

Department of Mental Health
TRANSMITTAL LETTER

SUBJECT Services to Children and Youth in Natural Settings		
POLICY NUMBER DMH Policy 340.4	DATE APR 22 2005	TL# 67

Purpose. To ensure that mental health services for children and youth are predominantly provided in natural settings, rather than in an office or other mental health provider site.

Applicability. Applies to all DMH-certified CSAs, subproviders, and specialty providers that provide mental health services to children and youth, and the Mental Health Authority (MHA).

Policy Clearance. Reviewed by affected responsible staff and cleared through appropriate MHA offices.

Implementation Plans. A plan of action to implement or adhere to this policy must be developed by designated responsible staff. If materials and/or training are required to implement this policy, these requirements must be part of the action plan. Specific staff should be designated to carry out the implementation and program managers are responsible for following through to ensure compliance. Action plans and completion dates should be sent to the appropriate authority. Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTRs) must also ensure that contractors are informed of this policy if it is applicable or pertinent to their scope of work. *Implementation of all DMH policies shall begin as soon as possible. Full implementation of this policy shall be completed within sixty (60) days after the date of this policy.*

Policy Dissemination and Filing Instructions. Managers/supervisors of DMH and DMH contractors must ensure that staff are informed of this policy. Each staff person who maintains policy manuals must ensure that this policy is filed in the **DMH** Policy and Procedures Manual, and contractors must ensure that this policy is maintained in accordance with their internal procedures.

*If any CMHS or DMH policies are referenced in this policy, copies may be obtained from the DMH Policy Support Division by calling (202) 673-7757.

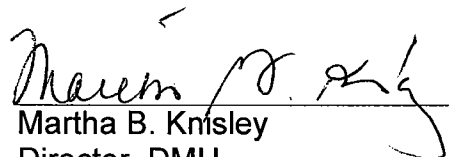
ACTION

REMOVE AND DESTROY


None

INSERT

DMH Policy 340.4



Martha B. Knisley
Director, DMH

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH	Policy No. 340.4	Date APR 22 2005	Page 1
	<u>Supersedes:</u> None		

Subject: Services to Children and Youth in Natural Settings

1. **Purpose.** To ensure that mental health services for children and youth are predominantly provided in natural settings, rather than in an office or other mental health provider site.
2. **Applicability.** Applies to all DMH-certified CSAs, subproviders, and specialty providers that provide mental health services to children and youth, and the Mental Health Authority (MHA).
3. **Authority.** Mental Health Service Delivery Reform Act of 2001; Final Court Ordered Plan, dated April 2, 2001; and the Dixon Court Ordered Exit Criteria, dated December 12, 2003.
4. **Definitions.**
 - 4a. **Natural Settings.** The consumer's residence, workplace, or other locations in the community that the consumer frequents, such as the consumer's home, school, workplace, community centers, homeless shelters, street locations, or other public facilities. Natural settings do not include inpatient hospitals or community residential facilities.
 - 4b. **Child/Youth Consumer.** A person under 18 years of age, or a person under 22 years of age and receiving special education, youth or child welfare services, who:
 - (1) Has or is at risk of having, a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder (including those of biological etiology) which substantially impairs the mental health of the person or is of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria specified within the DSM-IV or the ICD-9-CM equivalent (and subsequent revisions), with the exception of substance abuse disorders, mental retardation, and other developmental disorders, or seizure disorders, unless those exceptions co-occur with another diagnosable serious emotional disturbance; and
 - (2) Demonstrates either functional impairments or symptoms that significantly disrupt their academic or developmental progress or family and interpersonal relationships; or
 - (3) Has an emotional disturbance causing problems so severe as to require significant mental health intervention.
5. **Background.** In 2000, the U.S. District Court approved a plan which established the Department of Mental of Health and required the District of Columbia to significantly alter the manner in which mental health services are provided, specifically that a "recovery" model be adopted and utilized throughout the system of care. Following initial implementation of the Final Court Ordered Plan, the parties agreed to, and the Court approved, Exit Criteria that provides clear goals and measurements by which the District will be evaluated for compliance with the court orders. The Final Court Ordered Plan and Exit Criteria require that mental health consumers be served in their home community, and further that actual services be provided in natural settings, outside of mental health provider sites, as much as possible to support and promote recovery.

6. **Policy.** All children/youth enrolled with a DMH-certified CSA and engaged in active treatment shall have direct services provided in the child/youth's natural settings as much as possible.

7. **Responsibilities.**

7a. All DMH-certified CSAs, subproviders and specialty providers who serve children/youth shall:

- **Implement** a policy directed at requiring service provision in natural settings as the preferred manner of service delivery which addresses how the provider respects consumers and families right to privacy and confidentiality when the services are provided in natural settings, in accordance with MHRS Standards.

7b. The MHA shall:

- (1) **Monitor** the establishment of a policy specific to the provision of services in natural settings by each certified provider.
- (2) **Analyze** claims data on a quarterly basis to determine the rate at which services are provided outside of the mental health provider site.
- (3) **Develop** a structured process for providing feedback and requiring corrective action to each certified provider on a quarterly basis as to their compliance with the policy.

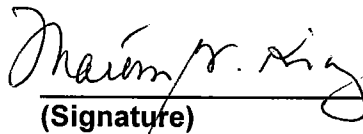
8. **Inquiries.** Any questions regarding this policy may be addressed to the Director, Division of Child Youth and Families in the MHA Office of Programs and Policy at (202) 671-2900.

9. **Related References.**

- MHRS Provider Certification Standards
- DMH Policy 340.5, Maintaining Children and Youth in their Homes
- DMH (MHRS) Provider Manual

Approved By:

Martha B. Knisley
Director, DMH

 4/22/05
(Signature) (Date)