



POLICIES FOR SIMS PSYCHIATRIC 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.

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 Psychiatric 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.

AUTHORIZATIONS AND SCHEDULING

11. 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.

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. Providers who provide services to a SIMS client without a written SIMS Service Authorization will not be reimbursed by SIMS.
15. 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.
16. Upon receipt of the SIMS Service Authorization, providers may offer sessions authorized **before the expiration date** of the authorization.

INITIAL SESSIONS

17. 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.
18. 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 use 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.

19. 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.
20. Providers will collect the authorized co-pay amount from the client at the initial session, and every session thereafter.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP VISITS

21. Psychiatric providers may provide medication management or follow-up sessions for a period of up to six months for each SIMS client from the date of the initial authorization of services.
22. When a SIMS client qualifies for such programs and assistance, psychiatric providers agree to assist SIMS clients in attaining access to prescription assistance programs.
23. When a SIMS client does not qualify for a prescription assistance program but states that s/he cannot afford prescribed medications, providers will refer the client back to SIMS for assistance.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH SIMS CLINICAL STAFF AND OTHER SIMS PROVIDERS

24. Psychiatric providers agree to exchange relevant information with SIMS clinical staff regarding services provided to the SIMS client, as indicated in the SIMS Release of Information form signed by the client at the time of the initial psychiatric assessment.
25. To ensure well-coordinated care and services for SIMS clients, psychiatric providers agree to exchange relevant information with other authorized SIMS providers who are involved with the same SIMS client. Providers will inform the SIMS client about the exchange of information with other authorized SIMS providers and will provide the client with his/her own release of information forms.
26. Psychiatric providers agree that the SIMS clinical staff may send a copy of the Psychiatric Provider Service Summary to other authorized SIMS providers for the same client, when deemed in the best interest of the client.

EXTENDED SERVICE (REQUESTING ADDITIONAL SESSIONS)

27. Providers may petition on behalf of the client for additional sessions beyond those initially or currently authorized by completing a *Psychiatric 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.
28. 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*.

RESOURCES, REFERRALS AND OTHER SERVICES FOR CLIENTS

29. 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.
30. Services received through referrals made by providers to other practitioners or programs will not be reimbursed by SIMS.

TERMINATIONS OF SERVICES

31. 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.
32. 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 Director 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

33. SIMS providers will be compensated according to the SIMS Provider Billing Schedule included in the Provider Claim Form.
34. 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.
35. Claims to SIMS for reimbursement should be submitted using the current Provider Claim Form following the steps outlined in the current Provider Billing Procedures.
36. 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

37. 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.
38. SIMS cannot make any guarantee as to the number of referrals that will be made to a provider.

PROVIDER RIGHTS

39. 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.
40. 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.

41. Providers have the right to share their professional insight and feedback to SIMS clinical staff and / or the Board of Directors.
42. Providers have the right to share their concerns and grievances with SIMS clinical staff and / or the Board of Directors.
43. 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

44. SIMS has the right to discontinue the relationship with a provider at any time without explanation.
45. 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:
