



SIMS

SIMS Foundation P.O. Box 2152 Austin, TX 78768-2152

Confidential Clinical Number: Phone 512-494-1007

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www.simsfoundation.org

POLICIES FOR SIMS PROVIDERS

The policies are intended to protect the rights and interests of clients, clarify the rights and responsibilities of SIMS providers, including prompt and accurate reimbursement for the services they provide, and to ensure that SIMS complies with its fiduciary responsibility as a community-based non-profit organization. Some policies *may* apply to more than one (of the following) categories:

ELIGIBILITY

1. Providers must be fully licensed by the Texas State Board of Examiners for the profession(s) in which they are licensed and must provide SIMS with a current copy prior to acceptance as a SIMS provider. Providers will be responsible for documenting/verifying their current status upon submission of each Provider Claim Form.
2. Providers must maintain professional liability insurance at all times and must provide SIMS with a current copy prior to acceptance as a SIMS provider. Providers will be responsible for documenting/verifying their current status upon submission of each Provider Claim Form.
3. Providers must sign and return a SIMS Provider Agreement *prior* to acceptance as a SIMS provider and at the time of any major change in SIMS policies.
4. Providers must have an email account at which they can receive notices and requests from SIMS that are not client-specific.
5. Providers must have access to the Internet in order to be able to download forms and other important information from the "Providers Corner" on the SIMS website (www.simfoundation.org).
6. Providers are asked, where possible, to have a confidential fax machine at which they can receive information about service authorizations and other client-related documents.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

7. Providers will abide by all applicable codes of ethics of her or his profession.
8. Providers will respect the privacy and confidentiality of SIMS clients and maintain appropriate professional boundaries with clients at all times.
9. Providers **will not** identify clients by name in email correspondence.
10. Providers will exercise best practice policies and procedures when providing mental health services to SIMS clients.
11. Providers may utilize any one therapeutic modality or a combination of modalities for a client, based on their clinical judgment as to the most effective approach for that client, so long as the total number of sessions provided does not exceed the number of currently authorized sessions. Please note that reimbursement rates for group sessions vary from other types of sessions.

AUTHORIZATIONS AND SCHEDULING

12. Providers will notify SIMS clinical staff in advance if they are unable to take additional clients, either temporarily or permanently; or if the provider will be away from the office and unable to take referrals during a specific but limited time.
13. When a SIMS client contacts a provider about services, providers will return calls within 24 hours during the business week, 48 hours over a weekend or holiday and within the same business day when possible. Providers may request assistance from the SIMS clinical staff if they are having difficulty reaching a client.
14. Providers will notify SIMS on either the SIMS confidential clinical line or fax number if the provider receives a Service Authorization for a client that does not schedule an appointment before the expiration date.
15. Providers who provide services to a SIMS client without a written SIMS Service Authorization will not be reimbursed by SIMS.
16. Providers who continue services with a SIMS client who's Service Authorization has expired will not be reimbursed by SIMS. Such clients should be referred back to SIMS to initiate services again.
17. Upon receipt of the SIMS Service Authorization, providers may offer the number of sessions authorized **before the expiration date** of the authorization.

INITIAL SESSIONS

18. During the initial session with a SIMS client, providers will discuss the SIMS fee schedule with the client, as well as the provider's personal policy regarding expectations for payment of co-pays and for missed appointments.
19. Providers will have each new SIMS client read and sign the SIMS forms listed below during the client's initial session. If the client is a minor, the legal parent or guardian must sign these forms.
 - ❑ ***Notice of Privacy Practices (read only)***
 - ❑ ***Receipt and Acknowledgment of Notice of Privacy Practices***
 - ❑ ***Limits of Confidentiality***
 - ❑ ***Consent for Release of Information***

Providers will also obtain from the client:

- ❑ ***Proof of Income (may used the form provided by SIMS or obtain a copy of a paycheck or tax return)***
- ❑ ***Proof of residency (may be a copy of a driver's license, lease, or utility bill)***

Copies of these completed and signed forms, as well as copies of the proof of residency and income, are to be forwarded to SIMS as soon as possible after the initial session. Provider Claim Forms will not be processed for reimbursement until the consent forms are received.

20. SIMS will not pay for missed appointments or for cancelled appointments. At their discretion and in accordance with the provider's individually established policy, as discussed with the client during the initial

session, providers may bill the SIMS client for the entire cost of a missed appointment at the applicable SIMS rate.

21. Providers will collect the authorized co-pay amount from the client at the initial session, and every session thereafter.

