



Bulletin Title: ACT Qualified Practitioner Clarification

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In light of recent questions from the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) provider network, DBH is issuing guidance to clarify the list of qualified practitioners for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services.

On November 26, 2021, DBH published [final rulemaking](#) updating the list of qualified practitioners permitted to deliver ACT services (as reflected in the list below); previously only psychiatrists and registered nurses were designated as qualified practitioners for ACT services.

- (a) Psychiatrists;
- (b) Psychologists;
- (c) Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers;
- (d) Advanced Practice Registered Nurses;
- (e) Licensed Professional Counselors;
- (f) Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists;
- (g) Registered Nurses;
- (h) Licensed Graduate Social Workers;
- (i) Licensed Graduate Professional Counselors;
- (j) Licensed Independent Social Workers;
- (k) Psychology Associates;
- (l) Physician's Assistants; and
- (m) Certified Addiction Counselors.

See Title 22-A DCMR § 3426.17

Please note that credentialed staff may provide components of ACT services under the supervision of an independently licensed qualified practitioner. *See* Title 22-A DCMR § 3426.18.

ACT regulations may be accessed through the [D.C. Register](#) website. We have attached a copy of the governing ACT regulations to this bulletin for your reference.

Please direct all questions regarding this Bulletin to Jana Berhow, Director, Care Access and Innovation (jana.berhow@dc.gov).

3426 ASSERTIVE COMMUNITY TREATMENT

- 3426.1 ACT is an intensive, integrated, rehabilitative, crisis, treatment, and mental health community support service provided by an interdisciplinary team to individuals eighteen (18) and over with serious and persistent mental illness with dedicated staff time and specific staff-to-consumer ratios.
- 3426.2 Service coverage by the ACT team is required twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week.
- 3426.3 The consumer's ACT team shall complete a comprehensive or supplemental assessment and develop a self-care-oriented Plan of Care (if a current and effective one does not already exist).
- 3426.4 Services offered by the ACT team shall include:
- (a) Medication prescription, administration, and monitoring;
 - (b) Crisis assessment and intervention;
 - (c) Symptom assessment, management, and individual supportive therapy;
 - (d) Substance use disorder treatment for consumers with a co-occurring substance use disorder;
 - (e) Psychosocial rehabilitation and skill development;
 - (f) Interpersonal, social, and interpersonal skill training;
 - (g) Education, support, and consultation to consumers' families and their support system which is directed exclusively to the well-being and benefit of the consumer;
 - (h) Finding safe and affordable supportive housing;
 - (i) Money management and benefits counseling and acquisition;
 - (j) Coordination of medical and psychosocial services; and
 - (k) Referrals and linkages to other services that address the consumer's social determinants of health.
- 3426.5 ACT services shall include a comprehensive and integrated set of medical and psychosocial services for the treatment of the consumer's mental health condition that is provided in non-office settings by the consumer's ACT team.

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- 3426.6 The ACT team provides community support services that are interwoven with treatment and rehabilitative services and regularly scheduled team meetings. ACT team meetings shall be held a minimum of four (4) times a week.
- 3426.7 ACT services and interventions shall be highly individualized and tailored to the needs and preferences of the consumer, with the goal of maximizing independence and supporting recovery.
- 3426.8 Each ACT provider shall have policies and procedures included in its Service Specific Policies that address the provisions of ACT (“ACT Organizational Plan”) which include the following:
- (a) A description of the particular treatment models utilized, types of intervention practiced, and typical daily curriculum and schedule; and
 - (b) A description of the staffing pattern and how staff are deployed to ensure that the required staff-to-consumer ratios are maintained, including how unplanned staff absences and illnesses are accommodated.
- 3426.9 At a minimum, the ACT team shall include the following members:
- (a) A full-time team leader or supervisor who is the clinical and administrative supervisor of the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team and who is at minimum an independently licensed qualified practitioner;
 - (b) A psychiatrist or a psychiatric prescriber working on a full-time or part-time basis for a minimum of four (4) hours per week per twenty (20) consumers, who provides clinical and crisis services to all consumers served by the ACT team, works with the ACT team leader to monitor each consumer’s clinical status and response to treatment, and directs psychopharmacologic and medical treatment;
 - (c) An RN working on a full-time basis, who provides nursing services for all ACT team consumers. The RN works with the ACT team to monitor each consumer’s clinical status and response to treatment, and who functions as a primary practitioner on the ACT team for a caseload of consumers;
 - (d) A certified addiction counselor who is working on a full-time basis and providing or accessing substance use disorder services for ACT team consumers, and who functions as a primary practitioner on the ACT team for a caseload of consumers;
 - (e) A clinically trained and licensed generalist practitioner working on a full-time basis and providing individual and group supportive therapy to ACT

