

Payment Policy | Behavioral Health Outpatient Professional Services



EFFECTIVE DATE: 05 | 01 | 2026

POLICY LAST REVIEWED: 01 | 21 | 2026

OVERVIEW

The intent of this policy is to provide information regarding credentialing for professional outpatient behavioral health providers, document provider specialty restrictions for CPT codes, and to provide medical record documentation requirements for behavioral health providers.

MEDICAL CRITERIA

Not applicable

NOTIFICATION OF ADMISSION

Not applicable

POLICY STATEMENT

Credentialing:

BCBSRI credentials the following independently licensed behavioral health clinicians:

- Psychiatrists (MD, DO)
- Psychiatric Neurologist (MD, DO)
- Child/Adolescent Psychiatrist (MD, DO)
- Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)
- Behavioral Health Nurse Practitioner (BH NP)
- Behavioral Health Physician's Assistant (BH PA)
- Psychologists (PhD, PsyD)
- Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers (LICSW)
- Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC)
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT)
- Licensed Behavior Analysts (LBA)
- Licensed Chemical Dependency Professionals (LCDP) *Not covered for Medicare Advantage Plans

BCBSRI has implemented a supervisory protocol process whereby Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs), Postdoctoral clinicians, Mental Health Counselor Associates (MHC-As), and Marriage and Family Therapist Associates (MFT-As), and Physician Assistants (PAs) may render services to our members in a professional outpatient setting under the supervision of an independently licensed behavioral health clinician. Please refer to BCBSRI's Behavioral Health Supervisory Protocol for Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Postdoctoral Clinicians, Mental Health Counselor Associates, and Marriage and Family Therapist Associates policy.

For more information, please contact BCBSRI Behavioral Health Utilization Management at 1-800-274-2958

Coding:

Unless specified in a specific payment policy, BCBSRI follows correct coding and payment guidelines published by National and Regional CMS (including DMEMAC) and other correct coding national standards such as Current Procedural Terminology (CPT). Please refer to the Coding and Payment Guidelines policy for additional details. All services rendered should be in accordance with correct coding.

Provider specialty restrictions exist for CPT codes for behavioral health services as defined in the coding grids below.

Behavioral Health Services Provided to Children Under the Age of 18:

BCBSRI recognizes that the evaluation of children/adolescents often takes longer than adults and requires additional collateral contacts that further differentiate this population. Effective, for dates of service on or after January 1, 2013, BCBSRI allows providers to file with a modifier "TU" Special Payment Rate, Overtime for extended psychiatric diagnostic interview examination (90791TU and 90792TU) for children under the age of 18. Extended services are defined as psychiatric diagnostic interview/examinations that extend longer than 75 minutes for our members under 18 years of age.

Medical Record Documentation requirements

Please see the attached document that provides the Behavioral Health Medical Record Documentation standards

[Documentation Standards](#)

For additional information, please contact BCBSRI's Behavioral Health Utilization Management at 800-274-2958.

COVERAGE

Benefits may vary between groups/contracts. Please refer to the appropriate Evidence of Coverage or Subscriber Agreement for applicable Behavioral Health Services for benefits and applicable deductibles and/ or co-payments.

CODING

The following is applicable for Medicare Advantage Plans and Commercial Products.

Table 1 is regarding the following specialties: Psychologist, Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW), Licensed Marriage/Family Therapist (LMFT), Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)

Table 1			
Provider Specialty	CPT Code Name	CPT Code	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychologist• Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW)• Licensed Marriage/Family Therapist (LMFT)• Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)	Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation	90791	
	Psychotherapy	90832, 90834, 90837	
	Interactive Complexity Add-On Code	90785	Must be billed with appropriate primary procedure per CPT coding guidelines
	Psychotherapy Crisis	90839, 90840	
	Family/Group Therapy	90846, 90847, 90849, 90853	
	Psychological and Neuro-Psychological Testing	Refer to Psychological and Neuropsychological Testing policy CPT coding details	These procedures are <u>limited to the following</u> specialties: 1. Psychologist 2. Pediatric neurodevelopmental specialist. Refer to the Psychological and Neuropsychological