EXTENDED SERVICE (REQUESTING ADDITIONAL SESSIONS)

22. Providers may petition on behalf of the client for additional sessions beyond those initially or currently authorized by completing a *Provider Service Summary*. This form should be received by SIMS at least five (5) business days prior to the end of the currently approved sessions in order for SIMS to complete a review process. Upon receipt, the *Summary* will be reviewed by SIMS clinical staff and providers will be advised of a decision in writing.
23. When SIMS clients have a “gap” in their services, such as when on tour, and their authorization period expires, the provider may request a continuation of services by submitting the *Provider Service Summary*.
24. Beginning January, 2010, SIMS will authorize all 24 sessions at intake, *pending receipt of the Provider Service Summary, consent forms and proof of income and residency before the 4th session*. If these documents have not been received after the 3rd session, no further sessions will be paid until they are received. SIMS will then ask for updated GAF scores quarterly, but will only require a new *Provider Service Summary* when additional sessions are required, the client terminates services with the provider, or the client’s service year expires.

RESOURCES, REFERRALS AND OTHER SERVICES FOR CLIENTS

25. SIMS clients may also be eligible for additional services, including psychiatric evaluations, assistance with substance abuse treatment, and referrals for other needs, including health and dental care. Providers should encourage clients to contact SIMS directly if they need any additional services.
26. Services received through referrals made by providers to other practitioners or programs will not be reimbursed by SIMS.

TERMINATIONS OF SERVICES

27. When the Provider and client agree upon termination of services, or if the client disengages for any reason from services, the provider will complete the *Provider Service Summary*, mail or fax along with a final *Provider Claim Form* within 30 days of the final session. Should the client contact the provider to schedule an appointment after services are terminated, the provider is to refer the client to SIMS for a reauthorization of services. Providers will not be reimbursed for services without this reauthorization.
28. If a person referred to a provider for authorized services does not initiate those services within two (2) weeks, the provider will inform the Clinical Coordinator via phone or fax. Should the client contact the provider to schedule an appointment after the two (2) weeks, the provider is to have the client contact SIMS for a reauthorization of services. Providers will not be reimbursed for services without a reauthorization of services.

CO-PAYS AND CLAIM FORMS

29. SIMS providers will be compensated according to the SIMS Provider Billing Schedule included in the Provider Claim Form.
30. Providers are responsible for collecting the co-pay fee from the client at each session, including the initial session. Co-pay amounts vary among clients, so please refer to each client's individual Service Authorization.
31. Providers will include an additional \$10 charge when billing SIMS for an authorized initial session.
32. Claims to SIMS for reimbursement should be submitted using the current Provider Claim Form following the steps outlined in the current Provider Billing Procedures.
33. Providers and their staff can contact SIMS clinical staff with questions about submitting claims forms or other billing procedures. Please call our confidential clinical phone line at 512.494.1007.

REFERRALS OF SIMS CLIENTS TO SIMS PROVIDERS

34. Referrals to authorized SIMS providers are made based on varied criteria, including but not limited to a client's specific request regarding location, gender of provider, experience with specific mental health issues or problems of concern to a client, philosophical or spiritual preference of a client, etc. Furthermore, referrals are made based on the current caseload of providers, as well as their availability at a particular date or time.
35. SIMS cannot make any guarantee as to the number of referrals that will be made to a provider.

PROVIDER RIGHTS

36. Providers have the right to discontinue their relationship with SIMS at any time without explanation by notifying SIMS by email, mail, fax or phone that they are no longer want to be a SIMS provider.
37. Providers have the right to decline to accept any additional SIMS clients by notifying SIMS by email, mail, fax or phone that they do not want any additional referrals and by stating the period of time for which the status applies, for up to *six* months without having to reapply.
38. Providers have the right to share their professional insight and feedback to SIMS clinical staff and / or the Board of Directors.
39. Providers have the right to share their concerns and grievances with SIMS clinical staff and / or the Board of Directors.
40. Providers may communicate directly with the Clinical Specialist, Clinical Director, Executive Director, and / or member(s) of the Board of Directors. Confidential correspondence may be forwarded to the SIMS office via postal service, facsimile or electronic mail. Verbal communication may be shared via our confidential clinical phone line at 512-494-1007 or by phoning our administrative line at 512-482-1008 and requesting a verbal response from the desired party.

SIMS RIGHTS

- 41. SIMS has the right to discontinue the relationship with a provider at any time without explanation.
- 42. SIMS has the right to set eligibility criteria for providers and has the right to terminate a relationship with a provider if a change in criteria negates their eligibility status in the SIMS network.

Agreed and Accepted:

Signature of Provider Applicant

Date of Signature:
