

**State of Vermont
Department of Mental Health
Child, Adolescent and Family Unit**

**Procedural Guidelines for the Prior Authorization of
Out of State Residential Treatment**

PURPOSE:

The authorization of residential treatment by the Child, Adolescent and Family Unit (CAFU) of the Department of Mental Health (DMH) is guided by the philosophy and best practice that children and adolescents have better outcomes when they are treated, whenever possible, in their homes or communities. To this end DMH/CAFU authorizes residential level of care only in cases where other community based options have been tried or community based options have been unable to create an appropriate service package. When residential level of care is deemed appropriate, DMH prioritizes programs that best meet the clinical needs of the child/adolescent and are closest to the child/adolescent's home and community to maintain and support on-going family and community connections. DMH coordinates placements with the Department of Education to assure the placement meets both the child/adolescent's mental health and educational needs. The ultimate goal of these guidelines is the provision of residential treatment to children and adolescents in a setting most appropriate to meet their individual mental health needs.

AUTHORITY:

3 V.S.A. § 835; 18 V.S.A. §§ 7401(14),(15),(17); 8907; Chapter 43 of Title 33; Vermont Administrative Code §§ 12-7-1:7103 (medical necessity); 12-2-201:10 and 12-7-4:7411 (authorization and payment for private non-medical institutions).

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES:

In order for a child or adolescent to be placed by DMH/CAFU in an out-of-state residential treatment facility the following criteria must be met:

1. The ***Procedural Guidelines for Out-of-Home Treatment for Children and Families with Intensive Mental Health Needs*** must be reviewed and applied to each individual case and the child/adolescent and family must meet the criteria and follow the guidelines. This includes the Coordinated Service Plan process and Case Review Committee approval.
2. The treatment team and the Local Interagency Team (LIT) must have reviewed the request, applied the ***Procedural Guidelines for Out-of-Home Treatment for Children and Families with***

- Intensive Mental Health Needs*** and support the exploration of an out-of-state residential treatment facility.
3. In-state options for residential care must have been tried and determined to be unsuccessful, or in-state residential programs have declined the referral to provide a service package because of the child/adolescent's extreme or unique mental health needs. Often the clinical presentation is complicated by other disabilities or behavioral issues.
 4. The treatment team and the Local Interagency Team must have consulted with their assigned clinical care coordinator at DMH/CAFU for technical assistance, to assure all requirements are met, and to explore possible out-of-state options. DMH can not place children/adolescents in locked facilities either in-state or out-of-state.
 5. The LIT must make a referral to the Case Review Committee (CRC) as a sub-committee of the State Interagency Team (SIT), requesting out-of-state residential treatment. LIT must clearly document what has been tried in-state and why it has either been unsuccessful or not a viable option due to the denial of the referral; documentation should include description of the child/adolescent's needs which require specialized care. CRC may refer the case to SIT if there are complicating factors that warrant SIT's input or funding barriers.
 6. Reimbursement for out-of-state private non-medical institution (PNMI) residential services shall not be made unless the services are not available within the state. No reimbursement shall be available unless prior authorization has been granted.
 7. Out-of-state residential treatment may be denied by DMH/CAFU even after above criteria is applied because the clinical documentation and the ***Procedural Guidelines for Out-of-Home Treatment for Children and Families with Intensive Mental Health Needs*** do not adequately support the need for an out-of-state residential treatment option and there are in-state options available.
 8. The out-of-state residential program must be licensed through the appropriate state entity and apply for and participate in Vermont's Medicaid Program.