

### What is CHAMPVA?

CHAMPVA is a health benefits program in which the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) shares the cost of certain health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries (see Eligibility Fact Sheet 01-3 for criteria for CHAMPVA coverage). CHAMPVA is managed by the VA's Health Administration Center (HAC) in Denver, Colorado. We process CHAMPVA applications, determine eligibility, authorize benefits, and process medical claims.

### What outpatient services are available under CHAMPVA for mental health evaluation and psychotherapy benefits?

- 23 outpatient psychotherapy sessions per fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) when medically necessary.
- Two psychotherapy sessions per week in any combination of individual, family, collateral or group.
- More than 23 visits per year and more than two visits per week when preauthorized by the CHAMPVA mental health contractor.
- Individual psychotherapy (limited to 60 minutes unless for crisis intervention).
- Individual psychotherapy sessions in excess of 60 minutes that have been authorized by the CHAMPVA mental health contractor.
- Multiple sessions on the same day to allow for crisis intervention and authorized by the CHAMPVA mental health contractor.

### What outpatient services are available under CHAMPVA for substance use disorder benefits?

Under CHAMPVA, you are entitled to three substance use disorder treatment benefit periods in your lifetime. A benefit period begins with the first date of covered treatment and ends 365 days later (regardless of the total services actually used within that one year benefit period).

- 60 group therapy sessions for outpatient rehabilitation, when medically necessary, per benefit period. **Individual therapy is NOT covered for Substance Use Disorder Rehabilitation.**

- 15 sessions per benefit period for family therapy provided on an outpatient basis.
- Substance Use Disorder sessions beyond the benefit limit require preauthorization by the CHAMPVA mental health contractor.

### **What other outpatient therapy services are available under CHAMPVA?**

- Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD or ADHD)
- Crisis Intervention: individual psychotherapy therapy over 60 minutes or family therapy over 90 minutes. Preauthorization is required from the CHAMPVA mental health contractor.
- Eating Disorders (preauthorization is required from the CHAMPVA mental health contractor).
- Electric Convulsive Therapy (ECT)
- Psychotropic Pharmacological Management
- Psychological testing, limited to 6 hours per fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). Preauthorization is required from the CHAMPVA mental health contractor for testing over six hours.
- Psychoanalysis provided by a graduate or a candidate of a psychoanalytic training institute recognized by the American Psychoanalytic Association. Preauthorization is required from the CHAMPVA mental health contractor.

### **What inpatient services are available under CHAMPVA for mental health disorder benefits?**

- Acute care to include room, board, and other hospital services – preauthorization is required from the CHAMPVA mental health contractor.
- 30 days for beneficiaries ages 19 and over, per fiscal year (October 1 through September 30) or during a single episode of care.
- 45 days per fiscal year for acute inpatient care for beneficiaries ages 18 or younger.
- The CHAMPVA mental health contractor may consider a waiver of the 30/45-day limit.
- Inpatient psychotherapy is limited to seven sessions per week. More than seven sessions per week requires authorization by the CHAMPVA mental health contractor.

- Outpatient psychotherapy provided while a beneficiary is participating in an inpatient program is **NOT** a covered service.
- Inpatient stay to primarily control or detain a runaway child is **NOT** a covered service.
- Cosmetic surgery performed for psychological reasons is **NOT** a covered service.

### What inpatient services are available under CHAMPVA for substance use disorder benefits?

#### Detoxification:

- Inpatient services for detoxification. Preauthorization is required by the CHAMPVA mental health contractor.
- Limited to 7 days per admission and counts toward the 30/45-inpatient mental health day limit.
- Detoxification can only be approved if care is under general medical supervision.

#### Rehabilitation:

- Preauthorized services as approved by the CHAMPVA mental health contractor.
- Limited to no more than one inpatient stay during a single benefit period of 21 days.
- Limited to three benefit periods or rehabilitation stays per lifetime.
- Counts toward the 30/45-day mental health inpatient limit.

