

From: Deborah Stokes [mailto:brainew@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 24, 2009 4:05 PM
To: EBSA, E-OHPSCA - EBSA
Subject: Parity Statute- neurofeedback

Please see my attached comments concerning USCG-2007-27022, page 19157, IIB areas 1 & 4. Thank you

--

Deborah Stokes, PhD, BCIA-EEG
The Better Brain Center
2121 Eisenhower Ave. Suite 604
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-684-0334
www.TheBetterBrainCenter.com

**Comments regarding Regulatory Guidance USCG-2007-27022
page 19157, II B specific areas 1 and 4**

I am a psychologist licensed in Washington, DC and a psychotherapist licensed in Virginia who provides EEG biofeedback treatment to individuals with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Mood and Pain Disorders. EEG biofeedback is an empirically validated and widely recognized effective non medication treatment for ADHD, as well as other conditions. There are over 50 studies evaluating the effectiveness of EEG biofeedback in the treatment of ADHD, Substance Use disorders and Autism. . A recent review of this literature concluded “EEG biofeedback meets the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry criteria for” Clinical Guidelines “for treatment of ADHD.” This means that EEG biofeedback meets the same criteria as to medication for treating ADHD, and that EEG biofeedback “should always be considered as an intervention for this disorder by the clinician”.

This service has been denied by most insurance companies including Medicare, Medicaid, Aetna, United Behavioral Health, Care First Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Federal Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Cigna, Amerigroup and others.

This is limitation of an effective and validated treatment for mental health problems. The reasons given by the insurance companies for this denial fell into two categories: 1) our company does not cover biofeedback for Mental Health problems or 2) there is not yet sufficient evidence for the efficacy of EEG biofeedback. As such, *they are using evidence-based criteria that are far more restrictive for mental health services than the criteria which are used for medical/surgical services. There are many routine medical and surgical procedures which have far fewer controlled studies about their efficacy than does EEG biofeedback. These medical and surgical procedures are generally not limited because of concerns about how many controlled studies have been performed about them.*

I believe that the parity regulations, based on legal reviews of the parity statute should require that employers and plans pay for the same range and scope of services for Behavioral Treatments as they do for Med Surg benefits and that a plan cannot be more restrictive in their managed care criteria and reviews for MH and SA disorders when compared to Med Surg. Today plans are being more restrictive in how they review evidenced-based Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatments than when compared to Med Surg treatments. This violates both the intent and letter of the parity statute and it is my hope that the new regulations will put an end to this discrimination.

Sincerely,
Deborah Stokes, PhD, LPC, BCIA-EEG