

587 – TRANSITION TO ADULthood

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I. PURPOSE

This Policy applies to ACC, ACC-RBHA, ALTCS E/PD, DCS/CHP (CHP), and DES/DDD (DDD) Contractors. This Policy is an optional resource for Fee-For-Service programs and is not a requirement for FFS providers. This Policy intends to strengthen practice in the System of Care and promote continuity of care through collaborative planning by:

1. Supporting individuals transitioning into early adulthood in ways that reinforce their health and wellness.
2. Ensuring a smooth and seamless transition from the Children System of Care to the Adult System of Care.
3. Fostering an understanding that becoming a stable and productive adult is a process that occurs over time and can extend beyond the age of eighteen.

II. DEFINITIONS

Refer to the [AHCCCS Contract and Policy Dictionary](#) for common terms found in this Policy including:

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INPATIENT FACILITY (BHIF)	CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM (CFT)	CONTRACTOR
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY (DCS)	INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)	MEMBER
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (RSA)	VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR)	

III. POLICY

The transition to adulthood is a process that occurs over many years and varies depending on the individual. Involving families in the transition planning process and collaborating with the youth to identify the individual needs acknowledges the diversity that is needed when accessing services and supports.

Often, the youth who successfully transition to adulthood are those that acquire a set of skills and the maturational level to use these skills effectively. Transition planning can emphasize interpersonal skill training through a cognitive-behavioral approach to help youth develop positive social patterns, assume personal responsibility, learn problem-solving techniques, set goals, and acquire skills across various life domains. Thus, it is the responsibility of the behavioral health system to ensure young adults are provided with the supports and services they need to acquire the capacities and skills necessary to navigate through this transitional period to adulthood. The Contractor shall ensure that their subcontracted network of providers utilize the best practices outlined in this Policy for assisting youth in transitioning to adulthood.

A. PROCEDURES

The Contractor shall ensure that clinical practice and behavioral health service delivery is individualized, strengths-based, and culturally responsive in meeting the needs of youth, and their families. Planning for a youth's transition to adulthood involves a working partnership among team members in the Children's System of Care and the Adult System of Care. The Contractor and their subcontractors shall adhere to the procedures clearly specified in AMPM Policy 520, which require that transition planning begins when the youth reach the age of 16. However, if the Child and Family Team (CFT) determine that planning should begin prior to the youth's 16th birthday, the team may proceed with transition planning earlier to allow more time for the youth to acquire the necessary life skills. For youth who are age 16 and older at the time they enter the Children's System of Care, planning shall begin immediately.

1. Transition to Adult Behavioral Health Services

a. Serious Mental Illness (SMI) Determination:

If it is determined that the member has a qualifying Serious Mental Illness (SMI) diagnosis or if a determination is requested by any member of the CFT, the Contractor and their subcontracted provider shall ensure that an SMI eligibility determination is completed at the age of 17.5, as specified in AMPM Policy 320-P, unless declined by the guardian. If the youth is determined to be eligible for services as a person with an SMI, the adult behavioral health provider is expected to join the CFT and participate in the transition planning process. After obtaining permission from the parent/guardian, it is the responsibility of the children's behavioral health service provider to contact and invite the adult behavioral health provider to upcoming planning meetings. The Contractor shall have a process for ensuring collaboration and coordination of care between the CFT and the SMI service provider, and

b. General Mental Health (GMH):

The young adults can request to retain their current team members and providers until the age of 21. When a young adult is transitioning to an adult behavioral health provider it is important to establish coordination between the child and adult service delivery systems. This coordination shall be in place no later than four months prior to the transition. To meet the individualized needs of the young adult, a coordinated effort is required to identify the behavioral health provider staff who shall be coordinating service delivery, including the services that will be needed and the methods for ensuring payment for those services. The Requirements for information sharing practices, and eligible service funding are outlined in the following policies:

- i. Prior to releasing treatment information, behavioral health providers, shall review and follow health record disclosure guidelines per AMPM Policy 940, and
- ii. If the young adult is not Medicaid eligible, services that can be provided under non-Medicaid funding shall follow Policy guidelines as specified in AMPM Policy 320-T1 and ACOM Policy 431.

2. Transition Planning Considerations

- a. When a young adult turns 18, the behavioral health provider shall be required to get updated treatment paperwork with the young adult's signature. Some examples include a new consent to treatment and authorizations for sharing protected health information with the team members that can continue as active participants in service planning,
- b. A full assessment is not required at the time of transition from child to adult behavioral health services unless an annual update is due or there have been significant changes to the young adult's status that clinically indicate the need to update the assessment,
- c. Orientation of the young adult and their family to potential changes they may experience as part of the transition to the Adult System of Care shall help minimize any barriers that may hinder seamless service delivery and support the youth's/family's understanding of their changing roles and responsibilities, and
- d. The Contractor shall ensure that its subcontracted network of providers:
 - i. Evaluate the need for a referral to a family support partner or peer mentor to assist the youth and family in this transition,
 - ii. Complete crisis and safety planning prior to the young adult's transition, when needed refer to AMPM Policy 320-O, and
 - iii. Ensure that the young adult is aware of the type of crisis services that will be available through the Adult System of Care and how to access assistance when needed.

