subject to the same requirements as provided in Section 1374.72.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), as of the date that proposed final rulemaking for essential health benefits is issued, this section does not require any benefits to be provided that exceed the essential health benefits that all health plans will be required by

federal regulations to provide under Section 1302(b) of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148), as amended by the federal Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-152).

(3) This section shall not affect services for which an individual is eligible pursuant to Division 4.5 (commencing with Section 4500) of the Welfare and Institutions Code or Title 14 (commencing with Section 95000) of the Government Code.

(4) This section shall not affect or reduce any obligation to provide services under an individualized education program, as defined in Section 56032 of the Education Code, or an individual service plan, as described in Section 5600.4 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1400 et seq.) and its implementing regulations.

(b) Every health care service plan subject to this section shall maintain an adequate network that includes qualified autism service providers who supervise or employ qualified autism service professionals or paraprofessionals who provide and administer behavioral health treatment. A health care service plan is not prevented from selectively contracting with providers within these requirements.

(c) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) “Behavioral health treatment” means professional services and treatment programs, including applied behavior analysis and evidence-based behavior intervention programs, that develop or restore, to the maximum extent practicable, the functioning of an individual with pervasive developmental disorder or autism and that meet all of the following criteria:

(A) The treatment is prescribed by a physician and surgeon licensed pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 2000) of, or is developed by a psychologist licensed pursuant to Chapter 6.6 (commencing with Section 2900) of, Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code.

(B) The treatment is provided under a treatment plan prescribed by a qualified autism service provider and is administered by one of the following:

(i) A qualified autism service provider.

(ii) A qualified autism service professional supervised by the qualified autism service provider.

(iii) A qualified autism service paraprofessional supervised by a qualified autism service provider or qualified autism service professional.

(C) The treatment plan has measurable goals over a specific timeline that is developed and approved by the qualified autism service provider for the specific patient being treated. The treatment plan shall be reviewed no less than once every six months by the qualified autism service provider and modified whenever appropriate, and shall be consistent with Section 4686.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code pursuant to which the qualified autism service provider does all of the following:

(i) Describes the patient’s behavioral health impairments or developmental challenges that are to be treated.

(ii) Designs an intervention plan that includes the service type, number of hours, and parent participation needed to achieve the plan’s goal and objectives, and the frequency at which the patient’s progress is evaluated and reported.

(iii) Provides intervention plans that utilize evidence-based practices, with demonstrated clinical efficacy in treating pervasive developmental disorder or autism.

(iv) Discontinues intensive behavioral intervention services when the treatment goals and objectives are achieved or no longer appropriate.

(D) The treatment plan is not used for purposes of providing or for the reimbursement of respite, day care, or educational services and is not used to reimburse a parent for participating in the treatment program. The treatment plan shall be made available to the health care service plan upon request.

(2) “Pervasive developmental disorder or autism” shall have the same meaning and interpretation as used in Section 1374.72.

(3) “Qualified autism service provider” means either of the following:

(A) A person who is certified by a national entity, such as the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, with a certification that is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, and who designs, supervises, or provides treatment for pervasive developmental disorder or autism, provided the services are within the experience and competence of the person who is nationally certified.

(B) A person licensed as a physician and surgeon, physical therapist, occupational therapist, psychologist, marriage and family therapist, educational psychologist, clinical social worker, professional clinical counselor, speech-language pathologist, or audiologist pursuant to Division 2 (commencing with Section 500) of the Business and Professions Code, who designs, supervises, or provides treatment for pervasive developmental disorder or autism, provided the services are within the experience and competence of the licensee.

(4) "Qualified autism service professional" means an individual who meets all of the following criteria:

(A) Provides behavioral health treatment, which may include clinical case management and case supervision under the direction and supervision of a qualified autism service provider.

(B) Is supervised by a qualified autism service provider.

(C) Provides treatment pursuant to a treatment plan developed and approved by the qualified autism service provider.

(D) Is either of the following:

(i) A behavioral service provider who meets the education and experience qualifications described in Section 54342 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations for an Associate Behavior Analyst, Behavior Analyst, Behavior Management Assistant, Behavior Management Consultant, or Behavior Management Program.

