Practice Points

Timely Informed Consent – Inpatient Hospitalizations and Medication Management Checkups

This Practice Point is to provide guidance regarding informed consent when a child is placed in an inpatient hospital setting.

In recent months there have been discussions with inpatient hospital administration and local clinical physicians regarding their ability to have necessary conversations with case managers regarding informed consent. Oftentimes inpatient hospitalizations are time limited and involve the introduction of new psychotropic mediations as well as titrating currently prescribed psychotropic medications. This means that the informed consent conversation has to happen timely.

To alleviate a delay in giving the necessary consent, upon admission into the inpatient hospital, the case manager and hospital staff will schedule a meeting within 24 hours and share direct contact information (email, cell phone, direct number and supervisor name and contact information). The youth's parent(s) should also be included in the meeting when possible. This conversation can take place through a phone call or video conference call. This call will allow for the initial conversation to take place regarding the youth's course of treatment while hospitalized and initiate the informed consent conversation with parents as needed.

This type of planning and conversation needs to also take place for medication management appointments. In the majority of cases, these appointments are scheduled in advance which allows for case managers to coordinate with the parents to participate in the medication management visit. Thus, direct parent involvement will meet the requirements of parental contact for informed consent. If the parents are not available to participate directly in the meeting the case manager will continue to follow policy with two documented attempts on two different days to obtain consent.

Reference – CWM Section 4, Chapter 4 (Working with Children) 4.3 – Medical and Mental Health Planning