

## CERTIFIED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER

Issue Date: March 1, 1984

Authority: [32 CFR 199.6\(c\)\(3\)\(iii\)\(F\)](#)

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### I. ISSUE

Certified Clinical Social Workers.

### II. BACKGROUND

A. The Defense Appropriation Act, Fiscal Year 1981 directed TRICARE/CHAMPUS to conduct a test reimbursement program for covered services provided by clinical social workers independent of physician referral or supervision. The test period was extended through September 30, 1982, by the Defense Appropriation Act, Fiscal Year 1982. This test reimbursement program was effective for claims received and processed from December 15, 1980, through September 30, 1982, and continued from October 1 through December 20, 1982, based upon provisions of the Continuing Resolution.

B. The Senate Report on the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1983, stated in part, that "Based on the successful pilot program, the Committee has included bill language to permit direct reimbursement of clinical social workers who provide mental health services....No quality of care problems have arisen, and reimbursement of clinical social workers costs less than the traditional physician gate-keeper approach". Thus, the Defense Appropriation Act, Fiscal Year 1983, included certified clinical social workers as authorized individual providers of care and terminated the test reimbursement program.

### III. POLICY

A. A certified clinical social worker may provide covered services independent of physician referral and supervision when the clinical social worker meets the standards established by [32 CFR 199.6\(c\)\(3\)\(iii\)\(F\)](#) for authorized clinical social workers and is practicing within the scope of his or her license. The clinical social worker must meet the following criteria:

1. Is licensed or certified as a clinical social worker by the jurisdiction where practicing; or, if the jurisdiction does not provide for licensure or certification of clinical social workers, is certified by a national professional organization offering certification of clinical social workers; and

2. Has at least a master's degree in social work from a graduate school of social work accredited by the Council on Social Work Education; and

3. Has had a minimum of two years or three thousand hours of post-master's degree supervised clinical social work practice under the supervision of a master's level social worker in an appropriate clinical setting, as determined by the Executive Director, TRICARE Management Activity, or a designee.

*NOTE: Patients who have organic medical problems must receive appropriate concurrent management by a physician.*

B. Medical services required by a patient under the care of an authorized certified clinical social worker must be rendered by or under a physician's supervision. Lack of physician involvement when required by the circumstances of the case is a basis for denial of payment on quality grounds.

C. Claims for mental health services provided by clinical social workers are subject to the limitations on psychiatric procedures as specified in the Regulation.

D. All states now offer certification or licensure for social workers. To be authorized under TRICARE, the social worker must be licensed or certified at the Masters' level. Licensure/certification at the BA or BSW level is not acceptable. Membership can be verified by contacting the membership validation office at the National Association of Social Workers at (202) 408-8600. The Diplomate status granted by the American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work is also recognized.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE            December 21, 1982

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