(ii) A psychological associate, an associate marriage and family therapist, an associate clinical social worker, or an associate professional clinical counselor, as defined and regulated by the Board of Behavioral Sciences or the Board of Psychology.

(E) (i) Has training and experience in providing services for pervasive developmental disorder or autism pursuant to Division 4.5 (commencing with Section 4500) of the Welfare and Institutions Code or Title 14 (commencing with Section 95000) of the Government Code.

(ii) If an individual meets the requirement described in clause (ii) of subparagraph (D), the individual shall also meet the criteria set forth in the regulations adopted pursuant to Section 4686.4 of the Welfare and Institutions Code for a Behavioral Health Professional.

(F) Is employed by the qualified autism service provider or an entity or group that employs qualified autism service providers responsible for the autism treatment plan.

(5) "Qualified autism service paraprofessional" means an unlicensed and uncertified individual who meets all of the following criteria:

(A) Is supervised by a qualified autism service provider or qualified autism service professional at a level of clinical supervision that meets professionally recognized standards of practice.

(B) Provides treatment and implements services pursuant to a treatment plan developed and approved by the qualified autism service provider.

(C) Meets the education and training qualifications described in Section 54342 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations.

(D) Has adequate education, training, and experience, as certified by a qualified autism service provider or an entity or group that employs qualified autism service providers.

(E) Is employed by the qualified autism service provider or an entity or group that employs qualified autism service providers responsible for the autism treatment plan.

(d) This section shall not apply to the following:

(1) A specialized health care service plan that does not deliver mental health or behavioral health services to enrollees.

(2) A health care service plan contract in the Medi-Cal program (Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code).

(e) This section does not limit the obligation to provide services under Section 1374.72.

(f) As provided in Section 1374.72 and in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a), in the provision of benefits required by this section, a health care service plan may utilize case management, network providers, utilization review techniques, prior authorization, copayments, or other cost sharing.

(Amended by Stats. 2023, Ch. 635, Sec. 1. (SB 805) Effective January 1, 2024.)

1374.74. (a) The department, in consultation with the Department of Insurance, shall convene an Autism Advisory Task Force by February 1, 2012, in collaboration with other agencies, departments, advocates, autism experts, health plan and health insurer representatives, and other entities and stakeholders that it deems appropriate. The Autism Advisory Task Force shall develop recommendations regarding behavioral health treatment that is medically necessary for the treatment of individuals with autism or pervasive developmental disorder. The Autism Advisory Task Force shall address all of the following:

(1) Interventions that have been scientifically validated and have demonstrated clinical efficacy.

(2) Interventions that have measurable treatment outcomes.

(3) Patient selection, monitoring, and duration of therapy.

(4) Qualifications, training, and supervision of providers.

(5) Adequate networks of providers.

(b) The Autism Advisory Task Force shall also develop recommendations regarding the education, training, and experience requirements that unlicensed individuals providing autism services shall meet in order to secure a license from the state.

(c) The department shall submit a report of the Autism Advisory Task Force to the Governor, the President pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the Senate and Assembly Committees on Health by December 31, 2012, on which date the task force shall cease to exist.

(Amended by Stats. 2012, Ch. 162, Sec. 82. (SB 1171) Effective January 1, 2013.)

1374.76. (a) No later than January 1, 2015, a large group health care service plan contract shall provide all covered mental health and substance use disorder benefits in compliance with the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-343) and all rules, regulations, and guidance issued pursuant to Section 2726 of the federal Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 300gg-26).

(b) No later than January 1, 2015, an individual or small group health care service plan contract shall provide all covered mental health and substance use disorder benefits in compliance with the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-343), all rules, regulations, and guidance issued pursuant to Section 2726 of the federal Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 300gg-26), and Section 1367.005.

(c) Until January 1, 2016, the director may issue guidance to health care service plans regarding compliance with this section. This guidance shall not be subject to the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code). Any guidance issued pursuant to this subdivision shall be effective only until the director adopts regulations pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act. The department shall consult with the Department of Insurance in issuing guidance under this subdivision.

(Added by Stats. 2014, Ch. 31, Sec. 8. (SB 857) Effective June 20, 2014.)