3. Personal Choice

The Contractor shall ensure their subcontracted network of providers' support:

- a. Young adults in making informed decisions about their treatment, unless there is an appointed healthcare decision maker,
- b. Young adults in developing goals and identifying services and supports to meet their needs,
- c. Young adults' inclusion of supportive team members, including their parents, and any other identified natural supports,
- d. Young adults' decision to not authorize inclusion of family members in treatment plan or access to medical records,

- e. Young adults in the acquisition of self-advocacy skills to assist them in learning how to speak and advocate on their own behalf as outlined in AMPM Policy 584,
 - f. Young adults with information about how the behavioral health service delivery systems operate in accordance with the Arizona Vision and 12 Principles for Children’s Service Delivery and Nine Guiding Principles for recovery-oriented adult behavioral health services and systems,
 - g. Young adults, who have disclosed to the behavioral health service provider their self-identity as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, with best practices identified for the LGBTQ+ community. This should include building community supports and pro-social activities as well as connections to providers that provide quality care specific to this population,
 - h. Young adults in maintaining or building a support system, and
 - i. Young adults in ways that align with the family and young adult’s cultural beliefs about this time of life transition.
4. Collaboration with System Partners

The Contractor shall ensure their subcontracted network of providers coordinate with all involved system partners to promote collaborative planning and seamless transitions. Child welfare, juvenile corrections, education, developmental disabilities, and vocational rehabilitation service delivery systems can provide access to resources specific to the young adults’ needs within their program guidelines. Providers shall be knowledgeable about these programs and the resources that can be utilized to meet the unique needs of each transition-aged youth:

- a. School - Behavioral health providers are expected to collaborate with the education system. Preparing youth and their parents/caregivers for the transition from secondary education to adult life. Contracted providers shall request individualized plans to assist with transition planning. Individualized plans include Education Career Action Plan (ECAP), 504 Plan, Transition Plan, and Summary of Performance (SOP). Behavioral health providers shall collaborate with the school to determine if a youth is eligible for a transition plan within their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- b. Department of Child Safety (DCS) – For youth in the custody of DCS, Behavioral health providers are expected to collaborate with DCS, refer to AMPM Policy 585 for additional information. Behavioral health providers shall work with DCS Specialist to determine if youth in foster care may be eligible for services through the Young Adult Program (YAP) and Transitional Independent Living Program (TILP),
- c. Department of Economic Security (DES) - Youth who have a disability, regardless of whether they are in Special Education, may be eligible for services through the Arizona Department of Economic Security/Rehabilitation Services Administration (DES/RSA) under a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program when transitioning from school to work. Behavioral health providers should consider a VR referral and discuss within the CFT meetings. Youth with a disability can be referred to the VR program as early as age 14 or at any time thereafter when they are ready to work with VR to address their career plans,

- d. Documentation Assistance - Behavioral health provider shall identify if there is a need to assist young adults and their families/caregivers in accessing or preparing necessary documentation, such as:
 - i. Birth certificates,
 - ii. Social security cards and social security disability benefit applications,
 - iii. Driver's License or Identification cards,
 - iv. Medical records including any eligibility determinations and assessments,
 - v. Individualized Education Program (IEP) Plans,
 - vi. Certificates of achievement, diplomas, General Education Development (GED) transcripts, and application forms for college,
 - vii. Case plans for youth continuing in the foster care system,
 - viii. Treatment plans,
 - ix. Selective Service Registration,
 - x. Voter Registration,
 - xi. Documentation of completion of probation or parole conditions,
 - xii. Guardianship applications,
 - xiii. Advance directives, and
 - xiv. Redeterminations of DDD Eligibility.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING

The length of time necessary for transition planning is relative to the youth's needs, and ability to acquire the necessary skills to assume the responsibilities of adulthood. When planning for the young person's transition into adulthood and the adult behavioral health system, a transition plan that includes an assessment of self-care, independent living skills, behavioral health needs, social skills, work, and education plans, earning potential, and overall stability shall be incorporated into the Service Planning. The Contractor shall ensure their subcontracted network of provider work in collaboration with the youth as outlined in AMPM policy 583 to consider the following areas when transition planning:

1. Self-care and Independent Living Skills

As youth approaches adulthood, the acquisition of daily living skills becomes increasingly important. Providers shall assess self-care and independent living skills needs of each young adult and ensure that services and supports are provided to meet their needs.

2. Vocational/Employment

In collaboration with the young adults, the team may identify vocational goals that lead to employment or other types of meaningful activities. Employment or other meaningful activities (such as an internship or volunteering in an area of special interest that can provide financial support), personal fulfillment, and social opportunities. Providers along with involved system partners shall work together to prepare the young adult for employment or other vocational opportunities.

