

Q&A

Advocating for Children with Complex Medical Needs

Q. Now that all medical assistance recipients receive medical care through managed care agencies, how do we access counseling and other mental health services for our clients?

A. In Philadelphia, mental health services for medical assistance recipients are provided by Community Behavioral Health (CBH). This applies to all children in the custody of the Department of Human Services (DHS). To arrange for counseling for our clients, call the CBH 24-hour hotline at 1-888-545-2600. If you know the agency where you would like the child to receive services, you may arrange for counseling directly through any CBH provider. All of the local mental health centers under the old “catchment area” or “base service unit” system are providers through CBH.

Some services, such as respite for mentally retarded children, can only be accessed through the local base service unit. For further information, call CBH or the Support Center. The Support Center’s *Handbook for Children with Special Medical Needs* is available to all volunteers. It contains more information about CBH, as well as details concerning medical assistance, managed care, consent to treatment, mental health/mental retardation services, special education and early intervention services, Supplemental Security Income and Adoption Subsidy.

Q. What are wrap-around services?

A. Wrap-around services are mental health services provided to children in their homes, at school, or wherever needed. These are provided by CBH through a provider, and are aimed at keeping children at home who might otherwise

require placement in residential care. Wrap-around services include in-home support and therapy services such as:

- **Therapeutic Staff Support (TSS):** one-on-one attention with immediate behavioral reinforcement, emotional support, self-esteem building, time-structuring activities, academic support, and other psychosocial rehabilitative activities.
- **Mobile Therapy:** provides psychotherapy to children and their families in a range of community settings.
- **Behavioral Specialist Consulting:** helps parents respond appropriately throughout the treatment process.

Q. What is SCOH?

A. “SCOH” stands for Services to Children in their Own Homes. SCOH offers a range of non-therapeutic support services, including referring and coordinating parent training, medical care, and psychological services. SCOH workers teach parenting skills and budgeting, helping the parent manage the home and children. Typically, private agencies under contract with DHS provide both general SCOH as well as specialized SCOH (e.g. medical SCOH for children with intensive medical needs).

*Do you have questions about children’s law, practice or services? Call the Support Center for consultation with a staff attorney or social worker, or drop a note to see your question answered in a future issue of **ADVOKIDS**.*