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- team consumers, and who functions as a primary practitioner on the ACT team for a caseload of consumers and is a qualified practitioner;
- (f) A certified recovery coach or certified peer specialist carrying out rehabilitation and support functions who may be a consumer in recovery that has been specially credentialed based on their psychiatric and life experiences. Certified recovery coaches and certified peer specialists are fully integrated ACT team members who provide consultation to the ACT team and highly individualized services in the community, and who promote consumer self-determination and decision making; and
 - (g) A vocational specialist with at least one year of training or experience who has knowledge of supported employment, vocational assessment, job exploration and marketing to recipient's interest and strengths and securing and maintain employment.
- 3426.10 The ACT team shall maintain a minimum consumer-to-staff ratio of no more than ten (10) consumers per staff person, and such ratio shall take into consideration evening and weekend hours, needs of special populations, and geographical areas to be covered.
- 3426.11 Eligible providers of ACT services shall:
- (a) Utilize the ACT model adopted by the Department;
 - (b) Meet ACT training requirements specified by the Department; and
 - (c) Have culturally and linguistically competent staff.
- 3426.12 ACT shall require prior authorization from the Department. Initial and subsequent authorizations shall not exceed one hundred eighty (180) calendar days and five hundred (500) units.
- 3426.13 ACT consumers shall receive vocational and supported employment services through their ACT team. ACT consumers shall not be eligible for Supported Employment services that are subject to the Supported Employment program standards set forth in 22-A DCMR Chapter 37.
- 3426.14 ACT shall not be billed on the same day as:
- (a) Diagnostic Assessment;
 - (b) Medication/Somatic Treatment;
 - (c) Counseling;

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- (d) Community Support;
 - (e) Rehabilitation Day Services;
 - (f) IDT;
 - (g) CBI;
 - (h) TF-CBT;
 - (i) TREM;
 - (j) TST; and
 - (k) FFT.
- 3426.15 ACT providers shall not bill Crisis/Emergency Services when provided to one of their current consumers.
- 3426.16 ACT shall be provided:
- (a) At the MHRS provider's service site; or
 - (b) In natural settings, including the consumer's home or community settings.
- 3426.17 The following are qualified practitioners of ACT:
- (a) Psychiatrists;
 - (b) Psychologists;
 - (c) LICSWs
 - (d) APRNs;
 - (e) LPCs;
 - (f) LMFTs;
 - (g) RNs;
 - (h) LGSWs;
 - (i) LGPCs;
 - (j) LISWs;

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- (k) Psychology Associates;
- (l) PAs; and
- (m) Certified Addiction Counselors (“CAC”) I and II.

3426.18 Credentialed staff shall be permitted to provide ACT service components under the supervision of an independently licensed qualified practitioner.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 61 DCR 5415 (May 30, 2014); as amended by Final Rulemaking published at 67 DCR 10674 (September 4, 2020); as amended by Final Rulemaking 68 DCR 012400 (November 26, 2021); as amended by Final Rulemaking published at 70 DCR 003050 (March 10, 2023).