3. Service planning that addresses the youth’s preparation for employment or other meaningful activities can include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Utilizing career interest inventories or engaging in vocational assessment activities to identify potential career preferences, volunteer opportunities, or other meaningful activities,
 - b. Identifying skill deficits and effective strategies to address these deficits,
 - c. Determining training needs and providing opportunities for learning through practice in real world settings,
 - d. Learning about school-to-work programs that may be available in the community and eligibility requirements,
 - e. Developing vocational skills (such as building a resume, filling out job applications, interviewing preparation, use of online job sites, etc.),
 - f. Learning federal and state requirements for filing annual income tax returns, and
 - g. When the youth reach the age of 14, they can be given work experience in the community, whether it is through employment, volunteering, or internship experience.

4. Postsecondary Education Considerations

When postsecondary education is the goal for young adults, transition planning may include preparatory work in a number of areas, including, but not limited to:

- a. Matching the young adults’ interests with the right school, and
- b. Connecting the youth to the preferred schools, and assisting with applications for scholarships or other financial aid, etc.

If accommodation is needed, connect the young adult with the Disability Resource Centers from their preferred postsecondary institutions.

5. Medical/Physical Healthcare

Planning can include assisting the young adult with:

- a. Transferring healthcare services from a pediatrician to an adult health care provider, if pertinent,
- b. Applying for medical and behavioral health care coverage, including how to select a health plan and a physician,
- c. Preparing an application for submission at age 18 to AHCCCS for ongoing Medicaid services,
- d. Obtaining personal and family medical history (e.g., copies of immunization records, major illnesses, surgical procedures, etc.),
- e. Information on advance directives, as indicated in the AMPM Policy 640,
- f. Methods for managing healthcare appointments, keeping medical records, following treatment recommendations, and taking medication,
- g. How to identify healthcare concerns, address questions during appointments, and consult with doctors regarding diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis, and
- h. Assuming responsibility for understanding and managing the symptoms of their mental illness and obtaining knowledge of the benefits, risks, and side effects of their medication.

6. Living Arrangements

Youth may require ongoing planning and evaluation of their ability to live independently, identify the level of community supports needed, and match the type of living environment to their individual personality and preferences. If needed, the team shall assist the young adult with completing and filing applications for public housing or other subsidized housing programs.

Youth receiving treatment in an Arizona Behavioral Health Inpatient Facility (BHIF) at the time they turn age 18 can continue to receive residential services if they continue to require treatment and give their consent.

The Licensed residential agencies may continue to provide behavioral health services to individuals aged 18 or older if the conditions are met as specified in AAC R9-10-318 (B):

- a. Person was admitted before their 18th birthday, is not 21 years of age or older, and is completing high school or a high school equivalency diploma, or is participating in a job training program; or
- b. Through the last day of the month of the person's 18th birthday.

7. Financial

Together, the team should review and update any federal and/or state financial forms to reflect the young adult's change in status to ensure there is no disruption in healthcare or financial assistance services. This could include applying for food stamps, housing, or other emergency assistance. Youth who are eligible for Social Security Income (SSI) benefits as a child shall have a disability redetermination during the month preceding the month when they attain age 18.

Planning considerations can include:

- a. Setting up a simple checking and/or savings account to learn how it can be used to pay bills, save money, and keep track of transactions,
- b. Identifying weekly/monthly expenses that occur (such as food, clothes, school supplies, and leisure activities) and determining the monetary amount for each area,
- c. Learning how to monitor spending and budget financial resources,
- d. Education on how credit cards work and differ from debit cards, including an understanding of finance charges and minimum monthly payments, and
- e. Understanding the short and long-term consequences of poor financial planning (e.g., overdrawn account [Non-Sufficient Funds fee], personal credit rating, eligibility for home and/or car loans, potential job loss, etc.).

8. Legal Considerations

Transition planning that addresses legal considerations needs to begin before the youth turns 18 to ensure the young adult has the necessary legal protections upon reaching the age of majority. This is important to prevent any delays of medically necessary services that would require consent to treatment. This can include the following:

- a. Guardianship,
- b. Conservator,
- c. Special needs trust, and
- d. Advance directives (e.g., living will, powers of attorney).

Refer to the Arizona Center for Disability Law's Legal Options Manual for access to information and forms.

9. Transportation

When transitioning to the adult behavioral health system, providers shall educate the family and young adult on the transportation options available through the adult service delivery system to support the young adult's continued attendance at behavioral health treatment appointments. The team shall identify and plan for other transportation needs that are not necessarily associated with accessing medical or behavioral health services.

C. TRAINING AND SUPERVISION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Contractors shall ensure:
 - a. Providers are trained and understand how to implement the requirements outlined in this Policy,
 - b. Whenever this Policy is updated or revised, provider agencies are notified and required staff is retrained as necessary on the changes,
 - c. Documentation demonstrating that all required provider staff have been trained in this Policy, can be provided to AHCCCS upon request, and
 - d. In alignment with A.A.C. R4-6-212 Clinical Supervision requirements, the supervision of this Policy is to be incorporated into other supervision processes provider agencies have in place for direct care clinical staff.