

ADVOCACY SERVICES

I. Description

Advocacy services support clients in achieving recovery in the context of where they live their day to day lives. Children and adults with mental health disorders experience numerous environmental challenges, in addition to symptoms of their mental illness. Often, the negative aspects of a person's environment affect his or her well-being, intensifying personal problems and creating obstacles to recovery. Problems such as poverty, discrimination and lack of awareness of rights affect individuals as significantly as symptoms of a mental disorderⁱ. Advocacy services involve speaking for the client to help them manage their environment and create a setting that fosters recovery. Advocacy also involves working with the client or family, to empower them, increasing their sense of personal power.ⁱⁱ

Advocacy services include:

1. *Individual advocacy* –
 - a. Educating members and families about their rights and assuring members are afforded their rights.
 - b. providing access to the grievance process,
 - c. helping members gain access to needed services outside of the mental health system (housing, transportation, education):
 - d. providing information about services and systems
 - e. providing tools to help members advocate for themselves.
2. *Program advocacy and outreach* – reaching out to agencies and organizations to educate them about the needs of Medicaid members; Collaboration with organizations to assure individual members get the services they need.
3. *System advocacy* - taking action to eliminate or reduce social problems and stigma, which adversely affect clients.

II. Admission Criteria:

- A. All clients are afforded Member Rights; therefore advocacy services are available to all clients.

III. Exclusion Criteria:

- A. None

IV. Continued Stay Criteria:

- A. None

V. Discharge Criteria:

- A. None

VI. Frequency of Review:

- A. As Needed

ⁱ Mark S. Kiselica, M. R. (Vol. 79, 2001.). Bringing Advocacy Counseling to Life: The History, Issues, and Human Dramas of Social Justice Work in Counseling, . *Journal of Counseling and Development* .

ⁱⁱ World Health Organization. (2003). Advocacy for Mental Health. *Mental Health Service Package* , 7-14.