### What services are available under CHAMPVA for partial hospitalization mental health benefits?

- 60 days per fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) – preauthorization is required from the CHAMVPA mental health contractor.
- A program that is at least 3 hours per day, and available 5 days per week (day, evening, or weekend program).
- Outpatient psychotherapy while a beneficiary is participating in a partial hospitalization program is **NOT** covered.

## What services are available under CHAMPVA Residential Treatment Center (RTC) Benefits?

- 150 days per fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) – preauthorization is required by the CHAMPVA mental health contractor at least two days before admission.
- Care in a TRICARE- authorized facility.
- Care for adolescents ages 18 and younger (or under the age of 21 if a full-time student).
- Care when a psychiatrist recommends admission for a diagnosable psychiatric disorder and a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist directs the treatment plan. Note: The treatment plan must include a provision for family therapy.
- Geographically Distant Family Therapy (GDFT) when preauthorized by the mental health contractor.
- Admissions primarily for substance use disorder rehabilitation are **NOT** covered.

## Who are CHAMPVA authorized mental health providers?

Any independent mental health provider who is appropriately licensed and/or certified may provide mental health services.

Providers who may render care independent of a physician's referral and supervision are:

- Certified Psychiatric Nurse Specialists
- Clinical Psychologists
- Licensed/Certified Clinical Social Workers (Master's Level)
- Medical Doctors (MDs)
- Osteopaths (DO)
- Psychiatrists
- Family Counselors

Providers requiring a physician's referral and supervision include:

- Mental Health Counselors
- Pastoral Counselors

### **What benefits are NOT covered under the CHAMPVA mental health benefit?**

- Acupuncture/acupressure
- Biofeedback for ordinary muscle tension or psychosomatic conditions
- Carbon dioxide therapy
- Care for antisocial behavior
- Care for specific developmental disorders, learning disabilities and other conditions not attributable to a mental health disorder
- Care or supplies furnished or prescribed by a person in the immediate family
- Counseling/self-help services, i.e., nutritional counseling, stress management, lifestyle modifications, counseling services related to tobacco use, safe sexual practices
- Court-ordered treatment in which the patient is directed to a specific treatment provider, and the treatment program is available at no cost to the beneficiary
- Drug maintenance programs where one addictive drug is substituted for another, such as methadone for heroin
- Electroshock therapy (EST) as negative reinforcement
- Guided imagery
- Hypnosis
- Learning disorders such as reading disorders or dyslexia, mathematics disorders, disorders of written expression/and or learning disorders not otherwise specified
- Light therapy for seasonal affective disorder (SAD)
- Marathon therapy
- Marriage counseling

- Megavitamin therapy
- Mind expansion or elective psychotherapy, i.e., Z therapy and transcendental meditation, environmental ecological treatments, primal therapy
- Multi-family group therapy
- Narcotherapy with LSD
- Psychotherapy within 24 hours of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) or electroshock therapy (EST)
- Rolfing
- Services rendered by a provider who is not licensed/certified for the service being provided
- Sexual dysfunction, paraphilias and gender identity disorders
- Telephone Consults
- Test of Variables of Attention (TOVA) to diagnose ADD/ADHD

### How do I get more information?

- Mail: VA Health Administration Center  
CHAMPVA  
PO Box 65023  
Denver, CO 80206-9023
- Phone: 1-800-733-8387 Monday - Friday 8:15 AM – 6:00 PM Eastern Time
- FAX: 1-303-331-7804
- E-mail: [HAC.INQ@MED.VA.GOV](mailto:HAC.INQ@MED.VA.GOV)
- Website: [WWW.VA.GOV/HAC](http://WWW.VA.GOV/HAC)
- For authorization of mental health benefits, providers in the United States may call the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor, Magellan Behavioral Health at 1-800-424-4018. International providers may call 1-720-529-7400. Magellan is also available by fax at 1-800-424-4017. You can write to Magellan Behavioral Health-CHAMPVA, PO Box 3567, Englewood, CO 80155.