



## Memorandum

To: All Health Homes (HH), Care Management Agencies (CMA), Health and Recovery Plans (HARP), HIV Special Need Plans (HIVSNP), and Recovery Coordination Agencies (RCA)

Date: 9/18/19

RE: Updated Staff Qualifications to Serve Health Home Plus (HH+) SMI and Assessor Qualifications for Administering the NYS Eligibility Assessment (NYS EA) for Adult BH HCBS

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In recent years, the State has created new initiatives to benefit high need behavioral health populations. This would include access to Health Home Plus (HH+) for new populations with Serious Mental Illness (SMI), as well as the development of Adult Behavioral Health Home and Community Based Services (BH HCBS) for eligible HARP/HIVSNP enrollees. Implementation efforts continue as agencies (HH CMAs, RCAs) increase and/or reallocate staffing resources to meet capacity in providing and connecting eligible individuals to these services. Stakeholders have expressed concern with a statewide workforce shortage that brings challenges in hiring staff meeting qualifications to serve HH+ SMI and/or assess eligibility for Adult BH HCBS. To support implementation efforts, the State is broadening staffing qualifications previously outlined in the following guidance documents:

Health Home Plus Guidance for SMI:

[Health Home Plus \(HH+\) for AOT \(revised October 2016\)](#)

[Health Home Plus \(HH+\) for State PCs and CNYPC \(Issued October 26\)](#)

[Health Home Plus Guidance for High-Need Individuals with Serious Mental Illness \(Issued May 2018\)](#)

Adult BH HCBS:

[Revised Adult BH HCBS Workflow Guidance for HARP and HIV SNP Members Enrolled in Health Home \(Issued 10/1/2017\)](#)

[Policy for Improving Access to Adult Behavioral Health Home and Community Based Services \(BH HCBS\) for HARP and HARP-Eligible HIV Special Needs Plan Members Not Enrolled in Health Homes](#)

### **Updated Qualifications for HH+ SMI and NYS Eligibility Assessments for Adult BH HCBS**

The State remains committed to ensure that the high need behavioral health population shall be served by staff who meet the appropriate education and experience.

Effective 9/1/19, the following minimum staff qualifications apply to those serving HH+ SMI and administering NYS EAs:



## Education and Experience

1. A Master's degree in one of the qualifying<sup>1</sup> fields and one (1) year of Experience; OR
2. A Bachelor's degree in one of the qualifying fields and two (2) years of Experience; OR
3. A Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) and two (2) years of Experience; OR
4. A Bachelor's degree or higher in ANY field with either: three (3) years of Experience, or two (2) years of experience as a Health Home care manager serving the SMI or SED population

Experience must consist of:

1. Providing direct services to people with Serious Mental Illness, developmental disabilities, alcoholism or substance abuse, and/or children with SED; OR
2. Linking individuals with Serious Mental Illness, children with SED, developmental disabilities, and/or alcoholism or substance abuse to a broad range of services essential to successful living in a community setting (e.g. medical, psychiatric, social, educational, legal, housing and financial services).

and

## Supervision

Supervision from someone meeting any one of the following:

1. Licensed level healthcare professional<sup>2</sup> with prior experience in a behavioral health setting; OR
2. Master's level professional with two (2) years prior supervisory experience in a behavioral health setting.

## Waiver Request of HH+ SMI Staff and Adult BH HCBS Assessor Qualifications

In rare circumstances, staff may have unique education and/or experience to adequately serve the high need behavioral health population but do not meet the updated qualifications outlined in this memo. HH CMAs and contracted RCAs may apply for a waiver for such staff.

Waivers are not intended to be the sole approach for an agency looking to expand capacity in serving these populations. Agencies should be prudent in selecting staff to pursue a waiver of

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<sup>1</sup> **Qualifying fields** include education degrees featuring a major or concentration in: social work, psychology, nursing, rehabilitation, education, occupational therapy, physical therapy, recreation or recreation therapy, counseling, community mental health, child and family studies, sociology, speech and hearing or other human services field.

<sup>2</sup> **Licensed level healthcare professional** includes: Physicians, Psychiatrists, Physician's Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners, Registered Professional Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Licensed Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Licensed Master Social Workers, Licensed Mental Health Counselors, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists, Licensed Psychoanalysts, Licensed Creative Arts Therapists, and Licensed Occupational Therapists.



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qualifications. Waivers should only be submitted for those staff whose unique qualifications allow them to adequately serve the population.

Please submit all waiver requests online here: [Waiver of Qualifications for HH+ SMI and NYS EA Assessors for Adult BH HCBS](#)

**IMPORTANT:**

Waiver approval alone does not authorize an agency to provide/bill for HH+ services or NYS Adult BH HCBS Eligibility Assessments; all other applicable requirements (e.g., HH+ Attestation, RCA contract) authorizing your agency for such still apply. For Adult BH HCBS Assessors, all currently mandated UAS-NY Assessor trainings<sup>3</sup> are STILL required and cannot be waived. HH CMAs/RCAs who receive waiver approvals are responsible for notifying their Health Home(s) and/or MCO(s) accordingly.

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<sup>3</sup> **Training** (for NYS Eligibility Assessors/Supervisors only):

Completion of:

1. Specific training on the array of services and supports available, person-centered care planning process, and assessment of individuals whose condition may trigger a need for HCBS and supports; and
2. Mandated training on the New York State Eligibility Assessment instrument; and
3. Additional training as required by the State.