			Testing policy for additional details.
	Health Behavior Assessment/ Intervention	Refer to Health and Behavior Assessment policy for CPT coding details	

Table 2 is regarding the following specialties: Licensed Chemical Dependency Professionals (LCDP)

Table 2			
Provider Specialty	CPT Code Name	CPT Code	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensed Chemical Dependency Professionals (LCDP) *Not covered by Medicare Advantage Plans 	Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation	90791	
	Psychotherapy	90832, 90834, 90837	
	Interactive Complexity Add-On Code	90785	Must be billed with appropriate primary procedure per CPT coding guidelines
	Psychotherapy Crisis	90839, 90840	
	Family/Group Therapy	90846, 90847, 90849, 90853	

Table 3 is regarding the following specialties: Psychiatry (MD, DO), Psychiatric Neurologist (MD, DO), Child/Adolescent Psychiatry (MD, DO), Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), Behavioral Health Nurse Practitioner (BH NP), Behavioral Health Physician's Assistant (BH PA)

Table 3			
Provider Specialty	CPT Code Name	CPT Code	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychiatry (MD, DO) Psychiatric Neurologist (MD, DO) Child/Adolescent Psychiatry (MD, DO) Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) Behavioral Health Nurse Practitioner (BH NP) Behavioral Health Physician's Assistant (BH PA) 	Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation	90791	
	Psych Diagnostic Medical	90792	
	Psychotherapy	90832, 90834, 90837	
	Psychotherapy/E/M Add-On Codes	90833, 90836, 90838	Must be billed with appropriate primary procedure per CPT coding guidelines
	E/M Codes	99201-99205, 99211-99215, 99221-99223, 99231-99233, 99238, 99239	
	Interactive Complexity Add-On Code	90785	Must be billed with appropriate primary procedure per CPT coding guidelines
	Psychotherapy Crisis	90839, 90840	

	Family/Group Therapy	90846, 90847, 90849, 90853	
	Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)	Refer to Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation policy for CPT coding details	
	Electro Convulsive Therapy (ECT)	90870	

Table 4 is regarding the following specialties: Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA) and Psychologists

Table 4			
Provider Specialty	CPT Code Name	CPT Code	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA) Psychologists 	Applied Behavior Analysis Codes. Please refer to Autism Spectrum Disorders Mandate policy for additional details	Please refer to Autism Spectrum Disorders Mandate policy for details on CPT coding	LBAs are only allowed to file claims for the codes in this code set. Please refer to Autism Spectrum Disorders Mandate policy for additional details

RELATED POLICIES

Autism Spectrum Disorders Mandate
 Behavioral Health Supervisory Protocol for Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Postdoctoral Clinicians, Mental Health Counselor Associates, and Marriage and Family Therapist Associates
 Coding and Payment Guidelines
 Health and Behavior Assessment
 Preventative Services for Commercial
 Provider Credentialing and Recredentialing Process
 Psychological and Neuropsychological Testing
 Telemedicine Services for Medicare Advantage
 Telemedicine Services for Commercial Products
 Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation

PUBLISHED

Provider Update, March 2026
 Provider Update, July 2025
 Provider Update, February/December 2024
 Provider Update March 2023
 Provider Update August 2022

REFERENCES

None

DRAFT

CLICK THE ENVELOPE ICON BELOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

This medical policy is made available to you for informational purposes only. It is not a guarantee of payment or a substitute for your medical judgment in the treatment of your patients. Benefits and eligibility are determined by the member's subscriber agreement or member certificate and/or the employer agreement, and those documents will supersede the provisions of this medical policy. For information on member-specific benefits, call the provider call center. If you provide services to a member which are determined to not be medically necessary (or in some cases medically necessary services which are non-covered benefits), you may not charge the member for the services unless you have informed the member and they have agreed in writing in advance to continue with the treatment at their own expense. Please refer to your participation agreement(s) for the applicable provisions. This policy is current at the time of publication; however, medical practices, technology, and knowledge are constantly changing. BCBSRI reserves the right to review and revise this policy for any reason and at any time, with or without notice. Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

