



Practice Points

AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF MEDICAL/HEALTH INFORMATION

The purpose of this practice point is to clarify the use of the authorization for release of medical/health information, SS-6. The SS-6 is the Division's general authorization for the release to share information between the Division and other individuals/entities related to case management, care or treatment, court, or custody matters, or active or potential resource providers applying for licensure or re-licensure. This information may include, but is not limited to physical or mental health information in the form of records, reports, or other documents or verbal communication.

Pursuant to Council on Accreditation (COA) standard, PA-CR 2.04, the release of information should include the following elements:

- The name of the person whose information will be released
- The signature of the person whose information will be released, or the parent or legal guardian of a person who is unable to provide authorization
- The specific information to be released
- The purpose for which the information is to be used
- The date the release takes effect
- The date, event, or condition upon which the consent expires, not to exceed one year from when the release takes effect
- The name of the person(s) or agency/agencies that will receive the disclosed information
- The name of the person or agency that is disclosing the confidential information, and

- A statement that the person or family may withdraw their authorization at any time except to the extent that action has already been taken

The following interpretation with regards to date of expiration has been provided by COA:

“The expiration event or condition should relate to the individual or to the purpose of the use or disclosure. **The date, event, or condition upon which the consent expires must ensure that the authorization will last no longer than reasonably necessary.** When the release of information is required for ongoing service provision, all elements of the form must be reviewed and updated annually at minimum to ensure that consent continues to be informed and appropriate.”

In relation to case management, a SS-6 should only be authorized for the time period that is necessary for the proper management of the case. If the case has long-term medical/health providers that require extended periods of authorization and communication, the worker may extend the date of authorization up to one year. After that year has expired, a new release must be signed by all parties as required. If the case does not require long periods of authorization from a medical/health individual or provider, the SS-6 may be re-authorized at the worker’s discretion with the requirements met as stated above. Circuits will have protocols in place to assure that each release is current.

For Authorization of Release of Non-Medical Records, staff may use the CD-98 in accordance to the above guidelines. Investigators may use the Medical/Professional Information Request, CS-30, for assessments and investigations. If the investigation takes the Differential Response track, the investigator will utilize the SS-6 and/or the CD-98 for continued engagement and assessment of services with the family in accordance to the above guidelines.

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