

Patient Intake & Identification Policy

Sunflower Mountain Mental Health (SMMH)

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Purpose

This policy ensures that Sunflower Mountain Mental Health (SMMH) properly verifies patient identity during the intake process, in compliance with **Medicare, Medicaid, commercial insurance, and HIPAA regulations**. The policy helps prevent identity fraud, ensures accurate patient records, and protects patient confidentiality.

Patient Identification Verification Process

All new and returning patients must complete identity verification before receiving services. SMMH will:

- **Require a government-issued photo ID** (e.g., driver's license, passport, or state ID) at the time of intake.
- **Verify insurance information** for Medicare, Medicaid, and commercial insurance patients.
- **Confirm demographic details** (e.g., full name, date of birth, address, and contact information).
- **Document patient identity verification** in the electronic health record (EHR).

Intake Documentation Requirements

Patients must provide:

- **Completed intake forms**, including medical history and consent documents.
- **Insurance verification documents**, such as Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurance cards.
- **Signed Patient Rights & Responsibilities acknowledgment.**
- **Signed HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices acknowledgment.**

Insurance Eligibility & Coverage Verification

SMMH verifies patient insurance coverage before appointments by:

- **Using insurance portals or third-party verification services** to confirm eligibility.
- **Checking Medicare and Medicaid databases** for active coverage status.

- **Confirming commercial insurance coverage**, including deductibles, co-pays, and out-of-pocket maximums.
- **Notifying patients of financial obligations** before services are rendered.

Voluntary Waiver of Insurance Billing

If a patient has active insurance coverage but **elects not to use it**, staff must present and obtain a signed **SMMH Health Insurance Waiver Questionnaire** during the intake process.

This form documents the patient's decision to self-pay and prohibits later insurance submission. Once completed, the waiver must be uploaded to the patient's EHR, and the chart flagged per internal procedures. For full documentation and workflow requirements, refer to the **Insurance Waiver Policy**.

Preventing Identity Fraud

To prevent fraudulent use of benefits, SMMH:

- **Performs annual re-verification of patient identity and insurance.**
- **Requires patients to report any changes** in insurance, address, or contact information.
- **Denies services if identity cannot be verified**, except in emergencies.
- **Reports suspected identity fraud** to Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurers as required.

Special Considerations for Minors & Guardianship

For minor patients or those with legal guardians:

- **A parent or legal guardian must provide identification** and sign consent forms.
- **Legal guardians must present court documentation** proving guardianship.
- **Emancipated minors must provide legal documentation** of their status.

Compliance & Monitoring

- **Staff training** on identity verification and fraud prevention is conducted annually.
- **Random audits** of patient intake documentation ensure compliance.
- Any **discrepancies or issues** must be reported to the **SMMH Compliance Office** immediately.

Patient Disputes & Appeals

Patients who dispute identity verification issues may:

- Contact **SMMH's Patient Services Department** at (719) 679-5022.
- File a formal appeal through **Medicare, Medicaid, or their private insurer**.

Last Updated: March 2025

For further assistance, please contact SMMH at **(719) 679-5022** or visit www.sunflowermountainmentalhealth.com.